

Code of Ethics
NCAA Division I Program Membership Divisions
of the
U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association

INTRODUCTION

The NCAA's *Position Statement* introducing the NCAA Track & Field and Cross Country Rulebook states in the paragraph led with "Coaches", "Doing the utmost within the rules to help athletes perform their best, placing honor and team welfare above victory. Acts of dishonesty, unsporting conduct or unprofessional behavior are unacceptable in the sport of track and field and subject to reprimand and/or removal by the referee or meet management."

In addition, members of the Division I Program Membership Divisions of the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) are expected to respect and adhere to all operating by-laws found in the current NCAA Divisional Manual, as well as their respective institution and Conference regulations.

The following "Code of Ethics" expands on the above statements and defines what actions by coaches are deemed ethical both within and outside competition and what actions the "Ethics Committee" might take in instances of breaches of our Code of Ethics and the due process allowed to coaches.

CODE OF ETHICS

It is understood that each and every member of the USTFCCCA Division I Program Membership accepts and agrees to adhere to the following responsibilities of the USTFCCCA Code of Ethics:

Responsibility to Student-Athletes.

Members of the USTFCCCA shall:

- *Place the academic, emotional, physical, and moral well-being of student-athletes above all else.*
- *Maintain strictly professional interpersonal relationships with student-athletes, student-managers, and student-trainers.*
- *Put safety and health considerations above performance strategy, and never force student-athletes to train or compete in situations which might lead to injury.*
- *Refrain from making demands for practice time and ancillary team activities which interfere with student-athletes' opportunities for academic success.*

- *Educate and prohibit any use of performance enhancing and recreational drugs as well as any illegal use of alcohol and tobacco.*
- *Strongly endorse NCAA's efforts to eliminate gambling by student-athletes and coaches.*
- *Respect privacy of student-athletes relating to release of personal information and adhere to institutional, state, and federal privacy guidelines.*

Responsibility to Prospective Student-Athletes.

Members of the USTFCCCA shall:

- *Refrain from any negative recruiting that reflects disapprovingly on another institution, its coach, or student-athletes.*
- *Desist from making any statements or promises to a prospect that, knowingly, cannot be fulfilled.*
- *Respect both written and verbal commitments a prospective student-athlete may make to another institution.*
- *Abstain from any discussion of transfer with any student-athlete from another institution prior to the granting of permission to contact by the student-athlete's institution.*

Responsibility to Fellow Coaches.

Members of the USTFCCCA shall:

- *Conduct one's self in such a way to bring credit to the profession, and exhibit professionalism in all words and actions.*
- *Honor all professional relationships with colleagues, and treat colleagues with dignity and respect.*
- *Notify the head coach of another institution prior to interviewing or offering a position to one of his/her staff members.*
- *Notify the head coach of another institution when a student-athlete from that institution initiates contact regarding a potential transfer.*

Responsibility to the Sports of Track & Field and Cross Country.

In addition to respecting and adhering to all competition rules found in the appropriate rulebook(e.g. NCAA, USATF, IAAF) governing the respective competition, members of the USTFCCCA shall:

- *Conduct all competition within the spirit and intent of the rules of competition.*
- *Submit entry marks with complete honesty and integrity.*
- *Support and respect competition officials and abide by their judgment, refraining from any form of criticism to student-athletes, news media, or the public.*
- *Promote the sport by treating members of the news media and institution sports information personnel with courtesy, honesty, and respect.*

Responsibility to Member's Educational Institution.

Members of the USTFCCCA shall:

- *Support and uphold decisions of academic, admissions, and NCAA compliance personnel and refrain from requesting exceptions.*
- *Accurately represent one's academic and professional qualifications and past affiliations to prospective employers.*

Responsibility of Personal Conduct.

Members of the USTFCCCA shall:

- *Refrain from any behavior which uses the influence of the coach's position for any sexual intimacy between coach and athlete.*
- *Abstain from public demonstrations of profanity, vulgar language, and obscene gestures and discourage the same amongst staff members and student-athletes.*
- *Be aware that any legal felony conviction will constitute a violation of this Code of Ethics.*

ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Ethics Committee shall consist of nine (9) members appointed jointly by the respective Presidents of Division I Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Associations. The make-up of the Committee should reflect similar diversity as the make-up of the body of Division I coaches with respect to gender, ethnicity and race.

