

STUDENT-ATHLETE: CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

As valued members of the Ohio Athletics Department, it is our goal to assist student-athletes in attaining a quality education and earning a degree. Student-athletes at Ohio University are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that best represents their team and the institution, while being productive members of both the campus and surrounding communities. It is their responsibility to exhibit behaviors that enable them to make the most of the academic and athletics opportunities afforded to them.

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right, and is subject to NCAA and MAC rules and regulations. To earn and maintain that privilege, all student-athletes must adhere to the Ohio Athletics Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, as well as the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct. The intent of this Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy is to define the department's standards and expectations of the student-athletes that represent Ohio University.

As Ohio University's most visible ambassadors, student-athletes at Ohio University are expected to uphold, at all times, high standards of integrity and behavior, reflecting well upon themselves, their families, coaches, teammates, the Department of Athletics and Ohio University.

Encouraging Good Sportsmanlike Conduct

Good sportsmanlike conduct means more than the absence of negative actions in public. Each Head Coach is responsible for providing program and departmental student-athlete conduct expectations:

- Techniques for communicating with officials and opponents on routine matters during athletic contests.
- Techniques for maintaining control during emotionally charged situations, including assisting a teammate or colleague who appears to be losing control.
- Techniques for reacting in a positive manner to an aggressive action by an individual or a group.

Instruction should also define actions that constitute unacceptable conduct and include techniques for avoiding such behavior. Actions viewed as inappropriate include:

- Physical or verbal abuse of officials, coaches, opponents, or spectators.
- Throwing of objects.
- Unauthorized seizure of equipment from officials or the media.
- Inciting players or spectators to negative actions or to any behavior that insults or defiles an opponent's tradition.
- Use of obscene or otherwise inappropriate language or gestures.
- Making public statements which are negative, controversial, or outside ICA's media policy.
- Participating in any action that violates the generally recognized ethical standards of intercollegiate athletics or of the university.

Community Expectations

Student-athletes are expected to respect the rights of others, and to abide by all rules and regulations of Ohio University, the MAC, and the NCAA. Failure to do so may result in suspension from the team and/or from Ohio University through the Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility. Scholarship student-athletes risk having all or part of their financial aid revoked for violations of this code. A student-athlete may appeal disciplinary action from the Athletic Department if he/she believes his/her situation presents special circumstances by which he/she believes the assigned sanctions to be manifestly unfair or there is significant evidence that would justify a different outcome (see Appeal of Disciplinary Action).

Student-athletes, as citizens of Ohio University and the Athens community, are expected to abide by the laws of the United States, the state of Ohio, and the city of Athens. Because it is expected that the behavior of student-athletes shall at all times reflect the high standards of honor and dignity that characterize participation in competitive sports at Ohio University, student-athletes may be subjected to Athletic Department discipline for such acts that violate the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, regardless of where and when the acts are committed and regardless if any other disciplinary, criminal or legal action is taken against the student-athlete. The university does, in addition, reserve the right, for educational purposes, to review any action taken by civil authorities regarding student-athletes behavior.

In addition to obeying all federal, state and local laws, student-athletes shall not participate in any gambling activities involving intercollegiate or professional athletics. They shall not solicit or accept any bet, wager any item of tangible value or provide information to individuals involved in athletic gambling activities.

Any behavior exhibiting racial, ethnic, religious or sexual harassment is prohibited. Physical or verbal abuse or offensive behavior will not be tolerated. “A just community committed to diversity acknowledges the uniqueness of the individual and her/his socio-cultural context, and provides systems and structures to support and promote the full, fair, and respected participation of all members. It holds as paramount the dignity of all people. It strives for acceptance, participation, and interdependence” (*Ohio University Statement on Hate Motivated Behavior*).

Hazing

Any form of hazing related to participation on any intercollegiate athletics team or other campus related group will not be condoned nor tolerated. According to Ohio Revised Code 2903.31, Hazing is defined as “doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into a student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person.” For additional information, please see the Ohio University Statement on Hazing, <http://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/process/hazing.cfm>.

Social Media & Electronic Communications

Student-Athletes are responsible for information contained in written or electronic transmissions (e.g., email) and any information posted in a public domain, e.g., internet, chat room, Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, MySpace (*see Ohio Policy & Procedure 91.003: Computer and Network Use: <http://www.ohio.edu/policy/91-003.html>*).

Student-athletes are not precluded from participation in such online social networks or cyber communities. However, student-athletes are reminded that they serve as representatives of Ohio University and, as such, student-athletes' sites are reflective of themselves, their team, their coach, the Department of Athletics and Ohio University.

Inappropriate or embarrassing information or pictures will not be posted to any public domain. Displaying indiscreet or hurtful comments about student-athletes, coaches, teams, administrators and/or the Department of Athletics will not be tolerated. Upon request, a student-athlete will grant access for coaches and/or department administrators to view his/her account.

Prohibited Use or Possession of Alcohol and Other Drugs

The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances on a team trip or during any team-related function is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to travel to and from an athletics event, before or after an athletics contest, during team gatherings and any time the team is together in an official capacity.

The use or sale of illegal drugs is prohibited. The possession and consumption of alcohol by persons under the age of 21 is illegal and is prohibited.

Notification Requirements

Student-athletes are expected to communicate to their Head Coach any violation of law and/or university policy within twelve (12) hours of the incident. For violations that occur outside of the Athens community area, such as during a vacation period, student-athletes are expected to communicate with the Head Coach within 24 hours of the incident. The Head Coach will immediately notify the Sport Supervisor and may also notify the Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility. Failure of the student-athlete to communicate such an incident may result in additional disciplinary action from the Athletics Department.

