



# Pursuing Victory With Honor

■ ARIZONA SPORTS SUMMIT ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES ■

The Accord is not a static document, but a plan of action. Here are some strategies for *achieving* the Accord's lofty goals. These strategies are suggestions only; they are not part of the Accord, nor are they necessarily endorsed by the signatories to the Accord. For a more comprehensive and detailed guide to building character through sports, call (800) 711-2670 or visit [www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org) to purchase the *Pursuing Victory With Honor "Ultimate Sportsmanship Tool Kit."*

## — Principle —

**Promote sportsmanship and foster good character by teaching, enforcing, advocating and modeling the "Six Pillars of Character": trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship. (Accord ¶ #2)**

### ➔ STRATEGIES:

- Develop and enforce a written code of conduct that stresses the importance of good character and specifies ethical obligations and sportsmanship expectations. (Accord ¶ #5)
- Discuss the importance of character, ethics and sportsmanship during the recruiting process and in promotional and descriptive materials. (¶ #8)
- Incorporate explicit language in the job descriptions and contracts of administrators, athletic directors, coaches and others involved in the sports program stating the obligation to promote sportsmanship and foster good character by teaching, enforcing, advocating and modeling trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship.
- Incorporate explicit incentives and disincentives in the contracts of athletic administrators, coaches and others involved in the sports program relating to desired and undesired behavior beyond sports performance. These might include incentives for high grade-point averages, graduation rates, games free of sportsmanship-related penalties; disincentives for conference, league or school rule violations, discrediting on-field conduct (e.g., technical fouls and other unsportsmanlike conduct penalties) discrediting off-field conduct (e.g., drug use, DUI's, assaults, illegal gambling). Financial and other consequences relating to these sorts of factors must be significant in relation to the overall compensation package and reflect the high degree of importance associated with the sportsmanship and character-building goals of the program.

- Coaches should be hired and retained not merely for their capacity to develop winning teams and high-performing athletes, but for their ability as teachers to support the educational and character-building goals of the institution.
- Devote a substantial portion of each yearly pre-season meeting to stressing the importance of good character and ethical and sportsmanship expectations.
- Teach athletes to discern and deal with ethical and sportsmanship issues by discussing these issues in relation to actual and hypothetical situations occurring or likely to occur in practice or game situations.
- Teach athletes that good character, ethics and sportsmanship are essential to honorable athletic competition and that victory attained in any other way is empty and unworthy.
- In communicating to athletes and to others about the athletic program, regularly use the language and concepts of character, ethics and sportsmanship, including: integrity, honor, honesty, respectfulness, courtesy, civility, responsibility, duty, accountability, fair play, empathy, compassion, kindness, unselfishness, teamwork and playing by the rules.
- Establish and regularly practice rituals and traditions that reinforce the principles of sportsmanship.
- Establish and discuss guidelines for dealing with unethical and unsportsmanlike behavior by athletes and impose sanctions regardless of the competitive impact.
- Communicate the importance of sportsmanship to parents and spectators by frequent public announcements, by posted signs and on programs and other materials.
- Establish and enforce guidelines for dealing with unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, parents, spectators, cheerleaders and other spirit groups.
- Develop a league- or campus-wide educational campaign promoting sportsmanship and celebrating the



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positive aspects of athletic competition beyond winning.

- Insist that coaches and athletes avoid displays of emotional immaturity after a bad play or losing a game.

## — Principle —

**Conduct sports programs in a manner that enhances the mental, social and moral development of athletes and teaches positive life skills that will help them become personally successful and socially responsible. (¶ #3)**

### ➔ STRATEGIES:

- Assure that coaches consider that they are, first and foremost, teachers. (see Accord ¶ #16)
- Coaches and others must demonstrate a genuine and continual interest in each athlete as a person and be willing to counsel, advise, encourage and console without regard to athletic performance.
- Develop comprehensive support programs for athletes that can deal with academic, emotional, social and ethical issues that may arise.
- Encourage student-athletes to think of themselves as students first and as athletes second. Be sure they have a realistic understanding of the remoteness of making a living as a professional athlete and the average career lengths of those who do.
- Wherever possible, integrate student-athletes into the general student population.
- Develop and continually refine a life skills program for athletes that acknowledges and helps them anticipate and effectively deal with the special stresses, conflicts and temptations that confront athletes, including:
  - time pressures and the need to juggle school, home and social responsibilities with athletic demands
  - social issues, including the potential of peer adulation to make the athlete conceited, self-absorbed, unkind, snobbish, arrogant and/or abusive
  - difficulties some young people have keeping their athletic goals in proper perspective
  - temptations relating to sex, drugs and alcohol
  - special compensation and other rules that may apply exclusively to athletes
  - possible contacts from agents or gamblers
- Develop and continually refine a life skills program for athletes that includes career counseling and training in leadership, time management, goal setting, ethical decision making, self-control and conflict resolution.
- Encourage character and good sportsmanship by praise and formal awards.

