

# Football Ontario

Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct



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## **CODE OF ETHICS AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Preamble**

The reputation and integrity of Football Ontario is maintained when all members act, and are seen to act, in a way which is of the highest standard of professional ethics.

This Code applies to all Football Ontario members and employees: it is intended to help, not hinder the organization's activities by clarifying our standards of conduct. We believe these standards reflect those of the Canadian public and members of the "Association" expect of amateur sport and of a National Sport Federation.

Football Ontario wishes to maintain a strong reputation for its integrity and, as an organization and business associate, be valued at all levels. Ultimately, our value is reflected in the pride we have in what we do, in the successful achievement of our mission and the willingness of others to work with us in that regard. Our reputation as an ethical Provincial Sport Organization is an essential part of what will make us successful.

It is expected that all Ordinary Members (both organizationally and personally) will implement and support Football Ontario Codes of Ethics and Conduct, Policies and Procedures, and as necessary adapted these Codes, Policies and Procedures to reflect the uniqueness of their respective organizations. All members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that instills trust and confidence in the "Association".

A series of Codes of Ethics and Codes of Conduct, Policies and Procedures have been developed to guide the membership both organizationally and individually in the performance of their duties and activities. The Codes of Ethics and Conduct are listed as the conclusion of this document.

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**Expectations for Fairness in Sports**

Football Ontario endorses the 2001 Federal-Provincial / Territorial Sports Ministers' vision regarding "Expectations for Fairness in Sports". In doing so, Football Ontario committed to the vision that is based on the following principles:

1. There be a firm and public commitment to the principle that lasting and meaningful athletic performance can only be achieved through fair means.
2. Participants in sport and physical activity will do so in a manner that adheres to the highest ethical principles.
3. Those who participate in sport will receive from their fellow athletes, coaches and officials, and parents/guardians and spectators, fairness and ethical treatment in a safe and welcoming sport environment, free of harassment and abuse.
4. Their sport system will help to advance the widest array of athletic goals of all participants, with or without disability, without discrimination and in spite of barriers based on personal circumstances.
5. Spectators to sport events can witness the activities without being subjected to abuse, interference or violence from others.
6. Coaches will be appropriately valued by their athletes, and their athletes' parents/guardians and supporters, that they will receive fair treatment and respect for their valuable contribution to sport, and that they will be free of harassment and threats of violence under any circumstance.
7. Sport officials will not be interfered with in the execution of their duties and will be respected for their decisions by athletes, coaches, parents/guardians and spectators.
8. Sport volunteers will be respected and recognized for their efforts to make sport participation possible and rewarding for athletes of all ages.
9. Parents/guardians are assured that their children participating in sport will receive fair treatment from coaches, volunteers and spectators.
10. The sport system will provide just treatment in cases of disputes in sport and that there are proper and accessible mechanisms that are available in a timely manner to resolve disputed issues through due process.
11. Athletes, coaches and team officials representing Canada in the international sport arena will conduct themselves, in both victory and defeat, in a manner that brings pride to all.

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12. Sport organizations in receipt of public funding, will be fully accountable for the use of such resources and will be transparent and democratic in their organizational life.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

Football Ontario's Code of Ethics and Codes of Conduct are grounded in the following principles:

**RESPECT FOR OTHERS**

The principle of respect challenges members to act in a manner respectful of the dignity of all participants in sport regardless of their connection to the sport. Fundamental to this principle is the basic assumption that each person has value and is worthy of respect.

**RESPONSIBLE ACTION**

The principle of responsible action carries the basic ethical expectation that the activities of members will benefit society in general and participants in particular and will do no harm. Fundamental to the implementation of this principle is the notion that each member is responsible and the consequences of their actions or inactions.

**INTEGRITY**

Integrity means that members are expected to be honest, sincere, and honourable in their relationships with others. Acting on these values is most possible when members possess a high degree of self-awareness and the ability to reflect critically on how their perspectives influence their interactions with others.

