

## Ohio Athletics Student-Athlete Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy

As valued members of the Ohio Athletics Department, it is our goal to assist student-athletes in attaining a quality education and earning a degree. Student-athletes at Ohio University are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that best represents their team and the institution, while being productive members of both the campus and surrounding communities. It is their responsibility to exhibit behaviors that enable them to make the most of the academic and athletics opportunities afforded to them.

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right subject to NCAA and MAC rules and regulations. To earn and maintain that privilege, all student-athletes must adhere to the Ohio Athletics Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, as well as the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct. The intent of this Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy is not to supersede NCAA policy, nor is it to judge who is guilty or not guilty under the same standards as would apply in a court of law. It is meant to set high standards for the department's expectations of how student-athletes represent Ohio University and to state the potential consequences for those student-athletes who make poor choices, reflecting negatively on themselves and Ohio University.

As Ohio University's most visible ambassadors, student-athletes at Ohio University are expected to uphold, at all times, high standards of integrity and behavior, reflecting well upon themselves, their families, coaches, teammates, the Department of Athletics and Ohio University.

Student-athletes are expected to respect the rights of others, and to abide by all rules and regulations of Ohio University, the MAC, and the NCAA. Failure to do so may result in suspension from the team or from Ohio University through the Ohio University Office of University Judiciaries. Scholarship student-athletes risk having all or part of their financial aid revoked for violations of this code. A student-athlete may appeal disciplinary action if he/she believes his/her situation presents special circumstances by which the assigned sanctions to be imposed are manifestly unfair or there is significant evidence that would justify a different outcome (see Appeal of Disciplinary Action).

Student-athletes, as citizens of Ohio University and the Athens community, are expected to abide by the laws of the United States, the state of Ohio, and the city of Athens. Because it is expected that the behavior of student-athletes shall at all times reflect the high standards of honor and dignity that characterize participation in competitive sports at Ohio University, student-athletes may be subjected to Athletic Department discipline for such acts that violate the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, regardless of where and when the acts are committed and regardless if any other disciplinary or legal action is taken against the student-athlete.

In addition to obeying all federal, state and local laws, student-athletes shall not participate in any gambling activities involving intercollegiate or professional athletics. They shall not solicit or accept any bet, wager any item of tangible value or provide information to individuals involved in athletic gambling activities.

Any behavior exhibiting racial, ethnic, religious or sexual harassment is prohibited. Physical or verbal abuse or offensive behavior will not be tolerated. “A just community committed to diversity acknowledges the uniqueness of the individual and her/his socio-cultural context, and provides systems and structures to support and promote the full, fair, and respected participation of all members. It holds as paramount the dignity of all people. It strives for acceptance, participation, and interdependence” (*Ohio University Statement on Hate Motivated Behavior*).

Any form of hazing related to participation on any intercollegiate athletics team or other campus related group will not be condoned nor tolerated. According to Ohio Revised Code 2903.31, Hazing is defined as “doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into a student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person.”

Student-Athletes are responsible for information contained in written or electronic transmissions (e.g., email) and any information posted in a public domain (e.g., internet, chat room, Facebook, You Tube, MySpace). Student-athletes are not precluded from participation in such online social networks or cyber communities; however, student-athletes should be reminded that they serve as representatives of Ohio University. As such, student-athletes’ sites are reflective of themselves, their team, their coach, the Department of Athletics and Ohio University.

Inappropriate or embarrassing information or pictures should not be posted to any public domain. Displaying indiscreet or hurtful comments about student-athletes, coaches, teams, administrators and/or the Department of Athletics will not be tolerated. Upon request, a student-athlete must grant access for coaches and/or department administrators to view his/her account.

The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances on a team trip or during any team-related function is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, travel to and from an athletics event, before or after an athletics contest, during team gatherings and any time the team is together in an official capacity.

The use or sale of illegal drugs is prohibited. The possession and consumption of alcohol by persons under the age of 21 is illegal and is prohibited.

