

TTAGA
Coaches Code of Ethics and Best Practice
2009

Introduction

Coaches are expected to conform to ethical standards in a number of areas: [humanity](#), [relationships](#), [commitment](#), [co-operation](#), [integrity](#), [advertising](#), [confidentiality](#), [abuse of privilege](#), [safety](#) and [competence](#).

Humanity

Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and their ultimate right to self-determination. Specifically, coaches must treat everyone equitably and sensitively, within the context of their activity and ability, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion or political affiliation.

Relationship

The good coach will be concerned primarily with the well-being, safety, protection and future of the individual gymnast or athlete. There must be a balance between the development of performance and the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the individual.

A key element in a coaching relationship is the development of independence. Gymnasts or athletes must be encouraged and guided to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance in training, in competition, and in their domestic, academic or business life.

Coaches are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with their gymnast or athletes. This is particularly important when the gymnast or athlete is a young person. The coach must realise that certain situations or friendly words and actions could be misinterpreted, not only by the gymnast or athlete, but also by outsiders (or other members of a squad or group of gymnast or athletes) motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust, and could lead to allegations of misconduct or impropriety.

Where physical contact between coach and gymnast or athlete is a necessary part of the coaching process, coaches must ensure that no action on their part could be misconstrued and that any TTAGA/FIG guidelines on this matter are followed.

The relationship between coach and gymnast or athlete relies heavily on mutual trust and respect. This means that the gymnast or athlete should be made aware of the coach's Qualifications and experience, and must be given the opportunity to consent to or decline proposals for training, performance or competition.

Commitment

Coaches should clarify in advance with gymnast or athletes (and/or employers) the number of sessions, fees (if any) and method of payment. They should explore with gymnast or athletes (and/or employers) the expectation of the outcome of coaching. Written contracts may be appropriate in some circumstances.

Coaches have a responsibility to declare to their gymnast or athletes and/or employers any other current coaching commitments. They should also find out if any prospective client is receiving instruction from another teacher/coach. If so, the teacher/coach should be contacted to discuss the situation.

Coaches who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their gymnast or athletes, and their obligation to TTAGA, (or other organisations employing them); must make explicit to all parties concerned the nature of the conflict, and the loyalties and responsibilities involved.

Coaches should expect a similar level of reciprocal commitment from their gymnast or athletes. In particular, the gymnast or athlete (parent/guardian in the case of a minor) should inform the coach of any change in circumstances that might affect the coach/gymnast or athlete relationship.

Coaches should receive appropriate acknowledgment for their contribution to the gymnast or athlete's progress and achievement. Where money is earned from performances, it is reasonable to expect the coach should receive an appropriate share of the rewards. Such apportionment with any attendant conditions should be agreed in advance (in writing) to avoid any misunderstanding.

Co-operation

Coaches should communicate and co-operate with other sports and allied professions in the best interests of their gymnast or athletes. An example of such contact could be the seeking of:

- educational and career counselling for young gymnast or athletes whose involvement in sport impinges upon their studies
- Sport science advice through the Olympic Committee or other relevant authority.

- Coaches must communicate and co-operate with registered medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their gymnast or athletes' medical and psychological problems.

Integrity

Coaches must not encourage gymnast or athletes to violate the rules of their sport. They should actively seek to discourage and condemn such action and encourage gymnast or athletes to obey the spirit of the rules.

Coaches must not compromise their gymnast or athletes by advocating measures that could constitute unfair advantage. They must not adopt practices to accelerate performance improvement that might jeopardise the safety, total well-being and future participation of the gymnast or athlete. Coaches must never advocate or condone the use of prohibited drugs or other banned performance enhancing substances.

Coaches must ensure that the activities, training and competition programs they advocate and direct are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual gymnast or athlete.

Coaches must treat opponents with due respect, both in victory and defeat, and should encourage their gymnast or athletes to act in a similar manner. A key role for a coach is to prepare gymnast or athletes to respond to success and failure in a dignified manner.

Coaches must accept responsibility for the conduct of their gymnast or athletes and discourage inappropriate behaviour in training, competition, and away from the sporting arena.

Advertising

Advertising by coaches in respect of qualifications, training and/or services must be accurate. Coaches must be able to present evidence of current qualifications upon request. Evidence should also be available to support any claim associated with the promotion of their services.

Coaches must not display any affiliation with an organisation in a manner that falsely implies sponsorship or accreditation by that organisation.

Confidentiality

Coaches inevitably gather a great deal of personal information about gymnast or athletes in the course of a working relationship. Coach and gymnast or athlete must reach agreement about what is to be regarded as confidential information (i.e. not divulged to a third party without the express approval of the gymnast or athlete).

Confidentiality does not preclude the disclosure of information about a gymnast or athlete to persons who can be judged to have a right to know. For example:

- Evaluation for competitive selection purposes
- Recommendations for employment
- In pursuit of disciplinary action involving gymnast or athletes within the sport
- In pursuit of disciplinary action by a sports organisation against one of its members
- Legal and medical requirements for disclosure
- Recommendations to parents/family where the health and safety of gymnast or athletes might be at stake
- In pursuit of action to protect children from abuse

Abuse of Privilege

The Coach is privileged to have regular contact with gymnast or athletes and occasionally to travel and reside with gymnast or athletes in the course of coaching and competitive practice. A coach must not attempt to exert undue influence over the gymnast or athlete in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.

Coaches must consistently display high personal standards and project a favourable image of their sport and of coaching to gymnast or athletes, their parents/families, other coaches, officials, spectators, the media and the public.

Personal appearance is a matter of individual taste but the sports coach has an obligation to project an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency.

Coaches should never smoke while coaching.

Coaches should not drink alcohol so soon before coaching that it would affect their competence to coach, compromise the safety of the gymnast or athletes or obviously indicate they had been drinking (e.g. smell of alcohol on breath).

Safety

Within the limits of their control, coaches have a responsibility to ensure as far as possible the safety of the gymnast or athletes with whom they work

All reasonable steps should be taken to establish a safe working environment.

The work done and the manner in which it is done should be in keeping with the regular and approved practice with their sport as determined by TTAGA/FIG.

The activity undertaken should be suitable for the age, physical and emotional maturity, experience and ability of the gymnast or athletes.

Coaches have a responsibility to protect children from harm and abuse.

The gymnast or athletes should have been systematically prepared for the activity and made aware, (Parents /Guardian in the case of a minor); of their personal responsibilities in terms of safety.

Coaches should arrange adequate insurance to cover all aspects of their coaching practice to the extent that it is commercially available.

Competence

Coaches shall confine themselves to practice in those elements of sport for which their training and competence is recognised by TTAGA. Training includes the accumulation of knowledge and skills through formal coach education courses, independent research and the accumulation of relevant verifiable experience.

The approved TTAGA/FIG coaching awards provide the framework for assessing competence at the different levels of coaching practice. Competence to coach should normally be verified through evidence of qualifications. Competence cannot be inferred solely from evidence of prior experience. (Local Qualification Structure to be developed and implemented).

Coaches should be able to recognise and accept when to refer gymnast or athletes to other coaches or agencies. It is their responsibility, as far as possible, to verify the competence and integrity of any other person to whom they refer a gymnast or athlete.

Coaches should regularly seek ways of increasing their personal and professional development.

Coaches should welcome evaluation of their work by colleagues and be able to account to gymnast or athletes, employers, TTAGA and colleagues for what they do and why.

Coaches have a responsibility to themselves and their gymnast or athletes to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and abilities. They should recognise when their personal resources are so depleted that help is needed. This may necessitate the withdrawal from coaching temporarily or permanently.