

London Ramblers Basketball
Code of Conduct for Competitive Coaches
September 2010

London Ramblers Basketball is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well being of all its members. Competitive coaches in the organization should at all times show respect and understanding for the safety and welfare of others and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the guidelines in this Code of Conduct.

1. Make sure that your behaviour always is guided by a concern for the safety and well being of your players.

In our increasingly litigious and accountable society, all those involved in sport have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps required to ensure the safety and well being of participants. Coaches are in a unique position to control many of the factors that affect the welfare of their players and are responsible for their players' safety and protection while under their supervision. Verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. For the purposes of this Code, verbal abuse is defined as the malicious use of insulting, threatening, shaming, demeaning, or derogatory language.

2. Plan your practices and ensure the safety and well-being of all players.

Practices should provide a safe, positive, and encouraging atmosphere for all participants. They should be carefully planned, well structured, and varied to provide opportunities for individual and team development. Because proper supervision is imperative, at least two adults should be present at all practices. Ensuring that there are adults of both sexes in the gym is also strongly advised. Finally, before they exit the gym, coaches must ensure that all players have been picked up by a parent or guardian.

3. Be reasonable in your demands.

Coaches must be reasonable in the requests they make of parents and players, such as whether to travel in bad weather. Players who miss practices because of inclement weather or an unwillingness to test road conditions should not be penalized for their absence.

4. Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every person.

Regardless of their gender, race, cultural background, religion, or other factor irrelevant to the sport, all individuals are entitled to equal treatment and respect and all participants should feel welcome when attending team activities. Coaches should avoid making remarks that could be construed as offensive or discriminatory, keeping in mind that sometimes even a joke may give rise to offence. Even if a person refers to him or herself using a particular label, it should not be taken as an invitation for coaches to do so. Using discretion is imperative, and it is better to err on the side of caution.

5. Remember that you are a role model.

As teachers, motivators, and mentors, coaches are placed in the position of role model. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the influence coaches have on players is positive. What you say and how you act is constantly being assessed by your players. Coaches should refrain from using profane, insulting, or offensive language in their capacity as a coach and should be careful about their use of alcohol before coaching, during competitions, or while on away trips.

6. Remember that players are not adults.

Coaches are not the peers of those they coach and must refrain from having inappropriate conversations with players, such as discussions about other players, coaches, parents, or discussions of an intimate or sexual nature.

7. Ensure that any physical contact is appropriate.

Physical contact between a coach and a player, except that which would be considered usual social contact such as giving a “high five,” should be rare. Gestures that are intended to be well meaning and that are considered acceptable to some may be unacceptable to others. Coaches should be aware that sometimes physical contact can be misinterpreted as sexual harassment or even molestation by a player or outsider. Particular care needs to be taken when coaching children. Coaches are required to ensure that if there is physical contact with a player, it is appropriate to the situation, necessary for the player’s skill development, and done in the sight of another adult.

8. Avoid being alone with players.

Whether at practices, games, or on away trips, coaches should avoid being alone with players. If you must have a private conversation with a player, do it within the view of others and with another coach or with the player’s parent present. Coaches should avoid transporting young players without another adult in the vehicle, or, where players are older, without another player in the vehicle. When staying in hotels, coaches should not enter any player’s room without knocking first and should avoid being left alone in a hotel room with only one or two players.

9. Act responsibly when players are ill or injured.

While parents should be contacted as soon as possible where a player is injured or becomes ill, coaches must take responsibility for players who are sick or injured while under their supervision. Where a player is injured on the court, make sure that there is no danger of further aggravation of the injury. Educate yourself so that you can recognize the seriousness of an injury or illness and act accordingly, but do not give medical advice if you are not qualified to do so. Finally, follow the advice of a physician when determining when an injured or ill player is ready to return to play or practice.

10. Remember that basketball is for enjoyment.

Children and young adults play basketball for fun and enjoyment. Winning is only one part of their motivation. Coaches never should ridicule players for making a mistake or losing a competition. Instead, coaches and players should see errors and losses as an opportunity to learn in a constructive way. Comment in a way that is positive and designed to create, interest, involvement, and development.

11. Develop team respect for opponents and their coaches.

Part of participation in sport is respect for all participants in the game. Encourage your players to accept that their opponents are entitled to proper courtesy. This means congratulating them whether they win or lose and accepting loss gracefully. Teach your players that the opposition coaches also are entitled to respect.

12. Instill respect for officials and their judgement in your players.

Players should be taught to understand that officials have a very difficult task to perform and that without them, games could not be played. Officials are there to enforce the rules of play, but they cannot always be right. Teach your players to accept bad calls gracefully. Abuse of referees is unacceptable behaviour that should not be tolerated.

13. Respect the facilities and equipment provided.

London Ramblers Basketball is committed to maintaining good relationships with those whose gyms we use to run our programs. Facilities, equipment, and their upkeep cost money and must be kept in good order. Coaches should ensure that neither they nor their players abuse anything provided for their use. Not only can equipment be damaged, serious injury can occur. Coaches also should ensure that facilities are left in the state in which they were found.

I have read and understand the content, requirements, and expectations of the Code of Conduct for Competitive Coaches of London Ramblers Basketball as set out above. I have a copy of the Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its provisions at all games, practices, tournaments, and other events that I attend as a coach or as a representative of London Ramblers Basketball. I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding this policy, I will consult London Ramblers Basketball.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____