**HONOURING SPORT**

The principle of honouring sport in general and football in particular challenges members to recognize, act on, and promote the value of football for individuals and teams and for society in general.

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**Football Ontario Code of Professional Conduct**

Football Ontario's Code of Professional Conduct is more than simply a set of behaviours for people within the organization; it reflects the ideals and values of the organization, as well as its commitment to uphold those values as part of what makes the organization what it is. It is therefore part of Football Ontario's Code of Conduct, that can be applied to any particular situation, by asking the questions: "what is the right thing to do, and how do we avoid doing the wrong thing?"

As part of our "Association's" philosophy, Football Ontario believes its work is first and foremost in the interest of the participant and the athlete. Our ethical rationale for promoting ethical conduct in sport is founded on the belief that sport is for the benefit of all Canadians, and that the pursuit of sporting excellence is a function of our collective pursuit of the human potential. As the Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) Football Ontario is a promoter of sport values and ethics (through football), and as such should lead by example as an "Association" committed to the highest order of professionalism and public scrutiny. The membership whether paid staff or volunteers and regardless of their duties and responsibilities is called upon to conduct themselves with integrity, be fair and honest in our dealings with others, and treat others with respect and dignity. The following is Football Ontario Code of Professional Conduct:

- Football Ontario members and employees are responsible for their actions and accountable for the consequences of their actions or inactions.
- At all times, Football Ontario members and employees will act in a manner that encourages and maintains confidence among athletes, sport organizations and the public, in the integrity of the organization and its people.
- Football Ontario will conduct its relations with, and discharge its duties to, other organizations, clients, the public and media with ethics and fairness. All business dealings must be conducted in a fair and honest manner, both within the spirit and the letter of agreements, policies and legal requirements. All persons should be treated with respect, tact and courtesy in all dealings with the "Association".
- All communications with clients, whether oral or written, must be conducted in a professional manner, and should be delivered in a timely, accurate and clear manner.
- Football Ontario members and employees must not be in a conflict of interest or permit any influence that could conflict with the best interest of the "Association" or prejudice the "Association's" reputation. Disclosure in writing is required for any Football Ontario member or employee associated with, employed by, performing services for or with a financial interest in any other corporation, body or enterprise doing business with or seeking to do business with Football Ontario.

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- Confidentiality of personal and sensitive information must be respected. Football Ontario will develop, implement, maintain and enforce reasonable policies and procedures to ensure confidentiality and safeguard confidential information.
- All methods of seeking and obtaining financial support for Football Ontario activities must be carried out in a manner consistent with maintaining membership and public confidence in, and respect for, the “Association”, its authority on matters of ethics in sport and its independence from vested interests.
- Football Ontario must use its resources (including human and material resources, funds, equipment and information) responsibly and in the best interests of all its members, the public and the “Association”.
- Any complaint received concerning Football Ontario must be handled professionally, promptly and courteously, with a written reply if requested, and a written record maintained.
- Football Ontario must conduct its affairs in an open manner that welcomes public scrutiny as a necessary and beneficial aspect of an effective ethics in sport organization and credible ethics in sport programs and policies. Football Ontario supports public disclosure of information and will not withhold any information about itself and/or its activities unless there is justifiable reason to do so, such reason(s) being itself open to public scrutiny.

**ATHLETE CENTERED**

With respect to its relations with athletes, Football Ontario will:

- Show respect and regard for the interests and goals of athletes;
- Act on the belief that the athlete as a person is more important than the sport;
- Demonstrate a responsiveness to individual needs and situations;
- Engage in practices that maintain and enhance the ethic of care for self and others;
- Carry out its activities in a manner, which demonstrates concern for the health, well-being, protection and *enhancement of all athletes*.
- Encourage and respect individual responsibility in developing ethical ideals through moral reflection, moral dialogue and moral practices in sport.

Football Ontario should consistently demonstrate an ethic of care, where we are watchful for and sensitive to the needs of athletes as people and not just as performers of sport. Our conduct should therefore ensure that athletes have the best possible experience

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when dealing with the “Association”, as measured by their satisfaction and expressed confidence in the integrity of Football Ontario and its member associations.

