

## Polo Coaches' Code of Conduct

Polo coaches play a crucial role in the development of the game, and good coaches will ensure that individuals have positive experiences and are therefore more likely to continue in the game.

Coaches must demonstrate, at all levels, a high degree of honesty, integrity and competence. The need for polo coaches to understand and act on their responsibilities is of critical importance to the game, as is the concept of participation for fun as well as achievement.

This Code of Conduct defines all that is best in good polo coaching.

### 1. Rights

Polo coaches must respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in the game. Polo coaches should:

- assist in the creation of an environment where every individual has the opportunity to participate in polo
  - Treat all individuals in polo with respect at all times.
- create and maintain an environment free of fear and harassment
  - Do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, colour, disability, sexuality, age, occupation, religion or political opinion.
  - Do not condone or allow to go unchallenged any form of discrimination.
- recognise the rights of all players to be treated as individuals
  - Do not publicly criticise or engage in demeaning descriptions of others.
- recognise the rights of players to confer with other polo coaches and experts
  - Be discreet in any conversations about players, polo coaches or any other individuals.
- promote the concept of a balanced lifestyle, supporting the well-being of the player both in and out of polo
  - Communicate with and provide feedback to players in a manner which reflects respect and care.

### 2. Relationships

Polo coaches must develop a relationship with players (and others) based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect. Polo coaches:

- must not engage in behaviour that constitutes any form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, bullying)
  - Be aware of the physical needs of players, especially those still growing, and ensure that training loads and intensities are appropriate.
  - Ensure that physical contact is appropriate and necessary and is carried out within recommended guidelines with the player's full consent and approval.
  - Do not engage in any form of sexually related contact with an underage player. This is strictly forbidden as is sexual innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms.

- should promote the welfare and best interests of their players
  - Inform parents or guardians immediately if you are at all concerned about the welfare of a child.
  - Discuss with parents and other interested parties the potential impact of the programme on the player.
- must avoid sexual intimacy with players either while coaching them or in the period of time immediately following the end of the coaching relationship
  - Arrange to transfer a player to another polo coach if it is clear that an intimate relationship is developing.
- must take action if they have a concern about the behaviour of an adult towards a child
  - Know and understand the relevant HPA or employer policies and procedures in this regard.
  - Follow the reporting procedures laid down by your HPA or employer if you have a concern – non-action is unacceptable.
- should empower players to be responsible for their own decisions
  - Respect players' opinions when making decisions about their participation in polo.
  - Encourage players to take responsibility for their own development and actions.
  - Allow players to discuss and participate in the decision-making process.
- should clarify the nature of the coaching services being offered to players
  - Discuss and agree with players what information is confidential.
  - Inform players or their parents of the requirements of polo.
  - Inform players or their parents of any potential costs involved in accessing the coaching services on offer.
- should communicate and cooperate with other organisations and individuals in the best interests of players.
  - Be aware of and communicate on any conflict of interest as soon as it becomes apparent.
  - Do not work with any other polo coach's player without first discussing or agreeing it with both the coach and the player involved.
  - Identify and agree with players which other experts or organisations could offer appropriate services.

### 3. Responsibilities – personal standards

Polo coaches must demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times.

Polo coaches:

- must be fair, honest and considerate to players and others in polo
  - Operate within the rules and the spirit of polo.
  - Educate players on issues relating to the use of performance enhancing drugs in polo and cooperate fully with UK Sport and HPA policies.
  - Maintain the same level of interest and support when a player is sick or injured.
- should project an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency
- Display high standards in use of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation.

- must be positive role models for players at all times
  - Encourage players to display the same qualities.
  - Do not smoke, drink alcohol or use recreational drugs before or while coaching. This reflects a negative image and could compromise the safety of your players.
  - Display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in polo.

#### 4. Responsibilities – professional standards

To maximise the benefits and minimise the risks to players, coaches must attain a high level of competence through appropriate qualifications and a commitment to ongoing training that ensures safe and correct practice. Polo coaches will:

- ensure that the environment is as safe as possible, taking into account and minimising possible risks
  - Follow the guidelines of your HPA or employer.
  - Only allow participation if there is no risk to the player.
- promote the execution of safe and correct practice
  - Plan all sessions so they meet the needs of the players and are progressive and appropriate
- be professional and accept responsibility for their actions
  - Maintain appropriate records of your players.
  - Recognise and accept when it is appropriate to refer a player to another polo coach or specialist.
- make a commitment to providing a quality service to their players
  - Seek to achieve the highest level of qualification available.
  - Attend Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to maintain up-to-date knowledge of technical developments in polo.
  - Attend CPD to maintain up-to-date knowledge and understanding of other issues that might impact on both you and your players.
- actively promote the positive benefits to society of participation in polo
  - Be aware of the social issues and how polo can contribute to local, regional or national initiatives.
- contribute to the development of polo coaching as a profession by exchanging knowledge and ideas with others
  - Actively participate in recruitment and education opportunities in polo.
  - Actively contribute to local, regional and national initiatives to improve the standards and quality of polo coaching both in polo and sport in general.
  - Practise in an open and transparent fashion that encourages other polo coaches to contribute to or learn from your knowledge and experience.
  - Engage in self-analysis and reflection to identify your professional needs.
  - Seek continuous professional development opportunities to develop your polo coaching skills and update your knowledge.
  - Manage your lifestyle and polo coaching commitments to avoid burnout that might impair your performance.
- gain HPA coaching qualifications appropriate to the level at which they coach polo
  - Do not assume responsibility for any role for which you are not qualified or prepared.
  - Do not misrepresent your level of qualification.

Polo coaches must respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in polo

“Coaches are the reason so many people stay engaged in sport; they are the most critical success factor” *Baroness Sue Campbell CBE, Chair UK Sport.*

Recruit – Train – Support – Retain – Monitor

Mission statement of the Coaching Committee:

“To assist the Development Committee in their mission of identifying and developing talented players and in widening the accessibility of the sport. This will be done by developing coaches and the coaching structure in order to provide a clear pathway of coaching development, such that each coach may know at what stage they are at and what they must do in order to progress to the next stage.”

Key skills that a good coach should have:

- Good depth of knowledge about polo.
- Knowledge of the rules
- Riding ability
- Sporting ability
- Ability to build a rapport and communicate information
- Good equestrian knowledge and background
- A good ability to demonstrate
- Good observational and analytical skills
- Good organisational skills.
- The highest regard for safety.

The Coaching Committee will aim to develop the skills of individual coaches.