



# **Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association**

## **Code of Conduct and Ethics**

**March 29, 2021**

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**1. Definitions** - The following terms have these meanings in this Code:

- 1.1. **Officials** means anyone, with the exception of players, performing an activity connected with the NLSA, regardless of title, the type of activity (administrative, sporting or any other) and the duration of the activity. It includes, but is not limited to, all Directors, Officers, committee members, Judicial Body members, coaches, trainers, referees, assistant referees, fourth officials, match commissioners, referee inspectors, diversity officers, persons in charge of safety, and any other person responsible for technical, medical and/or administrative matters in the NLSA, as well as all other persons obliged to comply with the NLSA *By-laws*.
- 1.2. **Staff** means any paid or volunteer person in a permanent or temporary position.
- 1.3. **Team Personnel** includes, but is not limited to, coaches, assistant coaches, guest coaches, managers, gender representatives, heads of delegation, medical or other personnel in a position of influence on the athletes.

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1. The purpose of the NLSA *Code of Conduct and Ethics* (hereinafter referred to as the Code) is to ensure a safe and positive environment (within NLSA's programs, activities, and events) by making individuals aware that there is an expectation, at all times, of appropriate behaviour consistent with the NLSA's core values. The NLSA supports equal opportunity, prohibits discriminatory practices, and is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect.
- 2.2. This Code is not intended to specifically outline every instance of misconduct. Misconduct that is not in line with the values of the NLSA or with the purpose of this Code may still constitute a breach of the Code and be subject to sanctions even though not specifically included in the Code.

**3. Application of this Code**

- 3.1. This Code applies to Officials, Athlete Members, Life Members, players and individuals employed or engaged by the NLSA.
- 3.2. The Code also applies to the Directors of the Provincial / Territorial Association Members, Professional Club Members or League Members or any other individuals who perform duties on behalf of these Members when the Members are engaged in soccer-related activities sanctioned by the NLSA.
- 3.3. This Code focuses on the conduct of actions on and off the field of play. Any breach of this Code will be addressed as described in the NLSA *Disciplinary Code*

**4. Responsibilities** - All parties referred to in Section 3 have a responsibility to:

- 4.1** Comply, at all times, with the NLSA *By-laws, Rules and Regulations*, policies, procedures and directives.
- 4.2** Work in a spirit of partnership to collaborate with the NLSA and all its Members and stakeholders to align efforts to achieve the Mission of the NLSA.
- 4.3** Resolve conflicts in a professional and civil manner on issues that may be in dispute.
- 4.4** Maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of NLSA Members and other individuals by:
  - 4.4.1** Demonstrating respect to individuals regardless of body type, physical characteristics, athletic ability, age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, sex, and sexual orientation
  - 4.4.2** Directing comments or criticism appropriately and avoiding public criticism of Members;
  - 4.4.3** Consistently demonstrating the spirit of fair play, sport leadership, and ethical conduct;
  - 4.4.4** Consistently treating individuals fairly and reasonably;
  - 4.4.5** Adhering to the *FIFA Laws of the Game*;
  - 4.4.6** Demonstrating respect for the principle of fair play, which include:
    - a) Respect for both the letter and spirit of the rules;
    - b) Respect for referees and their decisions;
    - c) Respect for opponents, including modesty in victory and composure in defeat; Facilitation of access to sport; and
    - d) Maintenance of self-control at all times.
  - 4.4.7** Refraining from the use of power or authority in an attempt to coerce another person to engage in inappropriate activities;
  - 4.4.8** Promoting the sport in the most constructive and positive manner possible;
  - 4.4.9** Respecting the property of others and not willfully cause damage; and
  - 4.4.10** Adhering to all federal, provincial, municipal and host country laws.

