

VOLLEYBALL OFFICIALS

**CODE OF ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL
CONDUCT**

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VOLLEYBALL
OFFICIALS**



Adopted by the Affiliated Boards of Officials Board of Directors, June, 1997
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Professional Association of Volleyball Officials

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NOTE: Text revised since last publication has been underlined.

INTRODUCTION

The primary role of the official is to assure equal opportunity and fair play for all participants. The official serves as an arbitrator who controls the tone of the match by demonstrating an impartial attitude and creating a positive environment for competition. It is the responsibility of the official to provide judgments that are within the spirit and intent of the rules, maintain the quality of the competitive experience, and protect the health and welfare of each participant within the authority of the rules that govern play. An official's decisions are free from bias and are based on a thorough knowledge of the rules and officiating techniques of volleyball.

PRINCIPLE I - COMPETENCE

It is the officials' responsibility to have a complete understanding of the rules, strategy, skills, and mechanics of the sport. This knowledge gives officials the foundation to operate within a flexible range of standards appropriate to the available playing facilities and to the age and skill level of the athletes. It is imperative that officials remain current, and meet the qualifications and standards pertinent to their ratings by fulfilling the requirements of the local affiliated board and the national organization. Officials constantly strive for improvement by attending clinics and accepting constructive criticism from observers, assignors, coaches, and colleagues.

Standards

1.1 Clinic Attendance

There is never an excuse for not knowing the most current rule changes, interpretations, and officiating techniques. If such information cannot be obtained locally, it is the officials' responsibility to attend the nearest clinic and locate resources that provide the knowledge they need to perform their duties.

1.2 Punctuality

Officials are punctual for their assignments and insist on that conduct from all participants. Officials comply with the pre-match time requirements established by the event host. If no pre-match time standards exist, officials arrive in uniform at least 30 minutes prior to the start of a match in order to inspect the facilities, conduct a captains' meeting, oversee warm-up procedures, and brief the officiating crew.

1.3 Uniforms and Equipment

Officials always wear the proper uniform. The uniform is clean and pressed with no signs of excessive wear. Wearing the proper uniform shows pride in officiating and contributes to the professional image of all officials. Obtaining the necessary equipment (for example, whistle, stopwatch, sanction cards, and so on) and all components of the uniform is the financial responsibility of all officials.

PRINCIPLE II - INTEGRITY

Officials seek to promote integrity in their profession. Officials are honest, fair, and respectful of others. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, or fees, they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive. Officials strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations and the effects of these on their work. They uphold professional standards of conduct and accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior. Officials

are concerned about the ethical and professional conduct of their colleagues. When appropriate, they consult with colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct. Officials voluntarily observe a high level of professional conduct not because they fear penalties, but because they possess moral character.

Standards

2.1 Impartiality

Officials are free of obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of competition. Decisions that are influenced by personal bias are dishonest and unacceptable.

2.2 Undue Influence

Officials avoid any circumstances that may create or imply undue influence in the performance of their duties. If ever confronted with an attempted bribe or made aware of an attempted bribe of any other official, officials immediately notify the authorities governing the event in addition to the person in charge of officials for the event.

2.3 Language

Officials do not use abusive or foul language when they are in the competitive facility, nor do officials use abusive or foul language toward any participants whether or not they are in the competitive facility.

2.4 Gambling

Officials do not gamble on sporting events in which they may have direct or indirect involvement. Under no circumstances do officials gamble on events involving participants who are under the age of 21.

2.5 Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

The use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited. Officials do not use alcohol or drugs immediately prior to or during the performance of their duties. Neither do they tolerate the use of alcohol or drugs by other participants immediately prior to or during an event. Because officials are role models, they refrain from using alcohol or tobacco inappropriately in places where they are likely to encounter former, current, or future participants of events in which they officiate.

2.6 Honoring Commitments

When officials accept assignments or contracts to officiate, they do not cancel those commitments in order to accept other commitments that pay more money or have more prestige. Only honest, legitimate reasons or emergencies cause officials to cancel commitments, and these are the reasons officials provide to the contracting entity when they need to rescind their availability.

2.7 Representation of Qualifications

Officials do not make false or misleading statements regarding their qualifications, ratings, credentials, professional affiliations, experience, training, or competence. Statements can be false, deceptive, misleading, or fraudulent either because of what they state, convey, or suggest, or because of what they omit. It is a violation of this Code to conceal any criminal background that may affect the qualification of officials to work in certain competitive environments.

2.8 Solicitation

Officials inform hiring entities of their availability, interest, and qualifications and provide further information to those entities if requested. Officials do not market, publicize, or promote their services, nor do they solicit or initiate assignments or contracts.

