

NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION
Revision of CODE OF ETHICS approved January 27, 1972

NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE - PURPOSE - N.A.T.A. OBJECTIVES

One outstanding characteristic of a profession is that its members are dedicated to rendering service to humanity. Also, they are committed to the improvement of standards of performance. Financial gain or personal reward must be secondary. In becoming a member of the athletic training profession the individual assumes obligations and responsibilities to conduct himself in accordance with its ideals and standards. These are set forth in the constitution and by-laws and are emphasized in the CODE OF ETHICS. Any athletic trainer who does not feel that he can or does not deem it necessary to comply with the principles set forth in the CODE should have no place in this profession.

Athletics have gained a prominent place in our educational institutions and our communities at local, national and international levels and are an important reflection of the American way of life. The members of the athletic training profession must adhere to the highest standards of conduct in carrying out their significant role in athletic programs at all levels. It is for this reason that the Board of Directors of the National Athletic Trainers' Association at their meeting of January 9, 1971 authorized a revision of the CODE which has been in effect since June 1957.

In approving this CODE the Board of Directors recognizes and believes that unless the standards and principles that are set forth in this document are accepted in good faith and followed sincerely, it will not be effective in continuing to improve the contributions of the profession and its members to athletics and sports medicine.

Ethics is generally defined as a science of moral duty, or making the right actions relative to ideal principles. Let it be understood that all members of the National Athletic Trainers' Association will understand and apply the principles set forth in this CODE, and make every effort to do the right thing at the right time to the best of their ability and judgment.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this CODE is to clarify the ethical and approved professional practices as distinguished from those that might prove harmful or detrimental. Its secondary purpose is to instill into its members the value and importance of the athletic trainer's role in the field of athletics and sports medicine.

ENFORCEMENT

It is suggested that the Committee on Ethics be empowered to investigate reported violations of the CODE. It is the duty of this committee to collect all data pertaining to any reported violation, consider all sides of any controversial issue, then forward a report of its findings and recommendations to the Board of Directors for final action.

It is further suggested that any member of the association on becoming aware of a violation of the CODE send a written report to both the President of the association and the chairman of the Committee on Ethics.

OBJECTIVES

The stated objectives of the National Athletic Trainers' Association in its constitution are:

1. The advancement, encouragement and improvement of the athletic training profession in all its phases, and to promote a better working relationship among those persons interested in the problems of training.
2. To develop further the ability of each of its members.
3. To better serve the common interest of its members by providing a means for free exchange of ideas within the profession.
4. To enable the members to become better acquainted personally through casual good fellowship.

ARTICLE 1 - BASIC PRINCIPLES

The essential basic principles in this CODE OF ETHICS of the N.A.T.A. are HONESTY, INTEGRITY and LOYALTY. Athletic trainers who reflect these characteristics will be a credit to the Association, the institution they represent and to themselves.

When a person becomes a member of the athletic training profession, he assumes certain obligations and responsibilities as set forth in the following sections:

SECTION 1. Athletics in General

An athletic trainer should do all in his power and ability for all branches of athletics and show no discrimination in his interests or efforts.

SECTION 2. Players

Each and every member of an athletic squad should be treated conscientiously without discrimination, or partiality. An athletic trainer can wield a great amount of influence on members of athletic squads by proper conduct and the use of good judgment in dealing with various personalities and temperament.

In the prevention and treatment of injuries, the athletic trainer must be thorough in carrying out the accepted procedures and instructions. Any carelessness or laxity on the part of the trainer in following through his responsibilities to players is a breach of ethical conduct.

SECTION 3. Physicians and Medical Advisors

The athletic trainer should cooperate completely with the team physician and any other medical advisor assigned to the organization. The trainer must carry out the details of the doctor's orders but not go beyond the scope of the trainer's duties or the doctor's instructions. Any deviation from the orders of the physician or failure to cooperate shall be considered unethical conduct.

SECTION 4. Parents

It is the responsibility of the trainer, by his conduct and interest and communication to assure parents of all athletes for whom he is responsible that they are being properly cared for in every manner that is possible by the work of the trainer and the team physician.

SECTION 5. Administrative Officials

It is the athletic trainer's responsibility to create and maintain a harmonious relationship between himself and all administrative officials. Suggestions and ideas should be freely exchanged and discussed but any controversial matters should be taken care of confidentially on a friendly basis. Decisions, business procedures and established standards and policies should be given complete support by the trainer.

