



## STUDENT-ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

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The intercollegiate Athletic program at Montana State University – Bozeman (MSU) facilitates the personal growth and education of students through their participation in a comprehensive program of NCAA Division I sports. As an integral part of the University, the Intercollegiate Athletic program actively promotes fair equity and diversity, and provides community enrichment

To this end, the department of athletics has adopted a standard of ethical conduct and behavioral expectations for all athletes at Montana State University. A balanced student-athlete will be a responsible citizen, who achieves academically and performs athletically. Violation of this code of conduct is a significant event and calls for disciplinary action.

### I. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

It is a privilege and not a right to be a student-athlete at MSU. On and off campus and in cyberspace communities, every student-athlete is expected to conduct himself or herself in a manner that exhibits honor and respect to a team, department, University and surrounding community for a duration of his or her tenure as a student-athlete. As a student-athlete at MSU, you are expected to conform to all federal, state, and local laws as well as University regulations regarding academics, residence life, and general conduct. Students penalized for violating public laws are not exempt from further prosecution by University authorities if actions also violate University rules. In addition, the athletic department and respective coaches reserve the right to implement additional sanctions.

MSU expects its student-athletes to demonstrate academic integrity and accomplishment, train and strive for their highest degree of athletic excellence and sportsmanship, and to conduct themselves responsibly as members of the campus and larger community.

Every student-athlete is required to report his or her violations of this Code of Conduct to his or her Head Coach or to the Director of Athletics within 24 hours of such violation. This obligation is in effect year-round, including semester and summer breaks.

Initial Section I \_\_\_\_\_

### II. DEFINITIONS

A. Student-Athlete: Once a student is accorded the status of a varsity athlete, he or she is expected to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct until the completion of eligibility, including semester and summer breaks or until the student-athlete is no longer receiving athletically related financial aid (including post eligibility and student-athletes medically unable to participate.)

B. Hazing: Hazing includes but is not limited to any conduct or method of initiation, admission, or condition of continued membership in any student organization which: 1) endangers the physical or mental health or safety of any student or other person, including extending deprivation of sleep or rest; forced consumption of food, liquor, beverage, or drugs; beating or branding; involuntary confinement or imprisonment; or 2. destroys, vandalizes, or removes public or private property.

C. Sportsmanship: Sportsmanship shall be defined in accordance with the standards of the NCAA, Big Sky Conference, and the MSU Athletic Department. In general, a sportsperson is one who can take a loss or defeat without complaint, a victory without gloating, and who treats opponents with fairness, generosity, and courtesy. Sportsmanship is respect for oneself, teammates, coaches, officials, opponents, and property. Sportsmanship also requires maintaining self control, and refusing to be drawn into or encourage physical conflict not otherwise required by proper execution of the sport. All student-athletes are obligated to represent themselves, the team, the Athletic Department, the University, their families, and their communities, with the highest level of sportsmanship.

Initial Section II \_\_\_\_\_

### III. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Prohibited conduct includes violation of any of the standards established by the governing authorities identified above. By way of illustration, and without limitation of those prohibitions, student-athletes must not violate any of the policies described below (please also refer to MSU Student Conduct Code):

