



CHARACTER CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1) **Full Responsibility** – This means taking responsibility for your own actions. Whatever happens, you are in control of your own actions and responsible for the consequences, both good and bad. We don't play the blame game on this team.
- 2) **Selflessness** – One selfish individual can ruin an entire team. We must all understand that every individual's personal success depends highly on the team's success. It is in everyone's interest to put the team before the ego.
- 3) **Commitment** – This translates into an unrelenting work ethic in the pursuit of greatness. Attendance at every practice is critical. The level of commitment on this team will undoubtedly have a direct effect on our level of performance.
- 4) **Positive Attitude** – This relates directly to rebound mentality. No matter how difficult the situation, no matter how harsh the setback, we must always remain positive to be able to bounce back and achieve the next level of success.
- 5) **Composure** – This means remaining calm under pressure and demonstrating professionalism on the pitch. Whether it's a bad call by the referee or going down a goal, we must always remain calm and confident in our ability and purpose.

Character as the foundation of success:

The best teams take pride in character as the foundation of success. "Character" here is defined by commitment, full responsibility, selflessness, composure, and a positive attitude. Success is not defined by whether or not setbacks occur, but how we respond to those setbacks. It is not in spite of, but because of this emphasis that we as coaches can breed players with a winning mentality that leads to their success not only on the pitch, but off the pitch as well. Character, self-leadership and first-class training are the factors that allow players to reach their full potential in a program focused on preparing its athletes for the rigors of competition and life.

Anson Dorrance, arguably the best women's college soccer coach of all time, talked

about four steps to developing a winning program that related closely to “full responsibility”, “selflessness” and “commitment”....

- 1) Create a winning philosophy of full personal responsibility.
- 2) Communicate that philosophy to everyone involved in the program at every opportunity.
- 3) Surround yourself with those who can help you implement that philosophy.
- 4) Get every player to be personally accountable and live by the philosophy of the program.

The point is that the mental edge encouraged here is acknowledged by the best coaches and professionals in soccer.

Here is one more view relating closely to “positive attitude” and “composure”....

“Choosing a Response”

By **Colleen Hacker**, former leading sports psychology consultant for the U.S women’s national soccer team...

“Games, coaches, opponents, places, and situations don’t make players tense – players do it to themselves. What’s happening around the player isn’t the culprit. Rather, the player’s view, approach, and response to those circumstances or events is the problem. Many wise counselors have reminded us that success in life (and sport) doesn’t depend so much on what happens to us but on how we react to and perceive those events.

Players can, and will, be frustrated, disappointed, or even angry at times. Such emotions are normal, expected, and human. The problem arises when those feelings result in negative behaviors, attitudes, choices, and expectations.

Let’s use an example of a soccer player who feels frustrated because he wasn’t selected to start in a particular game. The player might perceive that the coach doesn’t have confidence in him or that the coach believes that he lacks certain skills or expertise. Based on that interpretation, the player might respond by staying after practice every day to put in extra time on the field, participating in additional scrimmage opportunities, or seeking out an expert coach to assist in technical and tactical refinement. That player’s choice to respond in a task-oriented, positive manner turns his frustration and disappointment into a competitive advantage. If, on the other hand, the player responds to that perceived injustice by quitting the team, badmouthing the coach, or losing confidence in himself, they have made choices that undermine the likelihood of future athletic success. Again, the choice is the player’s. Both options are available. Players need to work at and practice making the right choice.”