Student-athletes are expected to communicate to their Head Coach any legal or campus-related violation or charge within twelve (12) hours of the incident. For violations that occur outside of the Athens community area, such as during a vacation period, student-athletes are expected to communicate with the Head Coach within 24 hours of the incident. The Head Coach will immediately notify the Director of Athletics. Failure of the student-athlete to communicate such an incident will result in an automatic one game suspension. This one game suspension is in addition to possible game suspensions that are appropriate related to this code.

Student-athletes shall conduct themselves with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, Ohio University and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports (*NCAA Bylaw 10.01.1*).

## **Ohio Athletics Disciplinary Policy**

Violations of the Ohio Athletics Student-Athlete Code of Conduct will result in immediate disciplinary action, above and beyond what action may be taken by the Office of University Judiciaries on behalf of the institution. Violations will be categorized into levels, and the corresponding discipline action will reflect the severity of the offense. A student-athlete may appeal disciplinary action if he/she believes his/her situation presents special circumstances by which the assigned sanctions to be imposed are manifestly unfair or there is significant evidence that would justify a different outcome (see Appeal of Disciplinary Action). Individual team policies may result in a greater, but not lesser, penalty than what is described herein.

### **Level 1**

Campus and/or Residence Hall Violations (e.g., noise or trash citations in residence halls or citations for violating other campus rules or policies)

- Violation will result in a verbal reprimand from the Head Coach.
- A subsequent level 2 violation may result in additional sanctions based upon the student-athlete's behavioral history and individual situation.

### **Level 2**

Campus Substance Violations (e.g., alcohol or substance violations on campus of a nature that does not result in an arrest or a required court appearance)

- Violation will result in a written reprimand from the Athletics Director. Depending upon the severity of the offense, a minimum of a 5% suspension of NCAA permissible contests and/or practice may be appropriate (Standard rounding rules apply [e.g., 1.5 = 2 games]). A possible suspension will be determined based upon the severity of the offense, the student-athlete's behavioral history and the individual situation. Such a decision will be made in consultation between the Director of Athletics and Head Coach. If the parties are unable to agree on an appropriate sanction, the decision of the Director of Athletics will prevail.
- A subsequent level 2 violation will result in a 10% suspension of NCAA permissible contests.
- This penalty will be enforced at the time the student-athlete is cited with the violation. If an athletics suspension is appropriate it may carry over to the next competitive season.
- All student-athletes are subject to Ohio University's expectations regarding alcohol which include:

- Depending upon the severity of the specific misbehavior, a first offense of the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct will result in reprimand, probation, suspension or expulsion.
- Sanctions for alcohol-related violations will include a referral to an appropriate University intervention program as well as a \$100 fine.
- If a student has earned fewer than ninety (90) credit hours and is under the age of 21, parents or guardians will be notified if student is found responsible for an alcohol-related violation of the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct.
- If a student is found responsible for an alcohol-related offense while on probation for an alcohol-related offense (even if either is minor), the student can expect to be suspended from the University.

### **Level 3**

Lower Level Misdemeanors (e.g., alcohol or substance violations resulting in an arrest and/or a required court appearance; those incidents where the student-athlete has placed himself/herself in a position where he/she could do harm to himself/herself or others; attempting to purchase, purchasing or possessing alcohol while underage, disorderly conduct, minor misdemeanor drug possession or use, possession of drug paraphernalia, resisting arrest without physical harm to the law enforcement officer)

- If arrested, the student-athlete will be placed on immediate suspension until the facts of the incident are reviewed by the Director of Athletics and Head Coach. During the period of review, the student-athlete will not be permitted to participate in any athletically-related activity, including but not limited to, team meetings, team travel, practice or competition. Each case will be reviewed within four business days of the incident.
- The violation will result in a suspension from 10-25% of NCAA authorized athletics contests, depending upon the severity of the offense (Standard rounding rules apply [e.g., 1.5 = 2 games]). The percent of suspension will be based on the number of NCAA permissible contests and ultimately approved by the Director of Athletics. Suspension's will be appropriate and may carry over to the next competitive season.
- In addition to any court sanction, the student-athlete will be required to complete an Ohio University approved counseling and evaluation session and may be required to participate in an educational program, consistent with sanctions imposed by University Judiciaries (e.g., BASICS course).
- The Head Coach will have the student-athlete call the student-athletes parent(s) or legal guardian. This phone call must be made in the presence of the Head Coach.

