



# USA Shooting Coach Code of Conduct

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# USA Shooting Coach Code of Conduct

## INTRODUCTION

Coaches associated with USA Shooting are expected to maintain a high standard of ethics and professional conduct.

This Coach Code of Conduct (referred to as “Code”) has been updated to reflect the USAS SafeSport policy application and the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport as it relates to sexual misconduct investigations. The purpose is to protect the athletes, coaches, volunteers, and our allied organizations. These standards define (to the highest extent possible) acceptable and unacceptable categories of behavior.

The Code is intended to provide a common set of values. It is the individual responsibility of each coach to maintain the highest possible standards of professional and ethical conduct. Coaches should respect and protect human civil rights and should not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

The USOPC requires SafeSport training for all coaches and volunteers that participate in any training or competition events at any of the Olympic and Paralympic Training Centers. The USA Shooting SafeSport training meets all USOPC SafeSport training requirements.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

### ***COMPETENCE***

Coaches strive to maintain high standards of excellence in their work. They recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified by education, training, or experience. In those areas in which recognized professional standards do not yet exist, coaches exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work. They maintain knowledge of relevant coaching advancements related to the services they render, and they recognize the need for ongoing development. Coaches make appropriate use of scientific, professional, technical, and administrative resources.

### ***INTEGRITY***

Coaches seek to promote integrity in the practice of coaching. Coaches are honest and fair. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, products, or fees, they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive. Coaches strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations, and the effect of these on their work. To the extent feasible, they attempt to clarify, for relevant parties, the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles. Coaches avoid improper and potentially harmful dual relationships.

### ***PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY***<sup>1</sup>

Coaches uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and adapt their methods to the needs of different athletes. Coaches consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutes to the extent needed to serve the best interests of their athletes, or other recipients of their services. Coaches' moral standards and conduct are personal matters to the same degree as is true for any other person, except when coaches' conduct may compromise their responsibilities or reduce the public's trust in coaching and/or coaches. Coaches are concerned about the ethical compliance of their colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct.

### ***RESPECT OF ATHLETES' RIGHTS AND DIGNITY***<sup>2</sup>

Coaches respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all participants. Coaches are aware of individual differences. Coaches try to eliminate biases that effect their work, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unlawful discriminatory practices.

### ***CONCERN FOR OTHERS' WELFARE***

Coaches seek to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact. In their actions, coaches consider the welfare and rights of their athletes. When conflicts occur among coaches' obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. Coaches are sensitive to differences in power between themselves and others, and they do not exploit or mislead other people during or after their relationships.

<sup>1</sup> *Professional: Of, engaged in, or worthy of high standards.*

<sup>2</sup> *Athletes: Those taking part in shooting (shooters and their family members, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators, and spectators).*

## ***COACHES, RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY***

Coaches are aware of their ethical responsibilities to the community and the society in which they work and live. Coaches avoid misuse of their work. Coaches comply with the law and encourage the development of law and policies that serve the interest of sport.

## **ETHICAL STANDARDS**

### ***A. GENERAL STANDARDS***

These General Standards are applicable to the activities of all coaches.

#### ***1. APPLICABILITY OF THE ETHICS CODE & SAFE SPORT***

While many aspects of personal behavior and private activities seem far removed from official duties of coaching, all coaches should be sensitive to their position as role models for athletes and community. Private activities perceived as immoral or illegal can influence the coaching environment, and coaches are encouraged to observe the standards of this Ethics Code and Safe Sport consistently.

#### ***2. BOUNDARIES OF COMPETENCE***

- a. Olympic and Paralympic shooting sports coaches should provide services only after first undertaking appropriate education, training, development, and/or mentoring from certified USAS coaches.
- b. In those areas of the United States which require coaching education and certification, coaches should take reasonable steps to ensure their attendance at appropriate coaching education schools, seminars, or clinics, and to ensure that they are in compliance with the law.

#### ***3. MAINTAINING EXPERTISE***

Coaches should be students of their sport, continually increasing their knowledge and skills in their chosen discipline to the benefit of the Olympic and Paralympic path athletes that they coach.

#### ***4. BASIS FOR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENTS***

Coaches rely on scientifically and professionally derived knowledge when making judgments or when engaging in coaching endeavors.

#### ***5. DESCRIBING THE NATURE OF COACHING JUDGMENTS***

When coaches provide services or information to an individual, a group, or an organization, they use language that is reasonably understandable and appropriate to the recipient of those services, and convey information that is always updated and truthful.