- A. Academic Dishonesty: The Athletic Department will not tolerate acts of academic misconduct which includes, but is not limited to: cheating, falsification/fabrication, tampering, plagiarism, facilitating academic misconduct, multiple submission, and other academic misconduct.
- B. Alcohol: Prohibited acts include 1) possessing or consuming alcohol if under the age of 21, 2) Operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, 3) Misrepresenting one's age for the purpose of purchasing, possessing, or consuming alcohol, 4) Purchasing, furnishing, or serving alcohol to or for an underage person, 5) Public intoxication 6) Violations of additional Team Rules regarding alcohol use, and/or 7) Consumption of alcohol during team travel or team functions.
- C. Other Drugs: Prohibited acts include 1) Possessing or using illegal substances, as defined by law, 2) Possessing or using controlled substances as defined by law, 3) Distributing, selling, or possessing with the intent to distribute illegal or controlled substances, as defined by law, 4) The use of tobacco products by a student-athlete during practice, competition, or other team functions. Student-Athletes also agree to NCAA and MSU drug testing. For written text of these policies, please visit [http://www.msubobcats.com/student\\_athletes.php](http://www.msubobcats.com/student_athletes.php).
- D. Hazing: Hazing in connection with membership or participation in University athletic team activities is strictly prohibited.
- E. Cyberspace (including social networking websites): Student-athletes are permitted to have profiles on social networking websites such as Myspace and Facebook provided that a) no offensive or inappropriate pictures are posted, b) no offensive or inappropriate comments are posted and/or c) any information placed on the website(s) does not violate the ethics and intent behind the MSU Student Code of Conduct, the student-athlete code of conduct, and all other applicable state, federal, and local laws.
- F. Violence: MSU is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which its members are free from all forms of harassment, exploitation, intimidation, and violence. Student-athletes are prohibited from engaging in violent acts including assault on a person or property, hate crimes, hazing, stalking, sexual violence, or any other conduct prohibited by University policy or law.
- G. Sexual Assault: The Department of Athletics will not tolerate sexual harassment, intimidation, stalking, rape, domestic violence, or other related violations.
- H. Disrespect: At all times, student-athletes are required to conduct themselves in a manner respectful of themselves, their team, the University, the Department of Athletics, game officials, opponents, and property. Student-athletes are to refrain from disrespectful conduct such as unsportsmanlike conduct; profane, abusive, demeaning, harassing, threatening, or obscene expression; or deliberate damage to equipment or other property. Disrespectful conduct will be reviewed by the Head Coach and Director of Athletics and may result in disciplinary action.
- I. Poor Sportsmanship: Student-athletes are held accountable to a high standard of ethical conduct in all activities affecting the athletics program, whether as a participant or as a spectator. "Unsportsmanlike" conduct will be reviewed by the Director of Athletics and may result in disciplinary action.
- J. Gambling and Bribery: Student-athletes shall not knowingly 1) Provide information to individuals involved in organized gambling activities concerning intercollegiate athletics competition, 2) Solicit a bet on any intercollegiate team, 3) Accept a bet on any team representing the institution, 4) Solicit or accept a bet on any intercollegiate competition for any item that had tangible value (e.g. cash, clothing, equipment, meals), and/or 5) Participate in any gambling activity that involves

intercollegiate athletic or professional athletics through a bookmaker, a parlay card or any other method employed by organized gambling.

- K. **Unexcused Class Absences and Poor Academic Performance:** Student-athletes are expected to attend class regularly and punctually, and to fulfill course load and academic performance requirements. Failure to meet such obligations may affect eligibility to participate, scholarship eligibility, and academic standing.
- L. **Failure to Meet Team Obligations:** Student-athletes must complete training requirements; arrive promptly for team practices, meetings, and departure for away games and other team events; attend team functions; and otherwise fulfill their responsibilities as team members. Absences must be excused in advance by the Head Coach unless an unforeseeable emergency arises.

Initial Section III \_\_\_\_\_

#### **IV. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS AND SANCTIONS**

The Department of Athletics disciplinary process is independent of, and supplements, the University judicial process. Sanctions levied by Athletics may occur over and above those levied by the University. Sanctions will vary depending on the type and circumstances of the violation.

When the Department of Athletics becomes aware of an alleged violation of this Code of Conduct, the Director of Athletics or his/her designee ("the AD") will take reasonable steps to verify the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the report. These steps may include interviews of students and employees, or of non-University persons having knowledge of relevant facts; examination of documents; and other steps necessary for the AD to determine the merits of the report. A meeting with the student-athlete will ordinarily occur before any discipline is imposed; however, in extenuating circumstances, the AD may suspend the student-athlete before the meeting.

Determination of responsibility will be based on a preponderance of evidence and information available. A first-time offense may be serious enough to warrant any of the possible sanctions listed below. A student-athlete's refusal to participate and cooperate in an Athletic Department or NCAA investigation of possible violation of this Code of Conduct or NCAA rules may itself constitute a basis for disciplinary action.

