

Averill Park Road Runners Code of Conduct©

1. Introduction

The Averill Park Road Runners is a longstanding and integral part of the community sports program in the Averill Park, New York area. Participants in the Road Runners' athletic programs—athletes, coaches, and board members-----are subject to a wide variety of requirements promulgated by USA Track and Field National, USA Track and Field National Adirondack Association, and Averill Park Central School District facilities use rules. The Averill Park Road Runners is committed to full compliance with all of these requirements, and engages in oversight, education, and training to ensure that all participants in both the fall Cross Country and spring Track and Field programs understand and comply with them.

The Averill Park Road Runners Code of Conduct, however, reflects a deeper commitment to the spirit of fair, honest, skillful, and civil competition that these requirements are designed to facilitate. This Code of Conduct articulates the fundamental principles for the conduct of all participants in Road Runners' programs and for those board members responsible for overseeing that conduct. This Statement does not restate or in any way replace the specific requirements to which participants in USATF programs are subject. Rather, it reaffirms the values that should permeate these programs, and seeks to remind all members of the Averill Park Road Runners that conduct inconsistent with those values is not appropriate and cannot be tolerated.

This Statement is divided into five sections. After this initial introductory section, section two articulates those principles that are applicable to all participants--including athletes, coaches, and board members in both Road Runner programs. Section three contains principles specifically applicable to coaches. Section four summarizes the obligations of board members and others who hold positions or serve on committees with responsibility for Road Runners programs and the conduct of their participants. The final section identifies those principles applicable to enforcement of this Code.

2. Principles Applicable to all Participants

2.1. All participants shall treat one another and all other people with dignity and respect. Participants shall behave according to the rules of their sport(s) and shall avoid conduct that demeans, harasses, or threatens any person. Given the breadth of this principle, its specific application will vary depending upon the context. But the breadth and force of this principle would prohibit any participant at any time from physically or verbally abusing another person; from using profane language or vulgar gestures; from demeaning or belittling another person or making derogatory comments about his or her race, sex, religion, age, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation; and from engaging in conduct intended, or so reckless as to be likely, to cause harm to another.

2.2. All participants shall demonstrate honesty and integrity in their statements and actions. This not only requires participants to tell the truth when asked, but also to avoid knowingly obscuring the truth by their actions or statements (such as giving incomplete answers or failing to give answers when required) and knowingly assisting any other person in a dishonest act or statement in connection with participation in Road Runner programs and determinations regarding compliance with this Code.

2.3. The conduct of all participants and parents shall reflect the fact that Averill Park Road Runners programs are first and foremost a developmental experience. For example, coaches and athletes shall focus on developing skill, experience, prowess, and character. Athletes shall not, and shall not be required to, allow their participation in athletic programs to interfere with their other educational activities.

2.4. The conduct of all participants and parents shall reflect the fact that by virtue of their participation in athletic programs sponsored by the Averill Park Road Runners, they are representing the Road Runners, themselves, then* community and their families. As a result, participants are expected to exhibit a higher standard of behavior than might be expected of other community members and to avoid conduct that is likely to appear improper.

2.5. All participants shall be aware of, understand, and comply fully with the requirements to which they are subject, including the principles in this Code; the requirements of USATF National and USATF Adirondack Association.

3. Principles Applicable to Coaches

All of the above principles apply with special force to coaches because of their influential role in the lives of athletes and the fact that they represent the Road Runners in dealing with athletes, opposing teams, officials, sports organizations, and the public.

3.1. All participants shall treat one another and all other people with dignity and respect.

3.1.1. Athletic programs by definition require coaches to interact physically and vigorously with student athletes. As a result, broad latitude is given to defining appropriate behavior in the context of athletic training and competition. However, conduct that is verbally or physically threatening or abusive, belligerent, or harassing is never appropriate and shall not occur at any time.

