

St. Albert Minor Football Association

2025 Staff Code of Conduct

The St. Albert Minor Football Association (SAMFA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a positive, safe, and enjoyable football experience for all participants in both tackle and flag football, across all ages and genders. As a member of the SAMFA staff, you play a critical and influential role in the personal and athletic development of our athletes. Our success relies on your commitment to uphold the values of sportsmanship, respect, fair play, and teamwork. Your role in upholding these values is not just a duty, but a responsibility that is integral to SAMFA. This Code of Conduct outlines the expectations for all staff involved in our activities, ensuring a healthy, supportive, and safe environment for everyone. We are proud to align with the Capital District Minor Football Association (CDMFA) Code of Conduct and Football Canada's ethical standards, as well as the principles of the Canadian Safe Sport Program (CSSP), demonstrating our unwavering dedication to safety and respect.

1. Purpose and Application: This Code of Conduct is designed to promote good conduct and guide the behavior of all SAMFA staff, protecting and supporting our players, their teammates, other staff, officials, and the broader football community. It applies to all staff conduct during SAMFA activities, including but not limited to games, practices, training camps, tryouts, team travel, and any related team or association events. This also extends to conduct outside of SAMFA activities when it adversely affects relationships within the Association (e.g., with players, other staff, or parents) or is detrimental to its image and reputation. Violation of this code may result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from SAMFA activities or expulsion from the association. It is crucial to understand that adherence to this code is not optional, but a requirement for all involved in SAMFA. Remember, the consequences of violating this code are serious, and we expect full compliance from all SAMFA staff.

2. Core Principles: As SAMFA staff, I agree to:

- **Prioritize Well-being and Safety:** At SAMFA, we prioritize the emotional and physical well-being of players above personal desire to win or other objectives. This commitment to safety is at the core of everything we do, ensuring that everyone can enjoy the game without fear of harm and providing a secure environment for all.
- **Respect Others:** The foundation of our football community is built on mutual respect and understanding. I will treat all players, other staff, opponents, officials, volunteers, and spectators with dignity and respect. This includes demonstrating respect regardless of body type, physical characteristics, athletic ability, age, ancestry, color, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, sex, or sexual orientation. My respect is what makes our community strong and inclusive.
- **Exhibit Sportsmanship and Fair Play:** I will consistently demonstrate the spirit of sportsmanship, sports leadership, and ethical conduct. I will acknowledge good plays and performances by both my team and opponents. I will be knowledgeable in and abide by the rules of youth football and the league in which we participate, and I will teach those rules to SAMFA players.

- **Promote a Positive Environment:** Your contribution to a positive, encouraging, and safe playing environment for all SAMFA players is invaluable. Your actions can inspire others and create a supportive atmosphere where everyone can thrive. Let's all do our part to make SAMFA a place where everyone feels welcome and encouraged. As a member of the SAMFA staff, you have the power to influence the environment and make a positive impact on our players and their experiences.
- **Lead by Example:** I understand that as an adult in a position of leadership, I set an example that the children participating in the program will follow. I will maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of myself and others involved in SAMFA.

3. Specific Expectations and Prohibited Conduct:

3.1. Professional Conduct & Relationships:

- I understand that I am a volunteer and not a voted position, and as such, the SAMFA Board is entitled to remove me from my position without explanation or formal complaint.
- I will focus comments and criticism appropriately and avoid public criticism of athletes, other staff members, officials, or volunteers. I will only discuss any disagreements, differences of opinion, or conflicts I may have with the person with whom I disagree, and only at an appropriate time and place.
- I will consistently treat individuals fairly and reasonably.
- I will always show respect for and abide by the decisions, calls, and judgments of the officials at any game.
- I will respect the property of others and refrain from intentionally causing damage.
- I will promote the sport in the most constructive and positive way possible.
- I will utilize coaching techniques tailored to all the skills I teach.
- I will be independent and impartial, and will not be influenced by self-interest, outside pressure, expectations of reward, or fear of criticism.
- I will adhere to the SAMFA Rules, Policies, and Procedures for fair play rules. These rules are not just guidelines; they are the foundation of our commitment to fair play and respect for the game. As a SAMFA staff member, it is your responsibility to uphold these rules and ensure a level playing field for all participants.

3.2. Mandatory Training and Certifications:

- **NCCP Courses:** All coaches are required to take all necessary NCCP (National Coaching Certification Program) courses relevant to their coaching level and sport.
- **Rule of Two:** All SAMFA staff (coaches, trainers, managers, and volunteers) are required to take the **Rule of Two course** to ensure appropriate supervision and to prevent situations where a single adult is alone with a participant. This course provides essential guidelines for maintaining a safe environment and minimizing the risk of abuse. Information can be found at:
<https://coach.ca/sport-safety/responsible-coaching-movement/rule-two>
- As per the **Rule of Two**, coaches, trainers, managers, board members, and volunteers are prohibited from being alone with a player in any setting.
- I will comply with SAMFA's "Screening Policy" if applicable.
- I will report to the Association any ongoing criminal investigation, conviction, or existing bail conditions.

