



National Standards for Sport Coaches & Core Responsibilities

NSSC Core Responsibilities

National Standards for Sport Coaches - SHAPE (Society of Health And Physical Educators) [NSSC Coaching Standards](#)

- **The National Standards for Sport Coaches includes 7 Core Responsibilities.**
 1. **Set Vision, Goals, and Standards for Sport Program:** Sport coaches establish a clearly defined coaching philosophy and vision for their program. They develop, implement and manage the goals for the program, in collaboration with sport program directors.
 2. **Engage in and Support Ethical Practices:** Sport coaches understand the importance of ethical practices, engage in ethical behavior, abide by codes of conduct affiliated with their sport and coaching context, and teach ethical behavior in their sport program.
 3. **Build Relationships:** Sport coaches develop competencies to effectively communicate, collaborate, educate and support all stakeholders associated with the sport program (e.g. athletes, administrators, assistant coaches, support staff, referees, sports medicine professionals, program supporters, parents, media).
 4. **Develop a Safe Sport Environment:** Sport coaches create an emotionally and physically safe sport environment by following the practices outlined by sport organizations, coaching science, and state and federal laws.
 5. **Create a Positive and Inclusive Sport Environment:** Sport coaches develop practices to maximize positive outcomes for their athletes by building season plans that promote physical, psychological and social benefits for their athletes and encourage participation in sport. Sport coaches implement strategies to promote participation of all athletes.
 6. **Conduct Practices and Prepare for Competition:** Sport coaches draw upon current coaching science, sport-specific knowledge, and best practices to conduct quality sport practices, prepare athletes for competition, and effectively manage contests. This practice can be framed around how coaches plan, teach, assess and adapt in practices and competition.
 7. **Strive for Continuous Improvement:** Sport coaches continually improve through self-reflection, mentorship, professional development, evaluation, and self-care.

National Standards for Sport Coaches

Core Responsibility #1 - Set Vision, Goals and Standards for Sport Program

Sport coaches establish a clearly defined coaching philosophy and vision for their program. They develop, implement and manage the goals for the program, in collaboration with sport program directors. To meet this responsibility sport coaches:

Standard 1: Develop and enact an athlete-centered coaching philosophy.

Standard 2: Use long-term athlete development with the intent to develop athletic potential, enhance physical literacy, and encourage lifelong physical activity.

Standard 3: Create a unified vision using strategic planning and goal-setting principles.

Standard 4: Align program with all rules and regulations and needs of the community and individual athletes.

Standard 5: Manage program resources in a responsible manner.

Core Responsibility #2 - Engage in and Support Ethical Practices

Sport coaches understand the importance of ethical practices, engage in ethical behavior, abide by codes of conduct affiliated with their sport and coaching context, and teach ethical behavior in their sport program. To meet this responsibility sport coaches:

Standard 6: Abide by the code of conduct within their coaching context.

Standard 7: Model, teach and reinforce ethical behavior with program participants.

Standard 8: Develop an ethical decision-making process based on ethical standards.

Core Responsibility #3 - Build Relationships

Sport coaches develop competencies to effectively communicate, collaborate, educate and support all stakeholders associated with the sport program (e.g., athletes, administrators, assistant coaches, support staff, referees, sports medicine professionals, program supporters, parents, media). To meet this responsibility sport coaches:

Standard 9: Acquire and utilize interpersonal and communication skills.

Standard 10: Develop competencies to work with a diverse group of individuals.

Standard 11: Demonstrate professionalism and leadership with all stakeholders.

Core Responsibility #4 - Develop a Safe Sport Environment

Sport coaches create an emotionally and physically safe sport environment by following the practices outlined by sport organizations, coaching science, and state and federal laws. To meet this responsibility sport coaches:

Standard 12: Create a respectful and safe environment which is free from harassment and abuse.

Standard 13: Collaborate with program directors to fulfill all legal responsibilities and risk management procedures associated with coaching.

Standard 14: Identify and mitigate physical, psychological and sociocultural conditions that predispose athletes to injuries.