Terms shall be for two (2) years and term limit will be two (2) consecutive terms, i.e., four (4) years.

The members of the Ethics Committee will vote for a Chairperson of the Committee, whose election shall take place on alternate years of election of Division I Presidents, and whose term shall be two (2) years, with a term limit of two (2) terms, i.e., four (4) years.

[The initial make-up of the Committee shall include four (4) members whose term limit is one (1) term, and five (5) members whose term limit is two (2) terms, to balance the terms and prevent all terms from expiring in the same year.]

PROCEDURE

The following are the general procedures involved in administering the USTFCCCA Code of Ethics:

1. An ethical complaint is brought to the attention of Chair of the Ethics Committee in writing by the complainant.
2. Only a member of the USTFCCCA may bring ethical charges against a Division I Program Membership Divisions member. In the case of criminally charged offenses, the Association itself will be considered the complainant.
3. A preliminary evaluation of the nature of the complaint will be conducted by the Chair of the Ethics Committee, the President of the respective Sport of the USTFCCCA, and the CEO or his/her designee. If the complaint is found to represent a potential ethical violation, it is immediately sent to the full Ethics Committee, and notification by certified mail of the action and specific charges are sent in writing to the accused coach. An invitation to respond is included, with a reasonable time frame for the accused to present a written response. It is possible that the initial screening process may decide that no ethical violation has occurred. If so, the Chair of the Ethics Committee will so inform the complainant immediately following such a decision.
4. Following a reasonable opportunity for written response, the committee may choose to:
 - a. Accept the response. No further action. Notify the complainant.
 - b. Propose simple disciplinary action, (likely to be accepted by the accused). Accused is notified, and may accept proposal, or may insist upon a full hearing.
 - c. Schedule a full hearing for the complaint. In this case, a full written explanation of the hearing process and place, time, etc. will be mailed to the accused.
5. Ethical complaints brought by one member against another that are found to be essentially of a spurious nature, will itself be considered to be a very serious breach of

ethical conduct, and will be an automatic complaint. This is meant specifically to prevent "nuisance" complaints, or issues arising from personal animosities.

6. Should the accused party wish to appeal, such appeal request must be submitted to the President of the respective Division of USTFCCCA, and the appeal board will be the Board of Directors of the USTFCCCA. The appeal will be heard at the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting or on a conference call convened for that purpose. The same procedures will then be followed as for the formal hearing by the Ethics Committee. Any member of the Ethics Committee who is also a member of the USTFCCCA Board of Directors shall be excused from this appeal process.

"DUE PROCESS" FOR CASES OF ETHICAL MISCONDUCT

Definitions:

Due Process is the procedure that ensures that when a member of USTFCCCA is charged with an violation of the Code of Ethics, his rights are protected in the following manner:

- The member will receive notice, in writing, of those specific offenses with which charged.
- The member will have an opportunity to defend oneself, and reasonable period of time to prepare that defense.
- The member has the right to be represented by legal counsel at his/her own expense.
- The member has a right to a hearing before an objective body, the USTFCCCA Ethics Committee, at a specific time that will allow full opportunity to present a defense.
- The member will be informed on procedure to appeal the decision, if the judgment is against.

AUTHORITY OF THE ETHICS COMMITTEE TO IMPOSE PENALTIES

In the case of a decision that an Ethics Violation has occurred, the Ethics Committee may impose penalty(s) from among the following options:

1. Letter of reminder of ethical conduct to the member.
2. Letter of reprimand directly to the offending member.
3. Letter of reprimand to the offending member, with copies to the athletic director and president of the coach's institution.
4. Letter of reprimand to the offending member, with copies to the athletic director and president of the coach's institution, along with temporary suspension of USTFCCCA voting privileges and eligibility for coaching awards for a defined period of time.

5. Letter of reprimand to the offending member, with copies to the athletic director and president of the coach's institution, along with indefinite suspension of USTFCCCA voting privileges and eligibility for coaching awards to be reviewed at a future time.

It is understood that the above are representative penalties only, and may be modified to appropriately fit any situation of ethical violation, by the Ethics Committee, and that they are presented in order of severity.