**4.5 Integrity in Sport** - All parties referred to in section 3.0 have a responsibility to:

- 4.5.1** Abstain from the non-medical use of drugs or the use of performance-enhancing drugs or methods and adhere to the requirements of the Canadian Anti-Doping Program;
- 4.5.2** Respect any penalty enacted pursuant to a breach of the Canadian Anti-Doping Program, whether imposed by the NLSA or any other sport organization;
- 4.5.3** Refrain from associating with any person for the purpose of coaching, training, competition, instruction, administration, management, athletic development, or supervision of the sport, who has violated an anti-doping rule and is serving a sanction involving a period of ineligibility imposed pursuant to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program and/or the World Anti-Doping Code;
- 4.5.4** Refrain from consuming alcohol in excess and from the use of illicit drugs while participating in NLSA programs, activities, competitions, or events;
- 4.5.5** Refrain from consuming alcohol , drugs and using tobacco in situations where minors are present;
- 4.5.6** Reject and condemn all forms of bribery and corruption;
- 4.5.7** Refrain from accepting or giving gifts or other benefits that influence an act that is related to their official activities. If in doubt, gifts shall not be offered or accepted;
- 4.5.8** Refrain from offering or accepting cash, other than reasonable per diems, expense reimbursement or salaries;
- 4.5.9** Refrain from forging or falsifying a document nor use such;
- 4.5.10** Ensure information obtained while carrying out one's duties is treated as confidential if that information is received or can be understood as confidential. Respect the confidentiality of the information after the relationship with the NLSA ceases;
- 4.5.11** Ensure transparency in all actions and decisions;
- 4.5.12** Remain politically neutral; and
- 4.5.13** Refrain from betting in connection with soccer and not tolerate any form of manipulation of match results – whether for financial, sporting or political gain, and ensure information in any form that is not publicly available is not used for the above purposes for oneself or another party.

**4.6 Harassment** - All parties referred to in Section 3.0 have a responsibility to:

**4.6.1** Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes harassment, where harassment is defined according to the Canadian Human Rights Commission <sup>1</sup> as a form of discrimination that involves any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates. Generally, harassment is a behaviour that persists over time. Serious one-time incidents can also sometimes be considered harassment.

**4.6.2** Types of behaviour that constitute harassment include, but are not limited to:

- a) Written or verbal abuse, threats, or outbursts;
  - b) The display of visual material which is offensive or which a reasonable person ought to know is offensive in the circumstances;
  - c) Unwelcome remarks, jokes, comments, innuendo, or taunts;
  - d) Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures;
  - e) Condescending or patronizing behaviour which is intended to undermine self-esteem, diminish performance or adversely affect conditions of participation;
  - f) Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, endanger a person's safety, or negatively affect performance;
  - g) Any form of hazing;
  - h) Retaliation or threats of retaliation against an individual who reports harassment;
  - i) Bullying;
  - j) Offensive or intimidating phone calls, texts, voice mails or emails;
  - k) Displaying or circulating offensive pictures, photographs or materials in printed or electronic form;
- 
- l) Psychological abuse;
  - m) Discrimination;

- n) Words, actions or an environment which is known or should reasonably be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning or intimidating; and
- o) Behaviours such as described above that are not directed towards a specific individual or group but have the same effect of creating a negative or hostile environment.

**4.6.3** Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes violence, where violence is defined as the exercise of physical force, that causes or could cause physical injury; an attempt to exercise physical force that could cause physical injury; or a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force. Types of behaviour that are applicable to this section include, but are not limited to:

- a) Verbal threats to attack;
- b) Sending or leaving threatening notes, texts, voice mail or emails;
- c) Making threatening physical gestures;
- d) Wielding a weapon;
- e) Hitting, pinching or unwanted touching which is not accidental or deemed to be generally accepted as a part of sport participation;
- f) Throwing an object in the direction of someone;
- g) Blocking normal movement or physical interference, with or without the use of equipment; and
- h) Any attempt to engage in the type of conduct outlined above.

