PREAMBLE

The distinguishing characteristic of a profession is that its members are dedicated to rendering a service to humanity. Personal gain must be of lesser consideration. Those who select football coaching must understand the justification for football is that it provides spiritual and physical values for those who play it, and the game belongs, essentially, to the players.

The welfare of the game depends on how the coaches live up to the spirit and letter of ethical conduct and how coaches remain ever mindful of the high trust and confidence placed in them by their players and by the public.

Coaches unwilling or unable to comply with the principles of the Code of Ethics have no place in the profession.

Formation of a Code and procedures for its enforcement were approved unanimously by the American Football Coaches Association at the 29th annual meeting held in Cincinnati, Ohio, on January 10, 1952. Since then, additional provisions have been adopted and incorporated into the Code, the most complete revision being in 1973.

The committee on ethics that year presented the new revision to the American Football Coaches Association, and the Association unanimously approved the revised code on January 10, 1973, at the 50th annual meeting held in Chicago, Illinois.

This Code should be studied regularly by all coaches and its principles should always be followed. Violation of the Code should be reported to the Ethics Committee.
PURPOSE

The Code of Ethics has been developed to protect and promote the best interests of the game and the coaching profession. Its primary purpose is to clarify and distinguish ethical and approved professional practices from those which are detrimental. Its secondary purpose is to emphasize the purpose and value of football and to stress proper functions of coaches in relations to schools, players, and the public.

The ultimate success of the principles and standards of this Code depends on those for whom it has been established—the football coaches.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee on Ethics shall consist of a chairman and eight members each representing one of the nine districts. Two members shall be appointed for four years, two for three years, two for two years, and two for one year. The ninth member shall be appointed for the proper amount of rotating years. New appointments shall be for four years. The committee shall meet each year on a date just prior to the Annual Meeting or at such other time as the chairman deems advisable, preferably at the American Football Coaches Association's All-America Game.

ENFORCEMENT

1. The Committee on Ethics is empowered to investigate any and all alleged violations of the Code. When an alleged violation is brought to the attention of the Committee on Ethics from any source, the method of proceeding with investigative action and requesting an appearance before the Committee shall be determined by a subcommittee consisting of the chairman, one at-large committee member and the committee district representative. Upon a decision to bring an alleged violation before the Ethics Committee, the member coach involved shall be notified thirty (30) days prior to the annual scheduled meeting date.

The member coach shall appear before the committee at the designated date and time. The Committee may request of the member coach that any official investigation data be forwarded to the committee. The member coach may submit to the committee any information relative to the alleged violation.

2. There is to be no acceptance of prima-facie evidence of a violation in any case. The member coach shall not be presumed in violation of the Code of Ethics because an institution has been found in violation of Article III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association or the conference rules and regulations to which that institution is a member. If the Committee on Ethics finds the member coach not in violation of the Code of Ethics, the committee shall write a letter to the member coaches, president and athletic director, detailing their findings.

3. If the Committee on Ethics finds the member coach in violation...
of the Code of Ethics, it may elect one or more of the following courses of action:

a. A letter of reprimand.

b. A letter of reprimand with copies of the letter to the member coach's president and athletic director.

c. Place the member coach on a one year probation. Any violation of the Code of Ethics during the probationary period will result in immediate and indefinite suspension of membership.

d. Recommend to the President and the Board of Trustees of the AFCA the suspension of membership for a period of one or more years.

After proper notification should member coach refuse to appear before the Committee on Ethics without cause, he shall be subject to immediate probation. Failure to appear at the subsequent annual meeting will result in a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for his indefinite suspension of membership from the Association.

4. The Board of Review shall act as an appeal board for members who have received disciplinary action from the Committee on Ethics. A member who wishes his case reviewed shall notify the chairman of the Board of Review, who shall then ask the Board of Review to meet for consideration of the appeal. The Board of Review will have final disposition of any case it has been asked to review.

The Board of Review shall consist of five members. Two past presidents, two trustees, and one active member who is not in either category. One is to be appointed for five years, one for four years, one for three years, one for two years, and one for one year. New appointments thereafter shall be for five years.

5. The entire proceedings are to be confidential. Exception: The findings of the Ethics Committee and the Board of Review on violations of the Code, may be announced to the membership at the annual meeting of the Association. However, names shall not be revealed.

Article One

RESPONSIBILITIES TO PLAYERS

1. In his relationship with players under his care, the coach should always be aware of the tremendous influence he wields for good or bad. Parents entrust their dearest possession to the coach's charge, and the coach, through his own example, must always be sure that the boys who have played under him are finer and more decent men for having done so. The coach should never place the value of a win above that of instilling the highest desirable ideals and character traits in his players. The safety and welfare of his players should always be uppermost in his mind, and they must never be sacrificed for any personal prestige or selfish glory.

2. In teaching the game of football, the coach must realize that there are certain rules designed to protect the player and provide common standards.
for determining a winner and a loser. Any attempts to beat these rules, to
take unfair advantage of an opponent, or to teach deliberate unsportsman­
like conduct, have no place in the game of football, nor has any coach
guilty of such teaching any right to call himself a coach. The coach
should set the example for winning without boasting and losing without
bitterness. A coach who conducts himself according to these principles
need have no fear of failure, for in the final analysis, the success of a
coach can be measured in terms of the respect he has earned from his own
players and from his opponents.

3. The diagnosis and treatment of injuries is a medical problem and
should, under no circumstances, be considered a province of the coach.
A coach’s responsibility is to see that injured players are given prompt and
competent medical attention and that the most minute detail of a physi­
cian’s orders are carried out.

