



Code of Conduct

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure a safe and positive environment within VMFL by making all Coaches and game day personnel, (including Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Associate Coaches, game commissioners, managers and trainers) aware that there is an expectation of appropriate behavior at all times.
2. Conduct that violates this Code of Conduct may result in the removal or suspension of the person.

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

3. This Code of Conduct applies to all team sideline personnel relating to conduct that may arise during the course of VMFL business, activities and events, including but not limited to, office environment, competitions, practices, games, tournaments, training camps, travel, and any meetings.
4. This policy applies to conduct that may occur outside of VMFL business and events when such conduct adversely affects relationships within the VMFL and its work and sport environment and is detrimental to the image and reputation of the VMFL.

RESPONSIBILITIES

5. All persons above will comply with the following:
Maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of VMFL Members and other individuals by:
 - a) Demonstrating respect to individuals regardless of body type, physical characteristics, athletic ability, gender, ancestry, color, ethnic or racial origin, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, age, marital status, religion, religious belief, political belief, disability or economic status;
 - i. Acting, when appropriate, to prevent or correct practices that are unjustly discriminatory; and
 - ii. Consistently treating individuals fairly and reasonably.
 - b) Refrain from any behavior that constitutes harassment, where harassment is defined as comment or conduct directed towards an individual or group, which is offensive, abusive, racist, sexist, degrading or malicious. Types of behavior that constitute harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Written or verbal abuse, threats or outbursts;
 - ii. The display of visual material which is offensive or which one ought to know is offensive;
 - iii. Unwelcome remarks, jokes, comments, innuendos or taunts;
 - iv. Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures;



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- v. Condescending or patronizing behavior which is intended to undermine self-esteem, diminish performance or adversely affect working conditions;
 - vi. Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, endanger a person's safety or negatively affect performance;
 - vii. Any form of hazing;
 - viii. Unwanted physical contact including touching, petting, pinching or kissing;
 - ix. Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, requests or invitations;
 - x. Physical or sexual assault;
 - xi. Behaviors such as those described above that are not directed towards individuals or groups but have the same effect of creating a negative or hostile environment; or
 - xii. Retaliation or threats of retaliation against an individual who reports harassment.
- c) Refrain from any behavior that constitutes sexual harassment, where sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual comments and sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or conduct of a sexual nature. Types of behavior that constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Sexist jokes;
 - ii. Display of sexually offensive material;
 - iii. Sexually degrading words used to describe a person;
 - iv. Inquiries or comments about a person's sex life;
 - v. Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions;
 - vi. Persistent unwanted contact;
 - vii. Sexual assault.
- d) Creating an atmosphere of good sportsmanship and respect for the players to develop within;
- e) Giving all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem;
- f) All team personnel must abide by the rules and policies as set out in the VMFL handbook.
- g) Team Personnel are to familiarize themselves with the rules, techniques and strategies of football. In addition, they should strive to be a positive role model for the players.
- h) Never openly criticize players, coaches, parents, officials or association members. Team Personnel must reserve constructive criticism for private meetings arranged with appropriate party(s).
- i) Agree to follow directives issued by the Association and VMFL Executive Board and/or Coaches Committee whether written or verbal.
- j) Use of tobacco products, drugs or alcoholic beverages is prohibited on game or practice fields or near or around players of the team.



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- k) In the case of adults, avoid consuming alcohol in situations where minors are present, and take reasonable steps to manage the responsible consumption of alcoholic beverages in adult-oriented social situations associated with VMFL events
- l) Team Personnel will not allow an ineligible or injured player to participate in practices or games.
- m) Team Personnel agree to inform the association president or Coaches Committee of any challenges with a player or parent immediately as the incident arises.
- n) The use of profanity or abusive language toward a player, official, parent, volunteer, or spectator is prohibited at all times.
- o) Team Personnel will abide by home association and park rules when playing opposing teams at visiting parks.
- p) Team Personnel are to check and ensure all players are fit and properly equipped before allowing them to participate in a practice or game.
- q) Team Personnel will read and acknowledge the responsibilities as stated in the VMFL Policy Manual attached to this document.
- r) Refrain from the use of power or authority in an attempt to coerce another person to engage in inappropriate activities.
- s) Respect the property of others and not willfully cause damage.
- t) Abstain from the non-medical use of drugs or the use of performance-enhancing drugs or methods.
- u) Comply at all times with the Constitution, Bylaws, policies, rules and regulations of the VMFL, as adopted and amended from time to time.
- v) Adhere to all Federal, Provincial, or Municipal laws.

ADDITIONAL COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6. The principle of respect for all participants challenges coaches to act in a manner respectful of the dignity of all participants in Football. Fundamental to this principle is the basic assumption that each person has value and is worthy of respect.
- 7. In addition to paragraph 5 above, Coaches have additional responsibilities. The athlete-coach relationship is a privileged one and plays a critical role in the personal as well as athletic development of their athletes. Coaches must understand and respect the inherent power imbalance that exists in this relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it. Coaches will at all times:
 - a) Be aware of significant pressure in a players' life, e.g. school, family, and financial pressure, and coach in a manner that fosters positive life experiences.
 - b) Be acutely aware of the power in coaching relationships and, therefore, avoid intimacy with players, both during coaching and during that period following coaching when imbalance in power could jeopardize effective decision-making.
 - c) At no time engage in an intimate or sexual relationship with an athlete of under the age of 18 years.



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- d) Abstain from and refuse to tolerate in others all forms of harassment and loss of self-esteem.
 - e) Act toward players, other coaches, parents and officials in a manner characterized by courtesy, good faith and respect.
 - f) Recognize and address harmful personal practices of others in football, e.g. drugs and alcohol, physical and mental abuse, and misuse of power.
 - g) Strive to be fully present, physically and mentally, in the performance of coaching duties.
 - h) Ensure players train and perform in suitable and safe settings.
 - i) Act in the best interest of the player development as a whole person.
 - j) Be honest, sincere and honorable in all relationships with players, parents, officials and other coaches.
 - k) No use of Tobacco products around the team or field.
 - l) Ensure a safe environment by selecting activities and establishing controls that are suitable for the age, experience, ability and fitness level of athletes, including educating athletes as to their responsibilities in contributing to a safe environment;
 - m) Prepare athletes systematically and progressively, using appropriate time frames and monitoring physical and psychological adjustments while refraining from using training methods or techniques that may harm athletes;
 - n) Avoid compromising the present and future health of athletes by communicating and cooperating with sport medicine professionals in the diagnosis, treatment and management of athletes' medical and psychological problems;
8. The Coaching staff is under the direction of the Head Coach; all other coaches will be considered Assistant Coaches.
9. The Head Coach will:
- a) Be responsible for the players of his/her team and will make sure all players are picked up or other arrangements are made before the Head Coach shall leave the park, both practice and games.
 - b) In the absence of the Head Coach, appoint an Acting Head Coach for any VMFL game.
 - c) Assume responsibility for the actions and behavior of all his/her Assistant Coaches.
 - d) Have final responsibility for his/her actions, also of his/her Assistant Coaches, players, staff and parents. They are also responsible for any and all misconduct by anyone on their sidelines before, during and after a game, including but not limited to taunting, fighting, and verbal abuse of officials. These actions can result in game suspensions by either the league commissioner or the VMFL Executive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

10. I have read and understand the items in this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the provision as they are set forth in this document. I have also read, understand and agree to the VMFL 'Coaches Responsibilities' as written above.



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11. I understand that non-compliance to the Code of Conduct can result in my suspension, removal or further action taken by the VMFL Executive.