The following provisions are drawn from various athletic codes of conduct. It is intended to provide a template for Codes of Conduct to be used as a guide to assist organizations to better serve the interests of those who participate in athletic activities. Use of this document is for the sole purpose of promoting safety and protecting children and is not intended for commercial use or for any other purpose without exclusive written permission from the National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS). The information provided herein should not be considered legal advice and should not replace review with your legal counsel. The National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS) assumes no liability for the information in this document including any errors or omissions within this document.
Introduction

The National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS) encourages participation and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of all athletic activities. In order to assist all organizations to better serve the interests of those who participate in athletic activities, the NCYS is providing this Codes of Conduct template which follows.

This document is not intended to establish a set of rules that will, by inclusion or exclusion, prescribe the appropriate behavior for an organization’s participants in every aspect of their involvement in the sport. Rather, the Codes of Conduct template offers general principles to guide the conduct, and the judicious appraisal of conduct, of all the organization’s participants (including employees and agents) in situations that have ethical implications.

An organization grants the privilege of participation to those individuals and organizations committed to that mission. The privilege of participation may, therefore, be withdrawn by the organization at any time where the organization determines that a member’s conduct is inconsistent with the mission of the organization or the best interest of the sport and those who participate in it.

This Codes of Conduct template cannot further ethical conduct in the athletic activities; that can only come from the personal commitment of the participants in the sport to behave ethically. This Codes of Conduct template is offered instead to guide and to affirm the will of all of participants to safeguard the best interests of the sport by acting ethically at all times.

General Provisions

- Sports can and should be a setting which builds personal character including integrity, responsibility, honesty, fairness, and respect for others.

- Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Remember, players are involved for fun and enjoyment.

- Provide a sports environment whereby the health, safety and welfare of participants is top priority.

- Embrace a “kids first” approach by implementing best practices and polices that protect participants and promote safety with the organization.

- Be certain safety programs, at minimum, include hydration stations, brain injury and concussion education, baseline testing, background screening for volunteers, contactors and employees, maintaining proper facilities and lighting, using correct and up-to-date equipment, providing appropriate medical prevention and response to injuries, and much more.

- Create community goodwill and make a positive impact on young people with a passion for service while keeping fun in the game.
Administrator’s Code of Conduct

Administrators are charged with the responsibility for contributing to an environment which makes participation in the sport a positive and rewarding experience.

- Follow the rules and regulations of your association to ensure that the association’s philosophy and objectives are enhanced.

- Support programs that train and educate players, coaches, parents, officials and volunteers.

- Require criminal background screening designed to remove and/or discourage those who might harm children. The NCYS has published Recommended Guidelines© as a tool for organizations and administrators.

- Promote and publicize your programs; seek out financial support when possible.

- Communicate with parents by holding parent/player orientation meetings as well as by being available to answer questions and address problems throughout the season.

- Work to provide programs that encompass fairness to the participants and promote fair play and sportsmanship.

- Recruit volunteers, including coaches, who demonstrate qualities conducive to being role models to the youth in our sport.

- Encourage coaches and officials to attend clinics and advise your board members of the necessity for their training sessions.

- Make every possible attempt to provide everyone, at all skill levels, with a safe and responsible place to play.

- Read and be familiar with the contents of your organization’s official playing rules.

- Require all participants to abide by a Code of Conduct which defines appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

- Develop other administrators to advance to positions in your association, perhaps even your own.
Coach’s Code of Conduct

Coaches are responsible for instructing their players to play the sport in a safe and sportsmanlike manner.

- Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Care more about the participant than winning the game. Remember, players are involved in youth sports for fun and enjoyment.

- Be a positive role model to your players. Display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.

- Be generous with your praise when it is deserved; be consistent and honest; be fair and just; do not criticize players publicly; learn to be a more effective communicator and coach; don't yell at players.

- Adjust to personal needs and problems of players; be a good listener; never verbally, emotionally, or physically abuse a player or official; give all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem; teach players the basics.

- Organize practices that are fun and challenging for your players. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques and strategies of the sport; encourage all your players to be team players.

- Maintain an open line of communication with your players’ parents. Explain the goals and objectives of your association.