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

### **Introduction**

The Code of Ethics has been developed to protect and promote the best interests of the game. Its primary purpose is to clarify and distinguish ethical and approved professional practices from those which are detrimental. Its secondary purpose is to emphasize the purpose and value of football and to stress the proper function of coaches in relation to schools, players, and the public. The ultimate success of the principles and standards of this Code depends upon the football coach.

### **Article One - Responsibilities to Players**

1. In his/her relationships with players under his/her care, the coach should always be aware of the tremendous influence he/she wields. The coach should never place the value of a win above that of instilling the highest desirable ideals and character traits in his/her players. The safety and welfare of his/her players should always be uppermost in his/her mind, and they must never be sacrificed for any personal prestige or selfish glory.
2. In teaching the game of football, the coach must realize that there are certain rules designed to protect the player and provide common standards for determining a winner and loser. Any attempts to beat these rules, to take unfair advantage of an opponent, or to teach deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct have no place in the game of football, nor has any coach, guilty of such teaching, the right to call himself/herself a coach.
3. The diagnosis and treatment of injuries is a medical problem and should, under no circumstances, be considered a province of the coach. A coach's responsibility is to see that injured players are given prompt and competent medical attention and that the most minute detail of a physician's orders is carried out.
4. Under no circumstances should a coach authorize the use of drugs. Medicants, stimulants, or drugs should be used only when authorized and supervised by a physician.
5. A player's future should not be jeopardized by any circumvention of eligibility rules.

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6. In the educational setting, a coach should not make demands on his/her players that will interfere with the player's opportunities for achieving academic success.

**Article 2 – Administrators’ Responsibilities**

1. Administrators should supervise their programs and personnel so as to maintain the principles, integrity and dignity of the organization / institution which they represent
2. Administrators should not exert pressure on members of their organization or coaches, to give players consideration they do not deserve.
3. Administrators, in conjunction with their coaches, should set and follow the procedures which relate to the players, rules, officials, public relations, recruiting, game day and other applicable responsibilities.

**Article 3 – Rules of the Game**

1. The Points of Emphasis which appear in the Canadian Rule Book for Tackle Football shall be considered an integral part of this Code of Ethics and should be carefully read and observed.
2. Each coach should be acquainted thoroughly with the rules of the game. He/she is responsible for having the rules taught and interpreted for his/her players.
3. Both the letter and the spirit of the rules must be adhered to by the coaches.
4. To gain an advantage by circumvention or disregard for the rules, brands that person unfit to be associated with football.
5. A coach is responsible for flagrant roughing tactics. He/she is responsible for illegal substitutions.

He/she shall not permit faking of injuries in order to stop the clock. He/she shall not permit motion which has the intent of drawing an opponent offside.

6. A coach must remember that it is not the purpose of football to hurt or injure an opponent by legal or illegal methods.



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7. Habit formation is developed on the practice field. Where coaches permit, encourage, or combine performance which is dangerous to an opponent, they are derelict in their responsibility to teach fair play and good sportsmanship. This aspect of coaching must be attacked just as vigorously as the teaching of offense and defense, and to the players it is far more important than all the technical aspects of the game combined. Any coach who fails to stress this point, or who permits, encourages or defends the use of unsportsmanlike tactics, shall be considered guilty of the most serious breach of football coaching ethics.