2.9 Contractual Agreements

Where there is an established or existing agreement, officials do not undermine other officiating groups or individuals by initiating an offer of alternatives such as lower fees, paying one's own transportation and expenses, or providing a different set of services. However, if hiring entities initiate requests for such information, officials are free to respond as appropriate.

2.10 Professional Courtesy

Officials have an obligation to treat other officials with professional dignity and courtesy and recognize that it is inappropriate to criticize other officials publicly. During competition, officials never display disgust or disapproval with the decisions of other officials no matter how much they may disagree. When officials are spectators, they remember that they may be recognized from other events and must refrain from rendering opinions or judgments of the work performed by other officials.

2.11 Financial Obligations

Officials meet financial obligations related to their duties as an official. All dues, fees, and debts owed to officials' professional organizations, sport-related entities, or other officials are to be paid in a timely fashion.

PRINCIPLE III - RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL DIGNITY

Officials respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all participants. They are aware of cultural, individual, and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Officials try to eliminate biases based on those factors and not allow them to affect their work. They do not knowingly participate in nor condone unfair discriminatory practices.

Standards

3.1 Non-Discrimination

Officials do not knowingly participate in actions designed to unfairly limit or restrain access to officiating, officiating assignments, or organizational membership. This includes selection for leadership positions based upon age, gender, race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Officials do not accept assignments or contracts to work in events that unfairly limit or restrain access to participants based on age, gender, race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status.

3.2 Individual Beliefs

Officials recognize that their personal beliefs may differ from the beliefs of other participants based on differences such as age, gender, race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Officials do not impose their personal beliefs on others.

PRINCIPLE IV - PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Officials seek to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact on a professional basis. In practicing their profession, officials consider the welfare and rights of athletes, coaches, colleagues, and other participants. When conflicts occur among officials' obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts and perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. Officials are sensitive to differences in power between themselves and others, and they do not exploit or mislead other people during or after professional relationships.

Standards

4.1 Conflict of Interest

Officials recognize that any circumstance leading to a conflict of interest, whether real or apparent, must be avoided. Such circumstances include gifts, favors, special treatment, privileges, employment, or personal relationship with a team, school, club, or individual associated with a team. Officials avoid anything that might compromise the perceived impartiality of officiating.

4.2 Fraternalization

Fraternalization in the competitive environment is unnecessary, is frequently misinterpreted, and brings discredit to the profession. Therefore, officials do not fraternize with coaches, players, spectators, event administrators, or other

participants. Officials interact with all participants in a cordial, courteous, and professional manner regardless of prior acquaintance.

4.3 Differences in Power

It is important that officials recognize the difference in power they have over others in the competitive environment. They do not let personal feelings affect their use of power by rendering biased judgments and giving unfair advantage to one competitor over another. There are also differences in power when officials can affect other officials by serving in roles such as assignors, raters, trainers, clinicians, supervisors, or officers of officials' associations. Officials in such positions do not exploit or misuse their power for personal gain, to give unfair advantage to certain individuals, or harm other officials' careers and opportunities.

4.4 Sexual Conduct

Officials do not engage in sexual harassment, which is defined as sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature. Such behavior constitutes sexual harassment if the actions are: 1) unwelcome, offensive, or create a hostile environment; or 2) sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts. Officials report all suspected cases of sexual harassment, abuse, or assault to law enforcement as required by law.

4.5 Forms of Abuse

Officials do not engage in physical, verbal, or emotional harassment, abusive words or actions, or exploitative coercion. They do not engage in behavior that is harassing, abusive, or demeaning toward participants in the competitive environment based on factors such as the participants' age, gender, race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. In the course of performing their duties, officials respond affirmatively to reports of harassment or abuse and initiate appropriate intervention on behalf of the participant who is the target of harassment or abuse.

4.6 Dual Relationships

Officials avoid dual relationships that can impair professional judgment, compromise the integrity of the profession, create the perception of officiating bias, or result in an unfair advantage for one competitor over another. They do not accept assignments or contracts when they have had prior association with one or more competitors or with the competitors' sponsoring entities. Officials do not knowingly accept assignments or contracts when they know that one or more participants could potentially evoke biased judgments or the perception of biased judgments because of a current or past relationship (for example, a family member, sexual partner, person who is dating the official, or someone who is commonly known as a personal friend of the official).

PRINCIPLE V - CONFIDENTIALITY

Officials respect the integrity and protect the welfare of all participants. They safeguard information about participants that has been obtained in the performance of their officiating duties. Such information includes performance reviews, statistics, and any personal confidences. When publicly referring to past officiating experiences that are not flattering or complimentary, officials thoroughly disguise the identity of the participants. The only exception to maintaining confidentiality is to intervene on behalf of a participant when there are legal issues involved or there is evidence of physical or psychological harm.