- Be concerned with the overall development of your players. Stress good health habits and clean living.

- To play the game is great; to love the game is greater.
Official’s Code of Conduct

Officials should be diligent and confident when officiating the sport. Each official should enforce all playing rules fairly and respectfully with the safety of the players and the best interest of the game in mind. Players must be held accountable for dangerous and illegal actions with the proper enforcement of the rules at all times.

- Act in a professional and businesslike manner at all times and take your role seriously.
- Strive to provide a safe and sportsmanlike environment in which players can properly display their sport skills.
- Know all playing rules, their interpretations and their proper application.
- Remember that officials are teachers. Set a good example.
- Make your calls with quiet confidence; never with arrogance.
- Manage and help to control games in cooperation with the coaches to provide a positive and safe experience for all participants.
- Violence must never be tolerated.
- Be fair and impartial at all times.
- Answer all reasonable questions and requests.
- Adopt a “zero tolerance” attitude toward any form of abuse – including verbal, physical, sexual and emotional abuse.
- Never use foul or vulgar language when speaking with a player, coach or parent.
- Use honesty and integrity when answering questions.
- Admit your mistakes when you make them.
- Never openly criticize a coach, player or fellow official.
- Keep your emotions under control.
- Use only approved officiating techniques and policies adopted by your organization.
- Maintain your health through a physical conditioning program.
- Dedicate yourself to personal improvement and maintenance of officiating skills.
- Respect your supervisor and his/her critique of your performance.
Parent’s Code of Conduct

Parents are encouraged to support their teams while showing respect for all players, coaches, officials, spectators, and other parents.

- Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sports. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun.

- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember, children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.

- Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches, officials, spectators or other parents. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.

- Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. De-emphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.

- Know and study the rules of the game and support the officials on and off the playing field. This approach will help in the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.

- Applaud a good effort in both victory and defeat, and enforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or abuse your child at any time – it is destructive. Work towards eradicating all forms of abuse in youth sports.

- Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.

- If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about the sport – and volunteer.

- Understand your child’s rights to play in an environment free from harassment and/or abuse in any form. Report any such incidents immediately.
Player's Code of Conduct

Players are encouraged to develop a deep sense of respect for all (opponents and officials) while endeavoring to enjoy the sport and improve their playing ability. Each player is expected to use proper skill and technique when engaging in any type of body contact.

- Play for fun.
- Work hard to improve your skills.
- Be a team player – get along with your teammates.
- Learn teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline.
- Be on time.
- Learn the rules and play by them. Always be a good sport.
- Respect your coach, your teammates, your parents, opponents and officials.
- Never argue with an official’s decision.
- Do not engage in any form of abusive behavior toward any other person.
- Understand your rights to play in an environment free from harassment and/or abuse in any form. Report any such incidents immediately.
Spectator’s Code of Conduct

Spectators are encouraged to support their teams while showing respect for all players, coaches, officials, parents and other spectators.

- Display good sportsmanship. Always respect players, coaches and officials.
- Act appropriately; do not taunt or disturb other fans; enjoy the game together.
- Cheer good plays of all participants; avoid booing opponents.
- Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play; profanity and objectionable cheers or gestures are offensive.
- Help provide a safe and fun environment; throwing any items on the playing field can cause injury to players and officials.
- Support the referees and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.
- Be responsible for your own safety – be alert to prevent accidents and other avoidable situations.
- Respect locker rooms as private areas for players, coaches and officials.
- Be supportive after the game – win or lose. Recognize good effort, teamwork and sportsmanship.
Criminal Conduct

All adults participating in the organization’s activities are expected to comply with all applicable criminal codes. This obligation is violated by any participant who has a pending charge, been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or no contest to a criminal charge or indictment involving sexual misconduct, child abuse, or conduct that is a violation of a law specifically designed to protect minors, and, depending on the nature of the crime, may be violated by any member who has a pending charge, been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or no contest to any felony charge or indictment involving conduct other than that specifically described above.

Sexual Misconduct

All adults participating in the organization’s activities must protect the integrity of the sport and the interests of the athletes they serve by strictly avoiding sexual relationships with athletes. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any member to:

1. Solicit or engage in sexual relations with any minor.
2. Engage in any behavior that utilizes the influence of an adult’s position as coach, official or administrator to encourage sexual relations with an athlete.
3. Engage in sexual harassment by making unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Conflict of Interest

All adults participating in the organization’s activities are responsible for avoiding both actual and perceived conflicts of interest in the conduct of business on behalf of the organization. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any member to:

1. Use, or be perceived as using, the organization’s properties, services, opportunities, authority or influence to gain private benefit.
2. Fail, as an employee, director, officer or committee member of the organization, to complete an annual conflict of interest of form, or fail to complete that form accurately.
3. Incur expenses in furtherance of the organization’s business which are unreasonable, unnecessary, or unsubstantiated.
4. Participate in the deliberation or decision making process about any issue for which the adult participating in the organization’s activities has a direct financial interest.
Enforcement of Code

Compliance with this Code of Conduct depends primarily upon understanding and voluntary compliance, secondarily upon reinforcement by peers, and, when necessary, upon enforcement through disciplinary action.

Any individual who believes that an individual participating in the organization’s activities has failed to meet his or her obligations under this Code of Conduct is encouraged to report the concern to responsible parties of the organization. If that action does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the individual may file a written complaint with the leader i.e.: President, program director or other appropriate staff member of the organization. That complaint must be signed and must state specifically the nature of the alleged misconduct. Upon review of the complaint and, where appropriate, additional discussions with the complainant and/or member who is the subject of the complaint, the leader may:

1. Determine that the complaint does not merit further action,
2. Counsel the member who is the subject of the complaint and record both the complaint and the nature of the counseling in the member’s permanent record,
3. Refer the complaint, as appropriate, to the state or regional chairs/committees or affiliated organization, law enforcement or
4. Process the complaint under the member misconduct or grievance procedures of the organization’s Bylaws.

Any individual who suspects illegal and/or abusive behavior shall immediately contact appropriate law enforcement agency(s) and notify responsible parties of the organization.
Prohibited and Recommended Behavior

Providing a safe environment for young people who participate in amateur youth sports is the highest priority. It includes a mandatory criminal background screening designed to remove and/or discourage those who might harm our kids. It will require all those working with children to abide by a Code of Conduct which defines appropriate and inappropriate behavior. It is our goal to ensure all employees and volunteers who work with young people are dedicated to that objective and qualified to do so.

The following list includes prohibited and recommended behavior for anyone involved with amateur youth sports programs. Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or termination of privileges.

Prohibited Behavior

- Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs while working with youth.
- Providing alcohol or drugs to youth, or allowing consumption of same while under an adult’s supervision.
- Physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse of any child, including bullying.
- Denying any youth the opportunity to participate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability.
- Failure to respect the privacy of youth, especially in situations calling for changing clothes or taking showers (the only exception is when health or safety issues dictate specific action).
- Disciplining youth by use of physical, emotional or other forms of punishment or failure to provide necessities such as water, food, or shelter.
- Being alone with a single child where others cannot observe you.
- Leaving a child unsupervised.
- Inappropriately touching a youth’s body. As a rule, this includes any area of the body that would be covered by a bathing suit. It is normally acceptable to touch a youth on the shoulders, arm or upper back. Tickling, wrestling, or teasing youth is inappropriate.
- Using profanity, telling inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one’s personal life, and using any kind of harassment or sexual references in the presence of youth or parents.
- Releasing a youth to anyone other than the authorized parent or guardian, or to a person designated by the parent/guardian.

Recommended Behavior

- Ensuring suspicious or unknown individuals do not occupy restrooms with unescorted youth. Always send youth to a restroom in pairs if staff is unable to accompany an individual. Supervise restroom activity without invading the privacy of the individual.
- Using positive reinforcement and encouragement to manage or change behavior. Avoid comparison or criticism. Praise will encourage positive behavior and create an atmosphere of cooperation and fun.
- Treating all youth fairly.
- Serving as a role model by maintaining an attitude of respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, sportsmanship & trustworthiness.
- Welcoming and encouraging parents to attend all youth functions.
Participant Code of Conduct Template
(Note to the organization...below is an example for your use. Feel free to create and customize your own Code of Conduct as applicable)

Print Name of Participant: __________________________________________________________

Name of Organization: _____________________________________________________________

1. No swearing or abusive language on the bench, on/in the playing field/facility, or at any team function.

2. No lashing out at any official no matter what the call is. The coaching staff will handle all matters pertaining to officiating.