**Article 4 – Officials**

1. No competitive contest can be played satisfactorily without impartial, competent officials. Officials must have the respect and support of administrators, coaches and players. On and off-the-record criticism of officials to players or to the public shall be considered unethical.
2. There should be a co-operative relationship between coaches, administrators and officials' associations, with frequent interchange of ideas and suggestions. Coaches should, whenever possible, accept invitations to attend officials' rules meetings. Similarly, coaches should extend invitations to officials to discuss the interpretation of rules with their squads, and, on occasion, to officiate at scrimmages for mutual benefits.
3. Good officiating promotes enjoyment of the game and protects the players. When an official accepts a game assignment, his/her responsibility is well defined. The protection and welfare of the players are paramount and there can be no compromise. Any official who fails to discharge promptly his/her responsibility to penalize a player or coach for an infraction, is delinquent and unqualified in officiate.
4. On the day of a game, officials should be created in a courteous manner. On their part, officials are expected to show courtesy and respect to players, coaches and administrators. Conferences between administrators, coaches and officials shall always be conducted according to procedures established by the governing Conference or Officials' Association. In every respect the Canadian Rule Book for Tackle Football shall be followed in coach-official relationships on the field, during and following a game. Any criticism which the coach or administrator may have concerning officiating, or any official's criticism of the public, teams, coaches or individual players, should be made in writing to the office which assigned the official to the game. For a coach to address, or permit anyone on his/her bench to address uncomplimentary remarks to any official during the progress of a game, or to indulge in conduct which might incite players or spectators against the officials, is a violation

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of the rules of the game and must be considered unworthy conduct for a member of the coaching profession.

5. Slow motion study of controversial decisions by officials is far different from on-the spot decisions which must be made during the course of the game. To show critical plays to sports writers, sportscasters, alumni and the public, which may incite them to label officials as incompetent, must be considered unethical conduct.

**Article 5 - Public Relations**

1. Members of the news media should be treated with courtesy, honesty and respect. Derogatory and misleading statements should be avoided. Direct questions should be answered honestly, or not at all. If good judgment indicates an honest answer would be prejudicial to the best interests of the game, ethical procedure demands that it not be answered. In such instances, "No comment" is justifiable.
2. Coaches should assume the responsibility of teaching their players how to conduct themselves in interviews in the best interests of football.
3. Coaches should not stress injuries, disciplinary measures, academic difficulties, eligibility problems, and similar personal matters. Disciplinary problems should be a "family affair" to be solved between the coach and the players. Injuries are essentially the province of the team physician or trainer. No good purpose can be served by emphasizing such matters.
4. Coaches and administrators should avoid talking in public about unethical recruiting and the use of illegal tactics.
5. Any statements which tend to portray football in any light other than being part of the educational process are detrimental to the future of the profession.
6. It is unethical for coaches and administrators to use alumni, booster, and quarterback club organizations in an attempt to defeat or obstruct institutional athletic controls, or to encourage the violation of established rules. It is unethical for coaches and administrators to make demands, financial or otherwise, upon such groups which are not in keeping with the letter and spirit of existing controls, or in any other manner misuse such strength and power in violation of accepted rules and regulations.
7. Solution of professional problems should be within the profession and not in the press.

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**Article 6 - Recruiting**

1. All institutional, conference, and national regulatory body rules pertaining to recruiting shall be strictly observed.
2. It is a breach of ethics to recruit a player enrolled in another program (or to recruit a prospective athlete who has avowed his/her intention to enroll in another program) for the purpose of participating in regularly organized fall practice.
3. In discussing the advantages of his/her organization/institution, the coach must confine his/her statements to an honest and forthright presentation of the facts. He/she shall refrain from making derogatory statements about other organizations / institutions and their officials.
4. It is unethical for any coach to make statements to any prospective athlete which cannot be fulfilled.

**Article 7 – Game Day and Other Responsibilities**

1. It is vitally important that a coach's actions and behaviour at all times bring credit to himself/herself, his/her institution / organization, and the game of football.
2. During a game a coach should be as inconspicuous as possible. Coaches are encouraged to demonstrate a friendly and kindly attitude toward their players.
3. In the interests of enjoyment and growth of the game, administrators and coaches should encourage the type of support from fans which is conducive to producing an environment of good sportsmanship and healthy competition.

**GUIDELINES FOR CODE OF CONDUCT – ATHLETES**

**Definition.**

Anyone who participates in an athletic activity is considered an athlete. It is expected that each athlete will compete to the best of his or her abilities at all times, keeping in mind the spirit of competition and the sport.