3.3. Anti-Bullying and Harassment:

- I understand that bullying of any kind is unacceptable at SAMFA.
- I will refrain from any behavior that constitutes harassment, defined as vexatious comment or conduct against any member that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.
- Prohibited forms of harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - Bullying (physical, verbal, relational, cyberbullying).
 - Written or verbal abuse, threats, or outbursts.
 - Persistent unwelcome remarks, jokes, comments, innuendos, or taunts.
 - Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures.
 - Condescending or patronizing behavior intended to undermine self-esteem or diminish performance.
 - Any form of hazing.
 - Unwanted physical contact, including but not limited to touching, petting, pinching, or kissing.
 - Behaviors that create a negative or hostile environment.
 - Retaliation or threats of retaliation against an individual who reports harassment.
 - Repeated offensive or intimidating phone calls or emails.
 - Displaying or circulating offensive pictures, photographs, or materials in printed, electronic form, or through social media.
 - Psychological abuse, personal harassment, discrimination, intimidating words or conduct, or any words or actions that are offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, or demeaning.

3.4. Violence and Sexual Harassment:

- I will refrain from any behavior that constitutes violence, including the exercise or attempt to exercise physical force that causes or could cause bodily injury, or any statement or behavior interpreted as a threat. This includes, but is not limited to: verbal, written or electronic threats to attack a person; making threatening physical gestures; wielding a weapon or throwing an object at a person; hitting, pinching, or unwanted touching (non-accidental); blocking normal movement or physical interference; or any attempt to engage in such conduct.
- I will refrain from any behavior that constitutes sexual harassment, defined as unwelcome sexual comments and sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or conduct of a sexual nature. This includes, but is not limited to: sexist jokes; physical or sexual assault; display of sexually offensive material; sexually degrading words used to describe a person; inquiring or comments about a person's sex life; unwelcome sexual flirtation, advances, or propositions; or persistent unwanted contact.
- I will not engage in a sexual or intimate relationship with an athlete.
- I will refrain from using power or authority to coerce another person into engaging in inappropriate activities.

3.5. Substance Use:

- I will provide a sports environment for SAMFA teams that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol at all youth sports events, including practices and games.
- I am unequivocally opposed to athletes using any banned substance.
- I will not possess or consume any alcoholic beverage or cannabis while involved in CDMFA or SAMFA activities.
- I will not smoke or vape any substance or use spit tobacco on-site while involved in CDMFA or SAMFA activities. This applies to all activities held at an Association event on any rented private or community facilities.
- Under no circumstances will I 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.

3.6. Communication and Conflict Resolution:

- If a conflict arises, I will ensure that one other neutral adult (neither a spouse nor a family member) is present during any conversations with players, staff, or parents. If this is not possible at the moment, I will request to have the conversation at a later time and ensure a suitable time is scheduled.
- I will utilize communication resources available to the association for appropriate and constructive communication only, avoiding widespread media communication channels (e.g., e-mails to 'all', open letters) which are not suitable and carry a significant risk of legal liability and escalating tensions.
- I understand the importance of following SAMFA's Conflict and Dispute Resolution Protocol for addressing concerns.

3.7. Role-Specific Expectations (where applicable):

- **Head Coaches:** I will ensure that expectations for my team are set out at my first practice, including but not limited to expectations for appropriate interactions with the coaching staff, expectations for the players (on and off the field), and expectations for the season.
- **Assistant Coaches, Trainers, Managers:** I understand that I am obligated to follow the direction of the Head Coach or Trainer for the team. I know that the Head Coach or Trainer is responsible for my actions. As such, if they determine that my actions indicate I should no longer be an Assistant Coach or Trainer under their supervision, they may remove me from my position at any time.
- **Trainers:** I understand that my decision regarding a player's participation is final, and it is my responsibility to ensure that a player does not step onto the field without obtaining the necessary medical clearance.
- I will provide athletes (and their parents or guardians) with the necessary information to be involved in decisions that affect them.
- I will prepare athletes systematically and progressively, using appropriate time frames and monitoring their physical and psychological adjustments, while avoiding the use of training methods or techniques that may harm them (e.g., following the safe contact rules)

- I will avoid compromising the present and future health of athletes by communicating and cooperating with sports medicine professionals in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of athlete medical treatments.
- I will act in the best interest of the athlete's development as a whole person.
- I will respect athletes playing with other teams and in dealings with them, refraining from encroaching upon topics or actions that are deemed to be within the realm of "coaching" unless I have first received approval from the coaches responsible for the athlete.
- I will dress professionally, neatly, and in an inoffensive manner.
- I will use inoffensive language, taking into account the audience being addressed.

4. Reporting and Consequences:

- I understand that I have a duty to report violations of this Code of Conduct, particularly concerns involving breaches of vulnerable persons or serious allegations of abuse or harassment, to SAMFA promptly and by the prescribed procedures (referencing SAMFA's Conflict and Dispute Resolution Protocol and Anti-Bullying Policy). I understand that for serious allegations, immediate contact with the President or Vice President is required, and I can also contact the police directly if a criminal act is suspected to have been committed.
- I understand that if I break this Code of Conduct, league officials will investigate and discuss with all parties.
- Disciplinary actions for violating this Code can include, but are not limited to: verbal warning, written warning, game suspension, disqualification of playoff eligibility, or a lifetime ban. In severe cases of bullying, suspension or removal from SAMFA will be strongly considered and enforced.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the St. Albert Minor Football Association 2025 Staff Code of Conduct.

Name: _____

Role (e.g., Coach, Trainer, Manager, Volunteer): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____