SECTION 6. Coaches

There should be a close harmonious relationship between trainers and coaches based on mutual respect. Cooperation must be the primary feature of interaction between coaches and trainers for the maintenance of esprit-de-corps, proper conditioning of athletes, methods of prevention and treatment of injuries, decisions relative to the welfare of the players and for conduct that is conducive for achieving the best results for all concerned.

SECTION 7. Fellow Trainers

The relationship between athletic trainers is partially set forth in the objectives. However, it should be stated further that in the process of extending courtesies and assisting fellow trainers one should abstain from so called "second guessing" them in the care and treatment of their athletes. Any suggestions should be given, and taken, in the spirit of constructive cooperation.

Any trainer, who by his conduct or comments discredits or lowers the dignity of members of his profession is guilty of a breach of ethics. Any report of unethical conduct of this nature should go through proper channels, be considered objectively and without comment outside the association.

ARTICLE II - CONDUCT - ATTITUDE - ACTIONS

The subject matter and implications of the following sections are of an abstract nature but are definitely to be considered in the realm of the athletic trainer's responsibility and obligations.

SECTION 1. Scholarship

A fundamental responsibility of an athletic trainer in an educational institution is to promote and inspire scholastic achievement by the athletes enrolled in the school. This may be accomplished by suggestions, example, and the promotion of study and tutoring.

SECTION 2. Testimonials and Endorsements

When an athletic trainer accepts an offer and agrees to endorse a commercial product - material, equipment, instrument, facility, book - he must realize that the offer is made primarily because he is a successful representative of the athletic training profession. In any endorsement in which the trainer's name and/or reference to the athletic training profession is included, the wording and illustration, including any implications of the endorsement as a whole, shall be such that no discredit to athletics in general nor to the training profession and sports medicine may be construed. Any endorsement that is not in keeping with the highest principles and standards of the athletic training profession shall be considered unethical.

SECTION 3. National Representation

An N.A.T.A. member who wishes to be considered for assignment to represent the N.A.T.A. as an Olympic or Pan American Games trainer or to represent N.A.T.A. in any other responsibility, shall seek this consideration only through the N.A.T.A. Officers and/or Committees designated to handle such representation.

SECTION 4. Public Relations and News Media Relations.

The ideal arrangement is for the institution's or organization's public relations director to handle news releases. However, if the trainer is authorized to answer questions from representatives of the press, radio and television he should use extremely good judgment in regard to the information given and the way in which it is given. Direct questions should be answered honestly or not at all. If there is a possibility that an honest answer might be misleading or involve a detrimental interpretation, good judgment may demand a "no comment" answer. All representatives of the news media should be treated with courtesy, honesty and respect.

Written material for publication and any information for the press, radio or television given by a member of the athletic training profession are strictly that individual's responsibility. Good judgment should indicate that no oral or written statements be made that reflect discredit to athletics in general or the athletic training profession. Any professional problems that arise should be settled within the association.

SECTION 5. Assistance to Personnel of Visiting Teams

If possible, inform the visiting team trainer by mail of the facilities and services that will be available to the visiting team. Meet the visiting team trainer when he arrives and offer any available services that he may desire. Make arrangements for any medical assistance that is needed by the visiting team during the time they are guests. Meet and exchange greetings with the coach and manager. During the times that a visiting team is preparing for practice or game and during practice, do not be constantly observing or overly inquisitive. After the game, offer any emergency service that the visiting team needs and give assistance in any way possible. Always be courteous to officials, and visiting team players and other members of the visiting team party.

SECTION 6, Sportsmanship

The athletic trainer is in a position to aid coaches in instilling fair play and good sportsmanship in the players. Any athletic trainer who condones or defends unsportsmanlike practices shall be considered to have violated this CODE.

ARTICLE III - ENFORCEMENT

SECTION 1. Reporting of Unethical Conduct

Any member of the Association who becomes aware of conduct that he considers unethical and that he believes warrants investigation should report the incident(s) in writing to the President and to the Executive-Director of the Association. He should include in his communication all pertinent data.

SECTION 2. Investigation and Action

In accordance with the By-Laws of the Association, (see Executive Council-Functions and Responsibilities) the Executive Council investigates reported incidents of unethical conduct and if in the judgment of a majority of the council members it finds that the accused person has violated the National Athletic Trainers' Association Code of Ethics it communicates its decision to the accused and to the Board of Directors in writing and recommends to the Board one of the following disciplinary actions: letter of censorship, letter of censorship with a period of probation, or cancellation of membership.

SECTION 3. Action by the Board of Directors

The decision of the Board of Directors in Code of Ethics matters is final, except that if the decision is to initiate cancellation of membership such cancellation shall be done as prescribed in ARTICLE VI., Sections 1 and 2 of the Constitution.