3.1.2. Coaches shall not take advantage of their relationship with and influence over athletes for personal advantage.

3.1.3. Coaches shall actively promote the good health and well-being of student athletes. Coaches shall defer to the judgment of parents, trainers and other medical advisors regarding an athlete's ability to participate in any athletic activity, and shall enforce the recommendations of trainers and other medical advisors.

3.1.4. The obligation of coaches to treat others with dignity and respect is not limited to their interaction with athletes, but shall apply to their treatment of all other participants, including other coaches, the athletes and personnel of other teams; officials and referees.

3.1.5. Coaches shall not in the performance of their duties by words or conduct manifest prejudice or bias based upon race, sex, religion, age, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation.

3.2. All coaches shall evince honesty and integrity in their statements and actions.

3.2.1. Coaches shall actively promote honesty and forthrightness among athletes, shall exhibit the highest standard of such behavior themselves, and shall sanction (or report for enforcement) dishonest acts or statements.

3.3. The conduct of all participants shall reflect the fact that Road Runners programs are first and foremost a developmental experience.

3.3.1 Coaches shall conduct themselves so as to serve as a role model of both compliance with the requirements to which they are subject as participants in Road Runner programs and the high standard of behavior required by this Code.

3.4. The conduct of all participants shall reflect the fact that by virtue of their participation in athletic programs sponsored by the Averill Park Road Runners, they are representing the Club and the community.

3.4.1. Coaches serve in a uniquely public role and therefore shall set high standards in their professional conduct. They shall conduct themselves so as to avoid conduct not only that is improper or inconsistent with their coaching responsibilities, but also that is likely to appear improper or inconsistent.

3.5. All participants shall be aware of, understand, and comply fully with the requirements to which they are subject.

3.5.1. Coaches and parents shall comply fully and in good faith with this Code and with other applicable requirements.

3.5.5. Coaches may establish team policies, provided they are consistent with this Code and with other applicable requirements. Team policies shall be in writing, approved by the Board of Directors, and shall be provided to each member of a team by the first day of practice or immediately upon a member's joining the team.

3.5.6. Coaches shall conduct themselves fairly and shall not show preferential treatment in the enforcement of student athletic rules.

4. Principles Applicable to Members of the Board of Directors

Officers and members of the Averill Park Road Runners Board of Directors and others who hold positions or serve on committees with responsibility for Road Runners' programs and the conduct of their participants, bear significant responsibility for ensuring the vigorous, timely, and fair enforcement of the principles contained in this Code of Conduct and the other requirements to which participants are subject, and an atmosphere conducive to full compliance and effective enforcement. These responsibilities are in addition to the many others they have concerning the overall operation of the Club.

4.1. These responsibilities include:

4.1.1. Ensuring the integrity of Averill Park Road Runner programs, compliance with this Code of Conduct and applicable requirements, and public confidence in the integrity and compliance of all participants in those programs.

4.1.2. Protecting the rights of all participants in Road Runners programs.

4.1.3. Informing and educating all participants in student athletic programs of their rights and responsibilities; the requirements to which they are subject as participants; the potential sanctions for failure to comply with those requirements; procedures for monitoring, enforcing, and reporting noncompliance; and the resources available to participants to facilitate their knowledge, compliance, and the protection of their rights.

4.1.4. Ensuring that there is a clear chain of responsibility for monitoring compliance with this Code of Conduct and other applicable requirements, reporting noncompliance, and enforcing this Code and other applicable requirements.

4.1.5. Monitoring compliance with and enforcement of this Code and other applicable requirements to ensure a high level of compliance, timeliness and fairness in enforcement, and the protection of participants' rights.