Ohio Athletics Disciplinary Policy

Student-athletes shall conduct themselves with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, Ohio University and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports (*NCAA Bylaw 10.01.1*).

Failure to meet any of the Student-Athlete Code of Responsibility, the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct and/or the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct may result in termination of your status as a student-athlete and cancellation or gradation of your financial aid (see NCAA Bylaws 15.3.4 and 15.3.5).

Violations of the Ohio Athletics Student-Athlete Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action, above and beyond what action may be taken by the Office Community Standards and Student Responsibility on behalf of the institution. Please see the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct for more information: www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/code/index.cfm

Violations are categorized into levels based on the severity of the offense, and the corresponding discipline action will reflect the circumstances and severity of the offense. The Executive Senior

Associate Athletic Director, in consultation with the Director of Community Standards & Student Responsibility, will determine the appropriate level of offense.

A student-athlete may appeal disciplinary action if he/she believes the assigned sanctions are inappropriate, and/or if the student-athlete presents new evidence which suggests that he/she did not violate the Student Code of Conduct and/or this policy or if he/she believes a procedural defect occurred (*see* Appeal of Disciplinary Action). Individual team policies may result in a greater, but not lesser, penalty than what is described herein.

The number of suspended competitions will be based upon the number of scheduled NCAA contests and will be served during the championship season. Suspension's will be appropriate and may carry over to the next competitive season.

All departmental disciplinary penalties will be enforced at a time that reflects appropriate due process considerations. This determination will be made in consultation between the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director and Head Coach and will be approved by the Athletics Director.

Level 1 - University-identified Code B Offenses

In addition to University determined sanctions:

- Verbal and Written Reprimands. The minimum response for Code B offenses will be a verbal reprimand from the coach and/or a written reprimand from the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director. A meeting between the student-athlete, the Head Coach, the Sport Supervisor and the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director may be required.
- Suspension. Conduct which could result in suspension from participation in intercollegiate athletics will be determined based upon the severity of the offense, the student-athlete's behavioral history and the individual situation. Such a decision will be made in consultation between the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director and the Head Coach. If the parties are unable to agree on an appropriate sanction, the decision of the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director will prevail.

Violations may result in a suspension of up to 25% of the NCAA authorized athletics contests, depending upon the severity of the offense (standard rounding rules apply [e.g., 1.5 = 2 games]).

- Parental Notification. The Head Coach may require that the student-athletes parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are notified. This phone call must be made in accordance with FERPA and Ohio University Policy and Procedure.
- Appeals. Appeals may be directed to the Athletic Director. The decision of the Athletic Director is final.

Level 2 - University-identified Code A Offenses

In addition to University determined sanctions:

- **Verbal and Written Reprimands.** The minimum response for Code A offenses will be a written reprimand from the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director and/or a meeting between the student-athlete, the Head Coach, the Sport Supervisor and the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director.
- **Suspension.** Conduct which could result in suspension from participation in intercollegiate athletics will be determined based upon the severity of the offense, the student-athlete's behavioral history and the individual situation. Such a decision will be made in consultation between the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director and Head Coach. If the parties are unable to agree on an appropriate sanction, the decision of the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director will prevail.

Violations may result in a suspension of up to 100% of NCAA authorized athletics contests, depending upon the severity of the offense (standard rounding rules apply [e.g., 1.5 = 2 games]).

- **Post-Suspension Probation.** At the conclusion of the period of suspension, the student-athlete may be placed on athletic probation. A subsequent offense of the same nature at any time during the student-athlete's career may result in further suspension and/or loss of athletics aid, or dismissal from the team. The Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director and Head Coach will review each case based on the facts presented. If the parties are unable to agree on an appropriate sanction, the decision of the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director will prevail.
- **Parental Notification.** The Head Coach will ensure that the student-athletes parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are notified. This phone call must be made in accordance with FERPA and Ohio University Policy and Procedure.
- **Appeals.** Appeals may be directed to Athletic Director. The decision of Athletic Director is final.

Appeal of Disciplinary Action

Appeals may be filed for the following reasons:

- inappropriate sanction;
- procedural defect in application of the sanction(s) under this policy; and/or
- new evidence

1) **Inappropriate sanction.** A student-athlete may appeal disciplinary action if he/she believes the assigned sanctions are inappropriate. A sanction will be deemed inappropriate only where there is demonstrated abuse of discretion by the sanctioning authority. Individual team policies may result in a greater, but not lesser, penalty than what is described herein.

2) Procedural defect. A student-athlete may appeal disciplinary action if the prescribed process for imposing disciplinary sanctions was not followed.

3) New evidence. A student-athlete may appeal disciplinary action if the new evidence is found to be substantial enough to indicate that the student-athlete did not violate the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct and/or this policy.

To appeal a disciplinary decision, the student-athlete must request a meeting with the Athletic Director, in writing, within two business days of notification of disciplinary action. Once the request for appeal is granted, a meeting between the Athletic Director, the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director, the Head Coach and the student-athlete will be scheduled as soon as is practical.

The Athletic Director will examine the information provided by the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director and the student-athlete, and will either uphold the recommendation of the Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director or take action that is deemed more appropriate. Such action could include implementing a more or less-restrictive disciplinary sanction or rescinding the disciplinary sanction altogether. The Athletic Director will have up to ten (10) days from the meeting to make a decision.

All sanctions originally levied may remain in place during the appellate process. The decision of the Athletic Director is final. No further appeal of disciplinary sanctions is available.

Policy Review

This policy is subject to review by the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct Review and Standards Committee. The frequency of the review will be determined by the President or his/her designee.