## — Principle —

**Consistently demonstrate and demand scrupulous integrity and observe and enforce the spirit as well as the letter of the rules. (¶ #6)**

### ➔ STRATEGIES:

- In relation to the traditions and customs of each sport, coaches and athletic administrators should discuss, determine and publish their program's attitudes and values regarding:
  - efforts to evade restrictions or rules that involve oral or written communications designed to misrepresent, mislead or deceive (e.g., disabled lists; residence, age, or academic eligibility; condition, height and weight of athletes)
  - deliberate violations of game rules (e.g., intentional fouls in basketball, delay of game in football, intentionally behaving in ways to get ejected for morale reasons; use of injury time-outs for other purposes)
  - attempts to mislead or deceive referees or umpires (e.g., who touched the ball last, whether a player touched a ball, faking fouls, whether a ball hit a runner, whether a ball was caught and not trapped, whether a player stepped out of bounds)
  - efforts to evade rules by artifice or stealth (e.g., recruiting limitations, practice or playing time restrictions, use of substances like silicon on uniforms or stick-em on hands)
  - when, if ever, athletes or coaches are expected to affirmatively call, or admit if asked, whether they touched or were touched by a ball, were out of bounds, touched a base)
- Speak openly to athletes during practices and training to assure that they know the letter and spirit of the rules and what they are expected and permitted to do.
- Establish clear consequences for violations of rules and expectations that reinforce the value and discourage future violations.

## — Principle —

**The highest administrative officer of organizations with sports programs must maintain ultimate responsibility for the integrity and quality of those programs ... and must assure that education and character-development responsibilities are not compromised to achieve sports performance goals and that the academic, emotional, physical and moral well-being of athletes is always above desires and pressures to win. (¶ #9)**

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## — Principle —

**Specifically determine during the recruiting process whether an athlete is seriously committed to getting an education and has or will develop the academic skills to succeed. (§ #8)**

### ➔ STRATEGIES:

- Before making a recommendation of an admission of a transfer, school administration should make an initial determination that the athlete is seriously interested in getting an education and that he or she will work diligently toward that end. If school administration cannot conclude



## — Principle —

**Prominently discuss the importance of character, ethics and sportsmanship during the recruiting process and in promotional and descriptive materials, and specifically determine that the athlete has or will develop the character to succeed. (§§ #7-8)**

### ➔ STRATEGIES:

- Assure that high school and club coaches know and pass on to athletes the institution's expectations regarding character and ethics.
- The faculties and staff of educational institutions must be directly involved in and committed to the character-building goals of the institution. (§ #10)

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with confidence that the athlete is serious about getting an education and is not simply seeking a transfer as a means to play sports, the athlete should not be recommended for admission.

## — Principle —

**The leadership of sports programs at all levels must ensure that coaches, whether paid or voluntary, are competent to coach in three areas: 1) character-building and sportsmanship, 2) first-aid and the physical capacities and limitations of the age group coached, and 3) coaching principles and rules and strategies of the sport (#12)**

### ➔ STRATEGIES:

- Athletic administrators should assess the competency of each applicant or recruit for a coaching position to determine whether he or she has basic knowledge of: 1.) the content and techniques of character-building in sport; 2.) the safety, first-aid and understanding of the physical capacities and limitations of the players' age group; and 3.) the basic principles of coaching, including techniques of motivation, conditioning and discipline as well as knowledge of the game's rules and strategies. A significant deficiency in any of these areas should preclude employment unless the institution can otherwise ensure that the coach will gain the required competency before or within the first 60 days of coaching.
- Athletic administrators should not take for granted that those who apply for or are currently serving as coaches possess minimal competency in all three critical areas. Even highly experienced coaches may lack the knowledge or interest in attaining or maintaining competence in one or more of these critical areas.
- Competency in the character-building and physical safety dimensions of coaching is especially important for those who coach young children, whose values and atti-

tudes about life and sports are not fully formed. The difficulty in getting qualified coaches in youth leagues and for certain middle and high school sports is a critical problem, but it is vital that unqualified coaches are not given the responsibility of guiding youngsters. In this context, an interested, caring adult with good values—and a concern with inculcating them—usually can be taught what needs to be known about first-aid, physical limitations and the basics of coaching and the sport. People with so-called “Xs-and-Os” knowledge who lack good character should be consciously avoided.

- A major factor in hiring and retaining coaches should be their commitment to develop and advance their coaching competence in all three areas through experience, reading or professional development courses.

*Download, print and distribute this guide.  
It is available, along with many other free resources, at:*

**[www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)**



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