3. Fighting will not be tolerated.

4. There will be no alcohol drinking, smoking, chewing of tobacco, or use of illegal substances at any team function.

5. I will conduct myself in a befitting manner at all facilities (ballfield, recreation facility, hotel, restaurant, etc.) during any team function.

6. I understand that players or team officials who cannot abide by these rules or who violates them will be subject to further disciplinary action.

By signing below, I/we acknowledge that I/we have read and understand the Code of Conduct as presented, and agree to abide by them.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: _________________

Parent/Guardian Signature ___________________________ Date: _________________
Board Member’s Code of Conduct
(Note to the organization…below is an example for your use. Feel free to create and customize your own Code of Conduct as applicable)

Print Name of Board Member: ______________________________________________________

I have read and signed this Code of Conduct as a board member of the <organization name> knowing and understanding the importance of the <organization name> Board Code of Conduct and agree to follow its statements.

• Follow the rules and regulations of <insert organization name> to ensure that the association’s philosophy and objectives are enhanced.

• Support programs that train and educate players, coaches, parents, officials and volunteers.

• Promote and publicize your programs; seek out financial support when possible.

• Communicate with parents by holding parent/player orientation meetings as well as by being available to answer questions and address problems throughout the season.

• Work to provide programs that encompass fairness to the participants and promote fair play and sportsmanship.

• Recruit volunteers, including coaches, who demonstrate qualities conducive to being role models to the youth in our sport.

• Encourage coaches and officials to attend <insert organization name> clinics, and advise your board members of the necessity of their training sessions.

• Make every possible attempt to provide everyone, at all skill levels, with a place to play.

• Read and be familiar with the contents of the <insert organization name> Bylaws, Official Rules, and other pertinent documents.

• Develop other administrators to advance to positions in your association, perhaps even your own.

• Create and administer a policy for risk management including appropriate background screening and applying the NCYS Recommended Guidelines.

Signature: ________________________________ Date: __________________
About the National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS)

WHO WE ARE
The National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS) comprises the who’s who in the youth sports industry. Founded in 1979, the National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS) membership represents more than 200 organizations/corporations serving 60,000,000 boys and girls registered in organized youth sports programs. NCYS is the largest known organization in America representing the amateur youth sports industry.

WHAT WE DO
The NCYS is well-known for advocating safe environments and healthy lifestyles for children and youth in order to achieve stronger neighborhoods and communities. The NCYS is committed to credibility, integrity and vigilance toward youth safety as a core principle of our service to our members and our industry. Adherence to these principles and to the mission and vision in our strategic plan, has led to respect for NCYS by our members, the media, government representatives, corporate America, and others, both in and around the youth sports industry.

Support for reliable, affordable, and accessible background screening of volunteers, combined with a complete athlete protection initiative, is one of the most important initiatives the NCYS has ever offered to its membership. NCYS is an untiring advocate for youth issues, for the protection of children, and for eradicating criminal behavior in youth-serving organizations, as well as, society as a whole, in order to make a positive difference for children of all backgrounds, genders, and economic circumstances.

WHY NCYS EXISTS
Our reason to exist is to enhance the youth sports experience in America for today’s youth and for future generations. The NCYS membership represents the breadth and depth of America’s grassroots youth sports programs. NCYS is a portal to the amateur youth sports industry for those wishing to know and understand this market. No other sport organization in America reaches more grassroots participants than the combined membership of the NCYS. The NCYS members are the gatekeepers and key decision-makers for millions of girls and boys. NCYS has demonstrated that it has influence on behavior and decisions with this powerful constituency, while advocating for the value of participation in amateur youth sports.

JOIN OUR TEAM
Please visit our website www.ncys.org and take advantage of the many resources provided for you. If you are already a member of NCYS, we thank you for your loyal support. If you are not yet member, please consider joining our team. Together we are a powerhouse of positive influence for the amateur youth sports industry for a safer, more wholesome society.