Standard 15: Monitor environmental conditions and modify participation as needed to ensure the health and safety of participants.

Standard 16: Reduce potential injuries by instituting safe and proper training principles and procedures.

Standard 17: Develop awareness of common injuries in sport and provide immediate and appropriate care within scope of practice.

Standard 18: Support the decisions of sports medicine professionals to help athletes have a healthy return to participation following an injury.

Standard 19: Model and encourage nutritional practices that ensure the health and safety of athletes.

Standard 20: Provide accurate information about drugs and supplements to athletes and advocate for drug-free sport participation.

Core Responsibility #5 - Create a Positive and Inclusive Sport Environment

Sport coaches develop practices to maximize positive outcomes for their athletes by building season plans that promote physical, psychological and social benefits for their athletes and encourage participation in sport. Sport coaches implement strategies to promote participation of all athletes. To meet this responsibility sport coaches:

Standard 21: Implement a positive and enjoyable sports climate based on best practices for psychosocial and motivational principles to maximize athlete and team well-being and performance.

Standard 22: Build inclusive practices into the program for all groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity/gender expression, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, nationality, etc.) which are aligned with current legal and ethical guidelines.

Standard 23: Understand the importance of including athletes with disabilities in meaningful participation in established sport programs and consider options for athletes who cannot participate in traditional sport opportunities.

Core Responsibility #6 - Conduct Practices and Prepare for Competition Sport coaches draw upon current coaching science, sport-specific knowledge, and best practices to conduct quality sport practices, prepare athletes for competition, and effectively manage contests. This practice can be framed around how coaches plan, teach, assess and adapt in practices and competition. To meet this responsibility sport coaches:

Standard 24 (Plan): Create seasonal and/or annual plans that incorporate developmentally appropriate progressions for instructing sport-specific skills based on best practices in motor development, biomechanics, and motor learning.

Standard 25 (Plan): Design appropriate progressions for improving sport-specific physiological systems throughout all phases of the sport season using essential principles of exercise physiology and nutritional knowledge.

Standard 26 (Plan): Plan practices to incorporate appropriate competition strategies, tactics and scouting information.

Standard 27 (Plan): Incorporate mental skills into practice and competition to enhance performance and athlete well-being.

Standard 28 (Plan): Create intentional strategies to develop life skills and promote their transfer to other life domains.

Standard 29 (Plan): Understand components of effective contest management.

Standard 30 (Teach): Know the skills, elements of skill combinations and techniques, competition strategies and tactics, and the rules associated with the sport being coached.

Standard 31 (Teach): Develop and utilize pedagogical strategies in daily practices.

Standard 32 (Teach): Craft daily practice plans based on sound teaching and learning principles to promote athlete development and optimize competitive performance.

Standard 33 (Teach): Use appropriate motivational techniques to enhance performance and athlete engagement during practices and competitions.

Standard 34 (Assess): Implement appropriate strategies for evaluating athlete training, development and performance.

Standard 35 (Assess): Engage athletes in a process of continuous self-assessment and reflection to foster responsibility for their own learning and development.

Standard 36 (Adapt): Adjust training and competition plans based on athlete needs and assessment practices.

Standard 37 (Adapt): Use strategic decision-making skills to make adjustments or improvements or change course throughout a competition.

Core Responsibility #7 - Strive for Continuous Improvement

Sport coaches continually improve through self-reflection, mentorship, professional development, evaluation, and self-care. To meet this responsibility sport coaches:

Standard 38: Regularly engage in self-reflection or peer-reflection to deeply examine situations, generate potential solutions, and think through those solutions.

Standard 39: Develop an evaluation strategy to monitor and improve staff and team performance.

Standard 40: Improve coaching effectiveness by seeking to learn the latest information on coaching through various avenues of coach development.

Standard 41: Engage in mentoring and communities of practice to promote a learning culture and continual improvement.

Standard 42: Maintain work-life harmony and practice self-care to manage stress and burnout.

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