## **6. RESPECTING OTHERS**

- a. Coaches respect the rights of others to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that differ from their own. This should be exhibited not only in the physical company of others, but in any social media participation and online forums.
- b. When engaged in coaching, coaches recognize the power they hold over athletes, and therefore make reasonable efforts to avoid engaging in conduct that is demeaning to athletes or other participants.

## **7. DISCRIMINATION**

Coaches do **not** engage in any type of discrimination (e.g. gender, religion, race, etc.). To do so could result in legal ramifications for such behavior.

## **8. SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

- a. Coaches do not engage in sexual harassment. This is also a violation of federal law.
- b. Coaches will treat sexual harassment complainants and respondents with dignity and respect.
- c. Under the new SafeSport policy, all allegations of sexual harassment, sex abuse and other sexual misconduct are to be directly reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

[USA Shooting SafeSport training](#) is required for all USA Shooting staff, coaches, volunteers and athletes over the age of 18. The USA Shooting SafeSport policy covers a broad scope of defined misconduct that will not be tolerated or ignored.

## **9. AVOIDING HARM**

Coaches must take reasonable steps to avoid harming their athletes both physically and emotionally.

## **10. MISUSE OF COACHES' INFLUENCE**

Because coaches' judgments and actions may affect the lives of others, they must guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence.

## **11. MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS**

- a. In many communities and situations, it may not be feasible or reasonable for coaches to avoid social or other non-coaching contacts with athletes and other participants. Coaches must always be sensitive to the potential harmful effects of other contacts on their work and on those persons with whom they deal. A coach refrains from entering into or promising a personal, professional, financial, or other type of relationship with such persons if it appears likely that such a relationship might impair the coach's objectivity or otherwise interfere with the coach effectively performing his or her function, or might harm or exploit the other party.
- b. Whenever feasible, a coach refrains from taking on obligations when preexisting relationships would create a risk of harm (physical, financial or emotional).
- c. If a coach finds that, due to unforeseen factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the coach attempts to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and maximum compliance with this Ethics Code.

## **12. EXPLOITATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

- a. Coaches do not exploit athletes or other participants for financial, personal or professional gain.
- b. Coaches do not engage in sexual/romantic relationships with athletes or other participants over whom the coach has evaluative, direct, or indirect authority. The USAS SafeSport policy clearly defines what is considered sexual misconduct. All sexual misconduct allegations are independently investigated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

## **13. DELEGATION TO AND SUPERVISION OF SUBORDINATES**

- a. Coaches delegate to their assistants only the authority that such persons can reasonably be expected to perform competently on the basis of their education, training, or experience.
- b. Coaches provide proper training and supervision to their assistants or substitutes, as well as take reasonable steps to see that such persons perform services responsibly, competently, and ethically.

## **B. PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

### **1. AVOIDANCE OF FALSE OR DECEPTIVE STATEMENTS**

Coaches do not make statements that are false, deceptive, misleading, or fraudulent (either due to what they state, convey, or suggest, or because of what they omit) concerning their work activities or those of persons or organizations with which they are affiliated. As examples (and not in limitation) of this standard, coaches no not make false or deceptive statements concerning:

- a. Their training, experience, Olympic and Paralympic accomplishments, competence, or services.
- b. Their institutional or association affiliations.
- c. Their academic degrees.
- d. Their credentials.
- e. The basis for, results of, or degree of success of their services.
- f. Their criminal record.

### **2. MEDIA PRESENTATIONS**

When coaches provide advice or comment by means of public lectures, demonstrations, radio or television programs, pre-recorded tapes, printed articles, mailed material, or other media, they take reasonable precautions to ensure that the statements are consistent with this Ethics Code.

### **3. TESTIMONIALS**

Coaches do not solicit testimonials from current athletes or other participants who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

## C. TRAINING ATHLETES

### 1. STRUCTURING THE RELATIONSHIP

- a. Coaches discuss with athletes, as early as it is feasible, appropriate issues such as the nature and anticipated course of training.
- b. Coaches make every reasonable effort never to work alone with an athlete. As much as possible, two adults (one female with female athletes), one of whom will be 21 years old, are on all trips and programs. In situations which require a personal conference, such as a youth/adult conference, the meeting is to be conducted privately, but in full view of other adults and youths. Coaches ensure that sufficient leadership and supervision are provided for all activities. (This is covered in more detail in the SafeSport policy.)
- c. Coaches make reasonable efforts to answer athletes' questions and to avoid misunderstandings about training. Whenever possible, coaches provide oral and/or written information, using language that is reasonably understandable to the athletes.

### 2. COACH/PARENT RELATIONSHIP

- a. When a coach agrees to provide services to several persons who have a relationship (such as parents and children), the coach attempts to clarify at the outset the relationship they will have with each person. The clarification includes the role of the coach and the probable uses of the services provided.
- b. As soon as it becomes apparent that the coach may be called on to perform conflicting roles (such as mediator between parents and children, or sibling teammates), the coach attempts to clarify and adjust or withdraw from roles appropriately.

### 3. SEXUAL INTIMACIES WITH CURRENT ATHLETES (*This is covered in more detail in the Safe Sport policy.*)

- a. Coaches do **not** engage in sexual/romantic activity with minors.
- b. Coaches do **not** engage in sexual/romantic activities with current athletes.

All sexual misconduct allegations are independently investigated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

### 4. DRUG-FREE SPORT

Coaches do not tolerate the use of any illegal or performance enhancing drugs and support the athletes' efforts to be drug free. [Anti-doping USADA coach training](#) is a required coach course.

### 5. ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND GAMBLING

- a. Coaches discourage the use of alcohol and tobacco in conjunction with athletic events or victory celebrations at playing sites and forbid any unlawful use of alcohol or tobacco.
- b. Coaches refrain from using tobacco or alcohol and from gambling while they are coaching and make every effort to avoid such activities while in the presence of their athletes.

c. Coaches discourage gambling in conjunction with athletic events, at playing sites, and during road trips.

**6. PORNOGRAPHY (This is covered in more detail in the Safe Sport policy.)**

- a. Coaches do not tolerate the use of pornographic material.
- b. Coaches do not tolerate the use of pornography while they are coaching and make every effort to avoid pornography.

All sexual misconduct allegations are independently investigated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

**D. TRAINING SUPERVISION**

**1. DESIGN OF TRAINING PROGRAMS**

Coaches who are responsible for training programs for other coaches seek to ensure that the programs are completely designed, provide the proper experiences, and meet the requirements for coaching education or other goals for which claims are made by the program.

**2. DESCRIPTIONS OF TRAINING PROGRAMS**

- a. Coaches responsible for training programs for other coaches seek to ensure that there is a current and accurate description of the program content, training goals and objectives, and requirements that must be met for satisfactory completion of the program. This information must be readily available to all interested parties.
- b. Coaches seek to ensure that statements concerning their training programs are accurate and not misleading.

**3. YOUTH PROTECTION (This is covered in more detail in the Safe Sport policy.)**

- a. Coaches respect the privacy of the athletes they coach and never improperly touch an athlete. Coaches always request permission to properly touch an athlete for the purpose of adjusting equipment or a position.
- b. When taking trips, coaches will not, unless absolutely necessary (e.g. creates significant financial hardship or would prevent an athlete from traveling), permit junior athletes to sleep in accommodations with another adult other than team members of the same sex or their own parent or guardian. Coaches will ensure that separate shower and latrine facilities are provided for males and females whenever possible. If not possible, coaches will ensure that a specific schedule is available for males and females to use these facilities.
- c. Coaches will not allow junior athletes to participate in high adventure, dangerous, or high-risk activities without proper preparation, supervision, safety measures and parent/guardian written permission.
- d. Coaches do not permit secret organizations as it relates to training and competitions. All aspects of athlete programs are open to observation by parents and volunteers.
- e. Coaches require proper attire for all activities.
- f. Coaches never use corporal punishment (physical abuse) or abusive language.

g. Coaches do not permit physically or mentally harmful hazing or initiations as part of their organization.

#### **4. ACCURACY AND OBJECTIVITY IN COACHING**

When engaged in coaching, coaches present information accurately and with a reasonable degree of objectivity.

#### **5. HONORING COMMITMENTS**

Coaches take responsible measures to honor all commitments they have made to athletes.

### **E. TEAM SELECTION**

#### **1. RECRUITING**

Coaches do not engage, directly or through agents, in uninvited in-person solicitation of business or services from current or potential athletes or other participants who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

#### **2. TAMPERING**

In deciding whether to recruit athletes already on another team, coaches must carefully consider the potential athlete's welfare. The coach must first discuss these issues with the athlete's present coach, and then with the athlete's parents, before approaching the athlete in order to minimize the risk of confusion and conflict.

#### **3. PLAYER SELECTION**

Coaches perform evaluations or team selection only in a manner consistent with the Ethics Code and USA Shooting selection policies.

#### **4. ASSESSING ATHLETE PERFORMANCE**

- a. In coach-athlete relationships, coaches establish an appropriate process for providing feedback to athletes.
- b. Coaches evaluate athletes on the basis of their actual performance on relevant and established program requirements.

### **F. RESOLVING ETHICAL ISSUES**

#### **1. FAMILIARITY WITH ETHICS CODE**

Coaches have an obligation to be familiar with this Code & SafeSport policy (or as it may be amended from time to time), other applicable ethics codes, and their application to the coach's work. Lack of awareness, or misunderstanding of an ethical standard, is not in itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.

## **2. CONFRONTING ETHICAL ISSUES**

When a coach is uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate the Code and/or SafeSport policy, the coach should consult with other coaches knowledgeable about ethical issues and with USA Shooting. USA Shooting Executive Director/CEO is available for consultation on ethics and conflict situations.

## **3. CONFLICTS BETWEEN ETHICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEMANDS**

If the demands of an organization with which coaches are affiliated conflict with this Code, coaches clarify the nature of the conflict, make known their commitment to this Code, and to the highest extent feasible, seek to resolve the conflict in a way that permits the fullest adherence to the Code and SafeSport policy.

## **4. INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF ETHICAL VIOLATIONS**

When athletes believe that there may have been an ethical violation by a coach not covered by SafeSport policy, they can attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that individual in an informal manner.

## **5. FORMAL REPORTING OF ETHICAL VIOLATIONS**

If an apparent ethical violation is not appropriate for informal resolution under this Code and SafeSport policy, or is not resolved properly informally, participants and USA Shooting may take further action by:

### a. Athlete:

- (1) Contacting the coach's Club President or appropriate designee.
- (2) Confirming with the coach's Club President if there was an attempt for informal resolution.
- (3) Notifying the USA Shooting Executive Director/CEO in writing, identifying the specific ethical violations and describing actions taken to resolve the violation if applicable.

### b. USA Shooting:

- (1) Will review the Code/SafeSport violation charge.
- (2) Will give a copy of the Coach Code of Conduct/SafeSport policy violation documentation to the coach in question to prepare a response prior to USAS' review.
- (3) If necessary, will review the Coach Code of Conduct/SafeSport policy violation with counsel, and follow counsel's recommendations which could result in revocation of coach credentials up to and including banning the coach's participation in USAS events, activities, competitions, etc.
- (4) Will keep a written record of all reviews and actions.

### c. Government:

- (1) Coaches are knowledgeable about laws regarding sex abuse and will comply with required reporting procedures. USA Shooting is required to report sexual abuse allegations to the U.S. Center for SafeSport who will conduct investigations related to sex abuse. This investigation may be in parallel but separate from any law enforcement investigation.

## **6. COOPERATING WITH ETHICS COMMITTEES**

Coaches cooperate in ethics and SafeSport investigations, proceedings, and resulting requirements of USA Shooting and any of its member organizations. Failure to cooperate with these requirements is an ethics violation.

## **7. IMPROPER COMPLAINTS**

A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of our Code and SafeSport policy and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

“Whistleblower” Protection. Regardless of outcome, USA Shooting will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith.

USA Shooting will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered a violation of the Coach Code of Conduct/SafeSport policy and grounds for disciplinary action.

## **8. PROCESS RELATING TO VIOLATION OF CODE**

1. The coach acknowledges that this Code and SafeSport policy is administered under the authority of USA Shooting and its member organizations, and that a violation of the Code or SafeSport policy subjects the coach to the disciplinary processes of USA Shooting and its member organizations.
2. In the event that a violation of the Code or SafeSport policy occurs during an authorized USA Shooting activity, USA Shooting may take action separate and independent from that of its member organizations in order to protect its interests and those of athletes, coaches, and others involved with the activity.
3. If the violation of the Code or SafeSport policy occurs while a coach is a member of a USA Shooting team or event, the coach's member organization acknowledges that USA Shooting may institute its own proceedings regarding the violation, which action shall not restrict the ability or obligation of the member organization to take its own separate and independent action.
4. In the event that a coach is found to have violated the Code or SafeSport policy, such action is separate and apart from any other legal consequences which may occur as a result of the act.
5. Any sexual misconduct allegations will be investigated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

## **G. REPORTING PROCEDURES**

[USAS Safe Sport online training course](#) contains the proper reporting procedures and forms.

The downloadable forms and other informational documents are found [here](#).

### **Contacts:**

CEO/Executive Director Matt Suggs  
719-866-4670  
[Matt.suggs@usashooting.org](mailto:Matt.suggs@usashooting.org)

US Center for SafeSport  
720- 524-5640  
[www.SafeSport.org](http://www.SafeSport.org)  
[Click here for the Online Reporting Form](#)