**4.6.4** Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment, where sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual comments and sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or conduct of a sexual nature. Types of behaviour that constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- a) Sexist jokes;
- b) Sexual violence;
- c) Display of sexually offensive material;
- d) Sexually degrading words used to describe a person;

- e) Inquiries or comments about a person's sex life;
- f) Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, requests, invitations or propositions;
- g) Inappropriate sexual touching, advances, suggestions or requests;
- h) Unwanted physical contact including, but not limited to, touching, petting, pinching, or kissing; and
- i) Physical or sexual assault.

#### **4.7 Additional Responsibilities**

##### **4.7.1 Directors, Committee Members, Judicial Body Members, and Staff** - The NLSA's Directors, Committee Members, and Judicial Body Members must also:

- a) Comply and be familiar with all NLSA governance documents applicable to their role and responsibility;
- b) Act with honesty and integrity and conduct themselves in a manner which maintains the confidence of Members and other stakeholders;
- c) Ensure that the NLSA's financial affairs are conducted with due regard for all fiduciary and operational responsibilities;
- d) Conduct themselves openly, professionally, lawfully and in good faith in the best interests of the NLSA;
- e) Be independent and impartial and not influenced by self-interest, outside pressure, expectation of reward, or fear of criticism;
- f) Behave with decorum appropriate to both circumstance and position, and be fair, equitable, considerate, and honest in all dealings with others;
- g) Keep informed about NLSA's activities, the national sport community, and general trends in sport;
- h) Exercise the degree of care, diligence, and skill required in the performance of their duties pursuant to the laws under which the NLSA is incorporated;



- i) Respect the confidentiality appropriate to the business at hand;
- j) Ensure that Members are given sufficient opportunity to express opinions, and that all opinions are given due consideration and weight;
- k) Respect the decisions of the majority and resign if unable to do so; and
- l) Commit the time to attend meetings and be diligent in preparation for, participation in, and follow-up from such meetings.

#### **4.7.2 NLSA's Staff must also:**

- a) Comply and be familiar with the NLSA *Rules and Regulations* and operational policies applicable to their role, responsibilities and /or their involvement in an event sanctioned by the NLSA; and
- b) Exercise the degree of care, diligence, openness, honesty, decorum and skill required in the performance of their duties.

### **4.8 Team Personnel**

The team personnel-athlete relationship is a privileged one and plays a critical role in the personal, sport, and athletic development of the athlete. Team personnel must recognize the power inherent in the position of team personnel and respect and promote the rights of all participants in sport. This is accomplished by establishing and following procedures for confidentiality (right to privacy), informed participation, and fair and reasonable treatment. Team personnel have a special responsibility to respect and promote the rights of participants who are in a vulnerable or dependent position and less able to protect their own rights. This section applies equally to the relationship between match officials and their coaches, instructors, accessors, and mentors.

Team personnel must also:

- 4.8.1.** Ensure a safe environment by selecting activities and establishing controls that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the involved athletes;
  - a) Prepare athletes systematically and progressively, using appropriate time frames and monitoring physical and psychological adjustments while refraining from using training methods or techniques that may harm athletes;
  - b) Avoid compromising the present and future health of athletes by communicating and cooperating with sport medicine professionals in the

diagnosis, treatment, and management of athletes' medical and psychological treatments;

- c) Provide athletes (and the parents/guardians of a minor) with the information necessary to be involved in decisions that affect the athlete;
- d) Act in the best interest of the athlete's development as a whole person;
- e) Respect other team personnel;
- f) Report any ongoing criminal investigations, previous convictions or existing bail conditions;
- g) Under no circumstances provide, promote, or condone the use of drugs (other than properly prescribed medications) or performance-enhancing substances and, in the case of minors, alcohol and/or tobacco;
- h) Respect athletes playing with other teams;
- i) Not engage in a sexual relationship with an athlete under 18 years old, or an intimate or sexual relationship with an athlete over the age of 18 if in a position of power, trust, or authority over the athlete;
- j) Dress professionally, neatly, and inoffensively; and
- k) Use inoffensive language, taking into account the audience being addressed.