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**Goal Statement.**

Any athlete competing or participating in any Football Ontario sanctioned events will be expected to adhere to the following Football Ontario guidelines for Code of Conduct. Any violation of the Athletes Code of Conduct will be dealt with under Football Ontario's Discipline Policy.

**Actions.**

Always display and behave in a mature, courteous, and respectful manner consistent with that of Football Ontario's Guidelines for Code of Conduct:

- **FAIR PLAY** is an athlete's first priority and focus.
- Participate for the love and enjoyment of the sport.
- **Respect** the dedication, training, efforts, and accomplishments of your fellow team members, and your opponents.
- **Be courteous and respectful** to the officials, coaches, spectators, and event organizers.
- Respect the facility you visit or in which you compete. Respect the rules of the sport.
- When travelling and representing your country or club, be courteous and respectful of the host country, officials, coaches, opponents, as well as their religion, culture, and laws of the country.
- Consumption of alcohol during all competitions, events, or activities is prohibited.
- The use of any illegal drugs or substances whether to improve performance or for personal use is strictly prohibited.
- Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes **sexual harassment**, where it is defined as unwelcome sexual advances or conduct of a sexual nature. This includes behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

**GUIDELINES FOR CODE OF CONDUCT - COACHES**

**Definition.**

It is the requirement of all Clubs affiliated with Football Ontario to assume responsibility for the conduct of all coaches, athletes, and spectators under their jurisdiction.

**Goal Statement.**

Violation of the Guidelines for Code of Conduct of Coaches and Athletes will be dealt with under Football Ontario's Discipline Policy.

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**Actions.**

Always model and display behaviour consistent with that of Football Ontario Guidelines for Code of Conduct:

- Be a **Leader**, displaying respect, courtesy for all, with a positive influence as a role model.
- **Acknowledge and reward** effort, fair play, commitment and dedication.
- Recognize and respect the individuality and differences in each of your athletes.
- **Demonstrate courtesy** and respect for all individuals involved in the sport.
- Always be aware and considerate of the physical and emotional well being of the athletes.
- **Communicate** in a positive and rational manner.
- **Respect** and coach within the spirit of the sport.
- Always attempt to contribute to the development and betterment of the sport.
- Consumption of alcohol during all competitions, events, or activities is prohibited.
- The suggestion or promoting the use of any illegal drugs or substances whether to improve an athlete's performance or for personal use is strictly prohibited.
- Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes **sexual harassment**, where it is defined as unwelcome sexual advances or conduct of a sexual nature. This includes behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

**GUIDELINES FOR CODE OF CONDUCT - OFFICIALS**

**Definition.**

Officials at a Football Ontario event are participants in enriching and promoting the experience of athletes and coaches competing in the sport. As such, it is expected they shall exercise a high level of self-discipline, professionalism, independence, and responsibility.

**Goal Statement.**

The purpose of this code is to establish guidelines for standards of Conduct for Officials who are participating in a Football Ontario sanctioned sport event, whether they are refereeing, timing, assisting at the official's head table, or any other role that requires the use of a person in an official capacity.

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**Actions.**

Officials shall master both the rules of the sport, and the correct procedures to enforce the rules and regulations, and shall exercise authority and discipline in an impartial, firm, fair, and controlled manner.

- Officials shall work with each other and Football Ontario in a constructive and cooperative manner
- Officials shall uphold the **dignity** of the sport in all interactions with athletes, coaches, team managers, scorekeepers, timekeepers, judges, referees, convenors, tournament organizers, and spectators.
- Officials shall prepare themselves both, physically, mentally, and shall wear the approved official's uniform, and shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the **high standards** of the sport, while they are performing their official duties.
- Officials shall be punctual, and **professional** at all times.
- Officials shall remain aware at all times that their conduct influences the respect that the athletes, coaches, other officials, and spectators hold for the sport.
- Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes **sexual harassment**, where it is defined as unwelcome sexual advances or conduct of a sexual nature. This includes behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
- Consumption of alcohol during competitions, events, or activities is prohibited.