##### **Possible Sanctions Include but are not limited to:**

1. Warning – the issuance of a written warning
2. Probation – Special status with conditions imposed for a limited time
3. Community Service
4. Required educational or counseling sessions
5. Drug Testing
6. Restitution – i.e Payment for damaged property
7. Suspension – Removal of a student-athlete from all athletic department activities for a limited period of time.
8. Expulsion – Permanent removal from a team and/or department activities
9. Withdrawal of Financial Aid – Termination of athletically related financial aid as allowable by NCAA regulations.

##### **Possible sanctions for team violations include but are not limited to:**

1. Team Probation
2. Team Community Service
3. Cancellations of Contests
4. Cancellation of Season

**Violations of Team Rules:** Each student-athlete is responsible for following his/her specific team policies. These policies shall be in writing and distributed to team members at the start of each academic year or the beginning of the playing season, whichever comes first. The Head Coach, Sport Supervisor, and the Director of Athletics all have authority to impose sanctions.

**Violation of Criminal Law:** When a student-athlete has engaged in conduct alleged to be in violation of criminal law, immediately upon receipt of notice of such possible violation the Head Coach must report the information to the Director of Athletics.

Student-athletes arrested for, or charged with, violating the criminal law will be immediately suspended from practice and competition. Within 48 hours of notice of a suspension, the student-athlete's coach or designee shall review the suspension and recommend to the Director of Athletics whether the suspension should continue. Within 10 days of notice of suspension, the student-athlete shall be afforded the opportunity to present his or her position before the Director of Athletics, the Faculty Athletics Representative, and the Chair of the Athletics Committee. Based on available information, the Director of Athletics may at any time prior to a finding or plea of guilty to a criminal charge may lift or modify the suspension. If the student-athlete is found guilty of the felony charge, such student-athlete shall be barred permanently from participation in intercollegiate athletics on any campus of the MSU System.

A student-athlete suspended from participation as a result of a criminal charge shall not be prohibited from receiving financial aid during the pendency of such criminal charge. Upon plea of guilty or a finding of guilt in a felony case, the University shall immediately determine whether the student-athlete's aid shall continue. This policy is applicable to all renewals of current athletic aid commitments and to all subsequently awarded athletic financial aid.

Initial Section IV \_\_\_\_\_

## **V. APPEALS**

A student-athlete who is subject to season-long suspension or expulsion from athletics team participation, or whose athletic grant-in-aid would be affected by a sanction imposed by the Athletic Director, may request for appeal from these sanctions. The appeal must be made, in writing, to the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) within 3 business days of the student-athlete's receipt of the notice of sanctions. The appeal letter must explain the grounds for the appeal (e.g. new information, due process issue, abuse of discretion).

Upon receipt of the request for appeal, the Appeals Board, organized by the FAR or his/her representative, will assemble as soon as is reasonably possible. The Board will conduct its investigation by hearing details of the case from the Director of Athletics, the student-athlete's Head Coach, and the student-athlete. The student-athlete will be given the opportunity to make an oral and written statement about the circumstances and why he or she feels reinstatement is warranted.

Upon conclusion of the appeals assembly, the Appeals Board will meet privately to discuss the case. The FAR, or his or her representative, will notify the student as to the result of the appeal.

Initial Section V \_\_\_\_\_

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## **VI. AGREEMENT/WAIVER**

I understand and agree that I am required to know, understand, and follow the standards contained in the Montana State University – Bozeman Department of Athletics Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. In addition, I understand and agree that I am responsible for knowing, understanding, and following the rules, policies, and procedures contained in the complete MSU Student Conduct Code, and my sport's team policies.

I understand the possible individual and team sanctions which could be imposed due to a violation of any of the policies listed above. I understand this Student-Athlete Code of Conduct will be available for my review in the Student-Athlete Handbook. If I have further questions regarding this Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, I can ask my coach or the Compliance Office.

SPORT: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_