**4.8.2 Athletes** - Athletes must also:

- a) Report any medical problems in a timely fashion, when such problems may limit their ability to travel, practice, or compete; or in the case of carded athletes, interfere with the athlete's ability to fulfill requirements under the Athlete Assistance Program;
- b) Participate and appear on time, well-nourished, and prepared to participate to their best abilities in all competitions, practices, training sessions, tryouts, tournaments, and events;
- c) Adhere to the NLSA's requirements regarding clothing and equipment;
- d) Never ridicule a participant for a poor performance or practice; and
- e) Act in a sportsmanlike manner and not engage in violent behaviour, foul language, or offensive gestures.

#### **4.8.3 Match Officials** - Match Officials must also:

- a) Conduct themselves with dignity both on and off the field of play, and by example seek to inspire the principles of fair play in others;
- b) Adhere to all standards and directives established by the NLSA, Canada Soccer and the International Football Association Board and FIFA;
- c) Be neat in appearance and maintain a high level of physical and mental fitness;
- d) Study and enforce the current Laws of the Game and any event-specific rules and regulations;
- e) Perform his/her designated duties, including attending organized clinics and lectures, etc. and shall assist their colleagues in upgrading and improving their standards of officiating, instructing and assessing;
- f) Adhere to the NLSA's Anti-Doping Policy;
- g) Honour any appointments accepted, unless unable to do so by virtue of illness or personal emergency;
- h) Not publicly criticize other referees or the NLSA;
- i) Not make any statement to the media (newspaper, television, radio, etc.) related to a game in which the referee has officiated, or to the performance of the players or other officials;
- j) Not accept any appointment to officiate in unsanctioned events;
- k) Be fair, equitable, considerate, independent, honest, and impartial in all dealings with others;
- l) When writing reports, set out the true facts and not attempt to justify any decisions; and
- m) Report any approach to fix the result of a match.

#### **4.8.4 Spectators and Parents** - Spectators and Parents are expected to:

- a) Encourage athletes to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence;

- b) Never ridicule a participant for making a mistake during a performance or practice;
- c) Provide positive comments that motivate and encourage participants' continued effort;
- d) Respect the decisions and judgments of officials and encourage athletes to do the same;
- e) Respect and show appreciation to all competitors, and to the coaches, officials, and other volunteers who give their time to the sport; and
- f) Refrain from entering the training or competition area and from interfering with any activities.

## **5.0 Duty of Disclosure, Reporting and Cooperation**

**5.1** Any behaviour prohibited by this Code that is experienced or observed must be reported confidentially and in writing to the following email address:

[ethics@nlsa.ca](mailto:ethics@nlsa.ca)

**5.2** When a report is submitted, the following shall apply:

- a) A person reporting a violation of this Code shall be provided the opportunity to remain anonymous, save and except in those circumstances where the nature of the disclosure and/or the resultant investigation make it necessary to disclose identify (for example, legal investigations or proceedings). In such cases, all reasonable steps shall be taken to protect the person reporting from harm as a result of having made a disclosure.
- b) The identity of the person submitting a report shall remain confidential unless the person and the Ethics Panel members agree otherwise.
- c) A person is protected against retaliation as a result of having made, in good faith, a report which the person believes to be valid or as a result of such person having otherwise assisted in the investigation of the report. Retaliation against a person who raises a concern, in good faith, will not be tolerated and is considered a violation of this *Code*.
- d) All parties must cooperate fully with the Ethics, Disciplinary and Appeals Panels as requested.

## **6.0 Coming Into Force**

- 6.1** This NLSA *Code of Conduct and Ethics* will be reviewed on an annual basis and may be amended, deleted or replaced by Ordinary Resolution of the Board of Directors.