Standards

5.1 Furnishing Information

While serving in an officiating capacity, officials do not furnish information to institutions, teams, or individual participants pertaining to any other institution, team, or individual participant. In addition, officials do not serve in an advisory capacity to any entity to evaluate the abilities of prospective athletes who might ultimately play in an entity

for which the advisory officials perform their duties. Officials do not advise or furnish information to professional teams as to their evaluations of the specific abilities of any athletes.

5.2 Interaction With the Media

Officials do not give interviews to the news media, television, or radio regarding the performance of their officiating duties. They do not publicly express their personal opinions, evaluations, or observations regarding competition that they have officiated.

PRINCIPLE VI - RESOLVING ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

This Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct is administered under the authority of the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials and local boards that are in good standing with the national organization. Violation of this Code subjects officials to the processes established by the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials and its local boards. These processes are provided in the event of disciplinary action against a member for violation of this Code.

Standards

6.1 Knowledge of the Code

It is the obligation of officials to be knowledgeable about this Code, other applicable ethics codes, and their application to the profession. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical or professional standard is not in itself a defense to a charge of unethical or unprofessional conduct. When officials are uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate this Code, they consult with those who are knowledgeable about such issues in order to choose a proper response.

6.2 Ethical Conflicts

If the demands of an organization with which officials are affiliated conflict with this Code, officials clarify the nature of the conflict and make known their commitment to the Code. To the extent that is feasible, officials seek to resolve the conflict in a way that permits the fullest adherence to this Code.

6.3 Informal Resolution of Code Violations

When officials believe that there may have been a violation of this Code by another official, they attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that individual if an informal resolution appears to be appropriate. Informal resolutions must not interfere with the rights of any other individuals who may have been involved.

6.4 Reporting Code Violations

Officials can take further action if an apparent violation of this Code is not appropriate for informal resolution as described in **Standard 6.3**, or if an attempt at informal resolution does not resolve the situation properly. Further action might include referral to an official's supervisor, the Ethics Committee of the local board, or the national organization. Officials must cooperate in investigations, proceedings, and resulting requirements regarding unethical or unprofessional conduct. Failure to cooperate is itself a violation of this Code. Reporting violations of this Code must not interfere with the rights of any other individuals who may have been involved.

If any local board or the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials receives information from any source alleging that an official has been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or no contest to a criminal charge or indictment involving sexual misconduct, child abuse, or conduct that is a violation of a law specifically designed to protect minors, or, depending on the nature of the crime, has been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or no contest to other felony charges or indictments, a complaint stating these matters may be submitted by any person to the local board president. That local board Ethics Committee shall proceed with a prompt investigation of the matter including information available in the public records.

Upon confirmation of the existence of a criminal record which violates the standards established in the Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct, the local board Ethics Committee may suspend the membership of the official with the

criminal record and allow the official a period of time in which to provide the Ethics Committee with any reasons why all membership privileges in the organization should not be terminated.

6.5 Improper Complaints

Officials do not file or encourage the filing of complaints that are frivolous and are intended to harm the respondent rather than to promote ethical and professional conduct.

PRINCIPLE VII - PROCESS RELATING TO CODE VIOLATIONS

Officials acknowledge that this Code is administered under the authority of the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials and local boards in good standing with the national organization. Officials acknowledge that a violation of this Code subjects them to the processes required in the event of disciplinary action by the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials and local boards in good standing with the national organization. The Professional Association of Volleyball Officials and its local boards acknowledge that all violations of this Code will be reviewed for possible disciplinary action.

Procedures

7.1 Ethics Committees

To address complaints filed in regard to violations of this Code, local boards must form an Ethics Committee comprised of at least three members in good standing who do not have a conflict of interest regarding the complaint or any person involved in the complaint. The Ethics Committee elects a chair. According to the Operating Code of the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials, the Ethics Committee of the national organization consists of the President, Past President/President-Elect, and a third member appointed by the President from the Board of Directors. The national Ethics Committee elects a chair.

7.2 Filing Complaints

Complaints regarding violations of this Code are filed in writing. Complaints may be filed from any source, and should contain as much information as possible to allow the ethics committee to effectively investigate, including, if known, the official or member being charged with a violation (“the Respondent”), the date(s) and place(s) of the violation, the violation alleged, and any witnesses to the violation. The complaint is filed with the local board president, who shall immediately appoint an ethics committee. Copies of the complaint are distributed by the president to the local ethics committee members and to the Respondent.

7.3 Actions of the Ethics Committee

- Within two weeks after a complaint has been received, and the committee selected, the chair of the local Ethics Committee must notify all parties involved that the Ethics Committee will review the situation brought forth in the complaint, including a notification to the Respondent that the Respondent may submit a written response to the complaint, or may request a hearing before the Ethics Committee.
- If the Respondent does not request a hearing, the members of the Ethics Committee then gather as much information as possible and reconvene to review the information, assess the situation, and discuss its recommendations and decision. If the Respondent has requested a hearing the chair will select the time and place for the hearing so to conduct the hearing at the earliest convenient date. The chair may, with the consent of the parties, conduct the hearing by conference call or other similar electronic means. The chair will communicate the information about the hearing schedule to the Respondent and the complaining party. Prior to the hearing, the chair will distribute copies of all documents to the committee, including a copy of the complaint, and any written response previously submitted by the Respondent.
- No less than fifteen days prior to the hearing, the chair will send to the parties a written copy of the procedures to be followed at the hearing. Those procedures shall include the opportunity for each party to be represented by counsel, to present oral or written evidence, to cross-examine witnesses and to present such factual or legal

claims as are desired. The hearing shall be tape recorded with a transcript made available to each party, if requested and at that party's expense.

- Following the information review or hearing, the Ethics Committee must come to a consensus and decide what disciplinary action, if any, to take against the respondent.
- It is recommended that all communication with the respondent be via a vehicle that provides a return receipt.

7.4 Disciplinary Actions

If the Ethics Committee finds that the respondent was not in violation of this Code, no disciplinary action is taken. If the Ethics Committee finds that the respondent was in violation of this Code, it may take disciplinary actions such as, but not limited to:

- Sending a letter of reprimand.
- Suspending the rating or membership of the respondent for a specified period of time.
- Upon request, advising officiating supervisors, assignors, and/or other assigning organizations that the Respondent has been found in violation of this Code.
- Expelling the respondent from the local board.
- Any other disciplinary action that is considered appropriate by the local Ethics Committee.

The chair of the Ethics Committee provides a written report as to the committee's decision and action, if any, to the Respondent, the complainant, and the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials executive director. The executive director shall maintain all such reports in a confidential file, for the benefit of only the National Ethics Committee, and no one else. Unless unusual circumstances are involved the entire process should be completed within sixty days from the date the complaint is first received.

7.5 Appeal Process

- If the Ethics Committee of a local board finds a Respondent to be in violation of this Code and the respondent disagrees with their findings, the Respondent may appeal the findings in writing to the national Ethics Committee of the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials.
- The appeal must be received by the national Ethics Committee, addressed to the national office, within 15 days of the date on the local Ethics Committee's report. If the Respondent does not timely appeal the local Ethics Committee's findings, then that decision is final and binding. If the Respondent does timely appeal the local Ethics Committee's findings, then the national Ethics Committee shall convene and follow the same procedures as set forth for the local Ethics Committee, including a review of the local Ethics Committee's record, or if requested by the Respondent, a new hearing.
- Following the record review or hearing, the national Ethics Committee must come to a consensus and decide to affirm, reverse or modify the local Ethics Committees' disciplinary action, if any, regarding the Respondent. The national Ethics Committee chair provides a written report as to the committee's decision and action, if any, to the Respondent, the complainant, and the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials executive director. The executive director shall maintain all such reports in a confidential file, for the benefit of only the National Ethics Committee, and no one else.
- The decision of the national Ethics Committee shall be final as to the Respondent and all parties.

7.6 Expedited Procedure

- If the Complaint challenges a violation which may affect a member's ability to officiate in an immediately upcoming event, the Complainant, as part of his or her written Complaint, or the respondent, as part of his or her written response, may request that the Complaint be referred immediately for an expedited process. The request for an expedited procedure shall be directed to the local board ethics committee. Upon receipt, the local board shall immediately convene and, if requested by the Complainant, provide notice of the expedited procedure to the respondent. The parties involved shall immediately submit their information to the committee. The committee shall then consider the information and issue its decision. By submitting to this procedure, the parties involved

acknowledge that all matters will be expedited and because of the time factor, there may not be an opportunity for an appeal prior to the subject event.

- In any matter in which an involved party has not requested an expedited procedure, an expedited procedure may be declared by the chair of an ethics committee, if the chair determines that action is necessary to expedite the resolution of a controversy in order to do justice to any party. In that event, if feasible, the time frames set forth in the regular procedure may be reduced to prevent injustice.

7.7 Binding Effect

Participation by any party in the procedure to address an alleged code violation, as set forth in this code, shall be deemed the parties' agreement to be bound by the provisions and result of this procedure, without further recourse, including arbitration or lawsuit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct is the result of the work of many people. The approach, structure and contents of this Code were inspired by the *Coaching Ethics Code* of the United States Olympic Committee. Ideas for other parts of this Code were drawn from:

- *Coaches Code of Ethics and Conduct* - American Volleyball Coaches Association.
- *Coaches Code of Ethics and Conduct* - USA Volleyball.
- *Code of Ethics* - National Association of Sports Officials.
- *Code of Ethics for Officials* - Big Ten Conference.
- *Big Ten Conference Officiating Manual* - Big Ten Conference.

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PAVO CODE OF ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT PROCESS