4.2. While the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the completion of all of these activities rests with the President and the other Officers of the Board of Directors, it is important that responsibility for day-to-day implementation of these tasks be clearly assigned to specific people, that a clear chain of responsibility exists, that the people in that chain carry out their duties fully, and that all participants in Road Runners' programs know and follow that chain of responsibility. Primary responsibility for implementation of this Code of Conduct, including ensuring the successful completion of each of the tasks identified above, rests:

- in the case of athletes, with their coaches and their parents

- in the case of coaches or parents, with the Head Coach and Board of Directors

- in the case of the Head Coach, with the Board of Directors

4.4. Exceptions regarding the persons responsible for implementing this Code of Conduct and for receiving allegations of noncompliance shall be made in writing by the Board of Directors.

5. Principles Concerning Enforcement

The principles in this Code of Conduct serve the interests of all participants in Road Runners' programs. It is therefore in the interest of all participants to comply fully with this Code and to encourage other participants to comply fully. The Club expects that all participants will comply. Nevertheless, the quality of any code of conduct is no greater than the means through which it is enforced. The purpose of enforcement is not the detection and punishment of noncompliance for its own sake, but rather to facilitate compliance with this Code and applicable requirements by all participants.

Of course, not all acts of noncompliance are of equal severity or warrant similar sanctions. In addition, the process by which an alleged offense is investigated and adjudicated will also depend in large part on the nature of the alleged offense and the severity of the potential sanction. Many acts of noncompliance with this Code or other requirements applicable to participants in student athletic programs will be and should be resolved immediately and without any formal procedure, and will involve comparatively minor sanctions, such as verbal correction. Such sanctions should be applied fairly and generally consistently, but the nature of the offense does not warrant formal procedures or other substantive due process.

There are likely to be, however, acts of noncompliance that fall beyond simple verbal correction. They involve offenses or behavior that are sufficiently serious or the subject of sufficiently burdensome sanctions to warrant procedurally more than immediate resolution. The following enforcement principles provide general guidance that may be useful in all situations, but that are designed specifically to guide investigations, adjudications, and the imposition of sanctions only in this broad intermediate setting.

5.1. Enforcement shall be accessible, swift, fair, consistent, certain, appropriate, and accountable.

5.1.1. The Club shall investigate credible reports of noncompliance with this Statement or other applicable requirements. The determination of a report's credibility necessarily involves many factors. However, except in unusual circumstances, a report shall be considered credible only if it is made by a person who has personally witnessed or experienced the allegedly non-complying act, or by a coach or Board Member with oversight responsibilities for participants in student athletic programs.

5.1.2. Acts of noncompliance shall be reported as swiftly as possible after the person making the report becomes aware of them. Delays in reporting a violation may significantly impair the Club's ability to investigate the complaint and interfere with the alleged perpetrator's due process rights. Delays may also raise questions about the credibility of the complainant.

5.1.4. The participant shall be given the opportunity to receive and provide information regarding the alleged noncompliance.

5.1.5. Allegations shall be investigated and resolved as speedily, informally, and confidentially as is possible.

5.1.6. Allegations of noncompliance shall be received, investigated, and adjudicated, and sanctions, if determined to be appropriate, shall be imposed consistently. This does not require that all procedures or sanctions be identical, but that similarly situated participants be treated consistently and that there be a general consistency among the treatment of all participants.

5.1.8. Sanctions should also be appropriate to the alleged offense, taking into account the circumstances and context of the offense, whether a pattern of improper conduct exists, the magnitude of the violation, and the effect the conduct has had on others. A single offense, particularly where the act of noncompliance is found to be unintentional and resulted in little or no harm to another person, might result in a minor sanction, such as:

- a warning
- increased monitoring
- probation

5.1.9. On the other hand, repeated or deliberate noncompliance, or noncompliance that threatens or results in physical harm to another person or other demonstrable injury, should be subject to significant sanction, such as:

- Suspension from one or more meets
- Expulsion from team
- Possible referral for criminal prosecution

5.1.10. As noted above, sanctions are intended to facilitate compliance by all participants. Therefore, when considering the imposition of sanctions, the Club shall take into account the effect of the sanction on other participants, other members of the Club, as well as fairness to the non-complying party and to other participants.