



Hurlingham Polo Association Coaches' Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is issued by the Hurlingham Polo Association (HPA), the governing body for the game of polo in the UK, Ireland and many other countries throughout the world.

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.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to define the standards of conduct that are expected and required of coaches. These standards reflect the HPA's aim to promote safe, inclusive and competitive polo at all levels. It reflects sector guidance also issued by UK Coaching.

Good polo coaching practice needs to reflect the following key principles:

Rights

Polo coaches must respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in polo. An HPA coach will be committed to championing diversity and recognise the importance of equal opportunities for all through the provision of an inclusive environment.

Your Responsibilities:

- assist in the creation of an environment where every individual has the opportunity to participate in polo
- create and maintain an environment free of fear and harassment
- recognise the rights of all players, officials and volunteers to be treated as individuals
- recognise the rights of players to confer with other polo coaches and experts
- promote the concept of a balanced lifestyle, supporting the well-being of the player both in and out of polo

Your behaviour:

- treat all individuals in polo with respect at all times.

THE HURLINGHAM POLO ASSOCIATION

Unit 2, Park Farm, Akeman Street, Kidlington, Oxfordshire OX5 3JQ, United Kingdom
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- 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.
- do not publicly criticise or engage in demeaning descriptions of others.
- be discreet in any conversations about players, polo coaches or any other individuals.
- communicate with and provide feedback to players in a manner which reflects respect and care.

Relationships

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

Your responsibilities:

- not engage in behaviour that constitutes any form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, bullying)
- promote the welfare and best interests of players
- avoid sexual intimacy with players in your role as a coach or in the period of time immediately following the end of the coaching relationship
- take action if they have a concern about the behaviour of an adult towards a child or vulnerable adult
- empower players to be responsible for their own decisions
- clarify the nature of the coaching services being offered to players
- communicate and cooperate with other organisations and individuals in the best interests of players.
- communicate to players and parents/guardians of any intention to photograph/film as a legitimate coaching aid and receive consent from the player and parent/carer

Your behaviour:

- 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.

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- 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.
- arrange to transfer a player to another polo coach if it is clear that an intimate relationship is developing.
- know and understand the relevant HPA or employer policies and procedures in this regard.
- follow the reporting procedures laid down by the HPA or your employer if you have a concern – non-action is unacceptable.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- photographs or film recordings of players must be kept securely i.e. hard copies in a locked drawer, digital copies in a password protected folder with restricted access.

Personal standards

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

Your Responsibilities:

- be fair, honest and considerate to players, officials and volunteers in polo
- project an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency
- display high standards in use of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation.
- ensure to apply these high standards within an online/virtual environment, maintaining appropriate boundaries and behaviours at all times.
- be positive role models for players at all times

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- accept and respect the authority of officials and their role in ensuring that competitions are conducted fairly and according to the relevant rules and regulations, and the decisions made by officials.

Your behaviour:

- 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.
- encourage players to display the same qualities.
- do not smoke, drink alcohol or use recreational drugs in the coaching environment. This reflects a negative image and could compromise the safety of your players.
- display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in polo, and embody the essential elements of sportsmanship at all times

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.

All coaches must be licensed through the HPA and commit to professional development by **attending a minimum number of hours of continual professional development (CPD) training** annually. Failure to comply to the necessary license requirements may risk possible regulation breaches and therefore fines or further sanctions. For more information please [click here](#).

Your Responsibilities:

- ensure that the environment is as safe as possible, taking into account and minimising possible risks
- promote the execution of safe and correct practice
- be professional and accept responsibility for their actions
- make a commitment to providing a quality service to their players
- actively promote the positive benefits to society of participation in polo
- contribute to the development of polo coaching as a profession by exchanging knowledge and ideas with others
- gain HPA coaching qualifications appropriate to the level at which they coach polo

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Your Behaviour:

- follow the guidelines of the HPA or your employer.
- only allow participation if there is no risk to the player.
- plan all sessions so they meet the needs of the players and are progressive and appropriate
- maintain appropriate records of your players.
- recognise and accept when it is appropriate to refer a player to another polo coach or specialist.
- seek to achieve the highest level of qualification available.
- attend CPD opportunities to maintain up-to-date knowledge coaching knowledge.
- attend CPD to maintain up-to-date knowledge and understanding of other issues that might impact on both you and your players.
- be aware of the social issues and how polo can contribute to local, regional or national initiatives.
- 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.
- do not assume responsibility for any role for which you are not qualified or prepared.
- do not misrepresent your level of qualification/competence.

Equine Welfare

The below has been adapted from the Equestrian Code of Conduct for Coaches from the British Equestrian Federation.

Polo differs from most other sports as it involves a combination of human and horse. These principles and duty of care not only apply to the player but also the horse*. In all our endeavours as a coach, we must ensure the highest standards of animal welfare.

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Your behaviour and responsibilities:

- ensure all activities you organise are appropriate for the capabilities of both the horse and rider/player
- encourage all players to meet the highest standards of equine welfare
- provide advice and support where you feel improvements could be made.
- refer players to an equine professional should you suspect, there could be a welfare issue. This should be done having first discussed your concerns with the rider/ owner of the horse.
- report any equine welfare concerns witnessed at games/matches/training or in the course of your work.

*Horse refers to both horse and pony

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