- The student-athlete will be placed on probation for a period of one calendar year. A subsequent offense during the probationary period may result in loss of athletics privileges for the remainder of the academic year. The Director of Athletics and head coach will review each case based on the facts presented. If the parties are unable to agree on an appropriate sanction, the decision of the Director of Athletics will prevail. Additional sanctions for a second offense may be made following the resolution of the second charge.

#### **Level 4**

Serious Misdemeanors (e.g., OMVI, assault, drug possession or use classified above a minor misdemeanor, shoplifting, theft, sexual misconduct, resisting arrest with physical harm to the law enforcement officer)

- If arrested, the student-athlete will be placed on immediate suspension until the facts of the incident are reviewed by the Director of Athletics and Head Coach. During the period of review, the student-athlete will not be permitted to participate in any athletically-related activity, including but not limited to, team meetings, team travel, practice or competition. Each case will be reviewed within four business days of the incident.
- Violation will result in suspension from 50% of athletics contests.
- The student-athlete will be required to complete an Ohio University approved counseling and evaluation program and may be required to participate in an educational program.
- The Head Coach will have the student-athlete call the student-athletes parent(s) or legal guardian. This phone call must be made in the presence of the Head Coach in accordance with FERPA and Ohio University Policy and Procedure.
- If misdemeanor charges result in a sentence which involves serving jail time, the student-athlete will be suspended from all athletic activities until the time has been served.
- The student-athlete will be placed on probation for the remainder of his/her time at Ohio University. A subsequent offense of the same nature at any time during the student-athlete's career will result in dismissal from the team and loss of athletics aid. Loss of aid may initiate at time of conviction.
- A subsequent offense of a less severe nature within a one calendar year period may result in dismissal from the team and loss of athletics aid. The Director of Athletics and Head Coach will review each case based on the facts presented. Additional sanctions for a second offense of a less severe nature may be made following the resolution of the second charge.

## **Level 5**

**Felonies** (e.g., any felony regardless of the nature of the charge)

- A level 5 charge will result in immediate suspension from all athletic related events.
- A level 5 conviction will result in immediate dismissal from the team and loss of athletics aid.

### **Appeal of Disciplinary Action**

A student-athlete may appeal disciplinary action if he/she believes his/her situation presents special circumstances by which the assigned sanctions to be imposed are manifestly unfair or there is significant evidence that would justify a different outcome.

To appeal a disciplinary decision, the student-athlete must request a meeting with the Director of Athletics, in writing, within ten business days of the incident. Once the request for appeal is granted, a meeting between the Director of Athletics, Head Coach and student-athlete will be scheduled as soon as is practical.

If a satisfactory agreement is not reached between the Director of Athletics and the student-athlete, the student-athlete may appeal the decision in writing to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs will examine the information provided by the Director of Athletics and the student-athlete and will either uphold the recommendation of the Director of Athletics or take action that is deemed more appropriate. Such action could include implementing a more or less-restrictive disciplinary sanction or rescinding the disciplinary sanction altogether. The Vice President for Student Affairs will have thirty (30) days to make a decision, but may decide on a longer period if necessary, and the Vice President for Student Affairs may or may not request a meeting with the student-athlete.

All sanctions originally levied shall remain in place during the appellate process, unless determined otherwise by the Director of Athletics.

The decision of the Vice President for Student Affairs is final. No further appeal of athletics sanctions is available.

### **Policy Review**

This policy is subject to an annual review by the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee.