

The ABCA Code of Ethics

First and foremost, the ABCA strives for sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity to the highest degree. On June 29, 1945, 27 coaches formed the American Association of College Baseball Coaches, which eventually became the American Baseball Coaches Association. At that first meeting in New York City, those founding fathers stated that coaching ethics were of utmost importance. Proper sportsmanship and ethical conduct in coaching established at that first meeting in 1945, certainly continues today as the ABCA's highest priority.

PREAMBLE: The next and following generations will be the stewards of our great game of baseball. More importantly, they will be the caretakers of our families, communities, and nation. The present and future well-being of our society will depend on men and women of high moral character who will demonstrate and live out the virtues of honesty, integrity, respect and personal responsibility. Recognizing that these and all other ethical values do not develop automatically in our players, the ABCA will make a deliberate and conscious effort to assist them in developing the values and ideals necessary for moral decision making and conduct. This stated goal is best achieved through the over 6,000 ABCA coaches and members. The single most important variable in promoting ethical conduct on the baseball field is the coach.

PURPOSE: The Code of Ethics has been written to protect and promote the best interests of the game of baseball and the coaching profession. It seeks to define what are right and ethical practices and what practices are wrong and detrimental. The principles and articles herein reflect the foundation of democratic society; in particular, honesty, integrity, respect, discipline, personal responsibility, fairness and loyalty. Additionally, these virtues reflect the highest calling of baseball coaches and players.

The ultimate success of the principles and articles of this Code depends on those for whom it has been established-the baseball coaches.

PRINCIPLE I: Responsibility to Players; Officials; Parents; Fans

ARTICLE A: Players

1. Always place the academic, emotional, physical and moral well-being of your players above desires and pressures to win.
2. The rules of baseball are clear. Any attempt to circumvent these rules to take unfair advantage of an opponent, or teach deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct has no place in coaching baseball.

3. The coach shall set the example for example for winning without boasting and losing without bitterness and thus earn the respect of his players.
4. The coach shall discourage and disallow the use of illegal or performance enhancing drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
5. The coach shall not permit any player to make unsportsmanlike or uncomplimentary remarks to opponents, umpires, or spectators. Taunting, boasting, and fighting demean individuals and the sport of baseball.
6. The coach shall discourage and disallow profanity, obscenities, and vulgar language from players, coaches, and all others associated with the team. Civil and respectful language is a mark of manhood and maturity.
7. The coach shall advocate and promote the value of education over and beyond the desire for professional stardom.
8. The coach shall not make demands on his players that will interfere with the players' opportunities for achieving academic success.
9. The coach shall recognize, address, and educate against harmful personal practices that may involve the players, e.g., drug, alcohol and tobacco addiction; unwise friends and places; misuse of power; and physical and mental abuse.
10. The coach shall take immediate disciplinary action when a player's on or off the field behavior is considered egregious. The integrity and reputation of the team, institution, and the sport of baseball must be protected.

ARTICLE B: Officials

1. The coach shall respect and support the umpires, scorers, public address announcers and others charged with conducting the game. On and off the record criticism of officials to players of the public is unethical.
2. The coach shall not permit anyone on his team to address uncomplimentary remarks to any official during a game, or to indulge in conduct which might incite players or spectators against the officials.

ARTICLE C: Parents

1. The coach shall treat the parents and family of his players with respect; be clear about your expectations, goals and policies and maintain open communication.
2. The coach shall be candid with players and parents about the likelihood of getting a scholarship or playing on a professional level.

ARTICLE D: Fans

1. The coach shall strive to educate the home fans to be respectful and courteous to the opponents while still maintaining enthusiasm and support for their team.
2. The coach shall be responsible, within reason, for the conduct of his team's fans and refrain from arousing the crowd by his conduct.

PRINCIPLE II: Responsibility to the Institution

ARTICLE A: Institutional Integrity

1. The coach shall conduct himself so as to uphold and maintain the integrity and dignity of his institution.
2. The coach shall discuss problems with his athletic director and/or other superiors in a professional manner, and then accept and support decisions that have been reached.

ARTICLE B: Academic Integrity

1. The coach shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give players consideration they do not deserve.
2. The coach shall not exert pressure on the Admissions Office to admit players who are not qualified.

PRINCIPLE III: Responsibility to the Rules and Integrity of Baseball

ARTICLE A: Rules

1. The coach shall maintain a thorough knowledge of the rules of the game and assure that his players know and understand the rules.

2. The coach shall require his players to know and abide by the letter and the spirit of all baseball rules and those relating to eligibility, recruitment, transfers, practices and other provisions regulating their competition.

ARTICLE B: Integrity of the Game

1. The coach shall communicate to his players a respect and reverence for the grand history of baseball and instruct them never to knowingly bring shame or dishonor to the game.
2. The coach shall not allow himself, or his players, to gamble on professional or intercollegiate baseball games.

PRINCIPLE IV: Professional Responsibility

ARTICLE A: Recruiting

1. The coach shall strictly observe all institutional, conference and national regulatory body rules and policies.
2. The coach shall not attempt to recruit a player enrolled at another institution unless properly authorized according to legislation.
3. The coach, or his players, shall not attempt to recruit players from another academic institution during summer baseball.
4. The coach shall not participate in negative recruiting against another coach, institution, or its players. Derogatory statements toward other coaches, players, or schools are considered unethical.
5. The coach shall not make any statements to prospective students which, knowingly, cannot be fulfilled.
6. The coach shall respect both the written and verbal commitment a student/athlete makes to another institution. It is considered unethical to urge or suggest a young man break his word.

ARTICLE B: Relationships

1. The coach shall maintain appropriate professional relationships with student/athletes, managers, and trainers and respect proper coach/player boundaries.
2. The coach shall treat news media with courtesy, honesty, and respect.

3. The coach shall teach his players how to conduct themselves in interviews in the best interest of the team and the game.
4. The coach shall instruct his players that any disciplinary, academic, or personal problems are “family affairs” and not to be made public.
5. The coach shall not be associated in any way with professional gamblers and should not be present where gambling on team sports is encouraged or permitted.
6. The coach shall act toward other coaches in a manner characterized by courtesy, good faith, and respect.
7. The coach shall help develop the baseball coaching profession by exchanging knowledge and experiences with colleagues, athletes and students while being a participant, course facilitator or master coach in courses and internships.
8. The coach shall uphold his or her responsibility to coaching by bringing inconsistent or unethical behavior of others to the attention of appropriate regulatory committees in a manner consistent with this code, but only if informal resolution or correcting the situation is not appropriate or possible.

PRINCIPLE V: Personal Responsibility

ARTICLE A: Trustworthiness

1. The coach shall model high ideals of sportsmanship and always pursue victory with honor while teaching and advocating good character.
2. The coach shall strive to be himself worthy of trust while teaching his players the importance of integrity, honesty, reliability, and loyalty.

ARTICLE B: Respect

1. The coach shall treat all people with respect at all times and require the same of the players.
2. The coach shall not engage in, or permit, profanity, vulgarities, obscene gestures, trash talking, taunting, boastful celebration, or other actions that demean individuals, or the sport of baseball, or reflect badly on the team and institution.

3. The coach shall use positive coaching methods to increase players' self-esteem and enjoyment, and to foster a love and appreciation for baseball. He shall refrain from physical or psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, and any conduct that is demeaning to players.

ARTICLE C: Conduct

1. The coach shall refrain from the use of tobacco and alcohol in front of his players.
2. The coach shall be mindful that he is a role model with high visibility great influence, and consistently conduct himself in private and coaching situations in a manner that exemplifies what he expects from his players.
3. The coach shall accurately represent his academic and coaching qualifications, experience, and past affiliations.

ARTICLE D: Fairness and Caring

1. The coach shall be fair in selecting a team, competitive situations, disciplinary issues, and all other matters, and be open-minded and willing to listen and learn.
2. The coach shall consistently demonstrate concern for his players as individuals and encourage them to look out for one another.
3. The coach shall put safety and health considerations above the desire to win, and never permit players to intentionally injure an opponent or engage in reckless behavior that might cause injury to themselves or others.

The ABCA Code of Ethics was unanimously approved by the Board of Directors on June 18, 2005, in Omaha, Nebraska.

ABCA STATEMENT ON SPORTSMANSHIP, VALUES, AND IDEALS

Whereas: We believe that coaches are among the strongest influences on a young person's moral and ethical development; and

Whereas: We believe that the highest calling of a baseball coach is to teach and model the character traits of honesty, integrity, respect, and personal responsibility; and

Whereas: We believe that honorable athletic competition in baseball provides rigid and voluntary rules of right and wrong that can lead to strong character development among our players; and

Whereas: We believe that a baseball coach's moral and ethical conduct, on and off the field (i.e., recruiting, academic, fairness to all team personnel) will deeply influence his players;

THEREFORE: We strongly encourage all members of the **AMERICAN BASEBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION** to place the highest priority on teaching and modeling the moral and ethical values of **HONESTY, INTEGRITY, RESPECT, DISCIPLINE, PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, FAIRNESS, AND LOYALTY.**

The ABCA Statement on Sportsmanship, Values and Ideals was unanimously approved by the Board of Directors on June 15, 2003, in Omaha, Nebraska.