4. Under no circumstances should a coach authorize the use of drugs.
Medicants, stimulants, or drugs should be used only when authorized and
supervised by a physician.

5. A player’s future should not be jeopardized by any circumvention of
eligibility rules.

6. A coach should not make demands on his players that will interfere
with the player’s opportunities for achieving academic success.

Article Two
RESPONSIBILITY TO THE INSTITUTION

1. The function of the coach is to educate students through participa­
tion in the game of football. This primary and basic function must never be
disregarded.

2. A coach shall conduct himself so as to maintain the principles, integ­
rity, and dignity of his institution.

3. A coach should not exert pressure on faculty members to give
players consideration they do not deserve.

4. A coach should not exert pressure on admissions office to admit
players not qualified.

5. A coach should discuss his problems with his athletic director and/or
faculty chairman in a friendly manner and then accept and support the
decisions that have been reached.

6. Official student records and transcripts should never pass through the
coach’s office.

7. The coach should constantly be alert to see his program is being con­
ducted and promoted properly. The coach should lend his experience and
training to the governing body of the school’s athletic program in the
solution of a football problem. Where differences of opinion arise, and the
council overrides the coach’s judgment, discretion should be exercised in
airing such differences outside the council meeting.

8. It is highly important that a coach support the administration in all
policies, rules and regulations regarding football.
9. A coach's immediate superior, or superiors, should be notified immediately of a possible position transfer.

Article Three
RULES OF THE GAME

1. The Football Code which appears in the Official Football Rule Book shall be considered an integral part of this Code of Ethics and should be carefully read and observed.
2. Each coach should be acquainted thoroughly with the rules of the game. He is responsible for having the rules taught and interpreted for his players.
3. Both the letter and the spirit of the rules must be adhered to by the coaches.
4. To gain an advantage by circumvention or disregard for the rules brands a coach or player as unfit to be associated with football.
5. A coach is responsible for flagrant roughing tactics. He is responsible for illegal substitutions. He shall not permit faking of injuries in order to stop the clock. He shall not permit illegal shift with the intent of drawing an opponent offside.
6. A coach must remember always that IT IS NOT the purpose of football to hurt or injure an opponent by legal or illegal methods.
7. Good Sportsmanship. Habit formation is developed on the practice field. Where coaches permit, encourage or condone performance which is dangerous to an opponent, they are derelict in their responsibility to teach fair play and good sportsmanship. This aspect of coaching must be attacked just as vigorously as the teaching of offense and defense, and to the players it is more important than all the technical aspects of the game combined. Any coach who fails to stress this point, or who permits, encourages or defends the use of unsportsmanlike tactics shall be considered guilty of the most serious breach of football coaching ethics.

Article Four
OFFICIALS

1. No competitive contest can be played satisfactorily without impartial, competent officials. Officials must have the respect and support of coaches and players. On and off-the-record criticism of officials to players or to the public shall be considered unethical.
2. Officials' Associations. There should be a cooperative relationship between coaches and officials' associations, with frequent interchange of ideas and suggestions. Coaches should, whenever possible, accept invitations to attend officials' rules meetings. Similarly, coaches should extend officials invitations to discuss rules interpretations with their squads, and on occasion, to officials at scrimmages, for mutual benefits.
3. Treatment of Officials. On the day of a game officials should be treated in a courteous manner. They should be provided with a private
room in which to meet and dress for the game. Conferences between coaches and officials shall always be conducted according to procedures established by the governing Conference or Officials Association. In every respect the official Rule Book shall be followed in coach-official relationships, on the field and during and following a game. Any criticisms which the coach may have to make concerning officiating should be made in writing to the office which assigned the official to the game. For a coach to address, or permit anyone on his bench to address, uncomplimentary remarks to any official during the progress of a game, or to indulge in conduct which might incite players or spectators against the officials, is a violation of the rules of the game and must likewise be considered conduct unworthy of a member of the coaching profession.

4. Use of Movies in Checking Officials. It should be recognized that slow motion study of controversial decisions by officials is far different from on-the-spot decisions which must be made during the course of a game. To show critical plays to sport writers, sportscasters, alumni and the public, which may incite them to label officials as incompetents, must be considered unethical conduct.

Article Five
PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Members of the news media should be treated with courtesy, honesty, and respect. Derogatory and misleading statements should be avoided. Direct questions should be answered honestly, or not at all. If good judgment indicates an honest answer would be prejudicial to the best interests of the game, ethical procedure demands that it not be answered. In such instances, “No comment” is justifiable.

2. Coaches should assume the responsibility of teaching their players how to conduct themselves in interviews in the best interests of football.

3. The Association recommends that the media be admitted to dressing rooms as soon as practicable after games.

4. Coaches should not stress injuries, disciplinary measures, academic difficulties, eligibility problems, and similar personal matters. Disciplinary problems should be a “family affair” to be solved between the coach and players. Scholastic eligibility is a province of the Dean’s or Registrar’s office. Injuries are essentially the province of the team’s physician or trainer. No good purpose can be served by emphasizing such matters.

5. Coaches should avoid talking in public about unethical recruiting and use of illegal formations.

6. Any statements that tend to portray football in any light other than being part of the educational process is detrimental to the future of the profession.

7. Falsifying weights is a bad educational process.

8. Coaches should not predict game winners.

9. It shall be unethical for coaches to use alumni, booster, and quarterback club organizations in an attempt to defeat or obstruct institutional
athletic controls, or to encourage violation of established rules. It shall be unethical for coaches to make demands, financial or otherwise, upon such groups which are not in keeping with the letter and spirit of existing controls or in any other manner misuse such strength and power in violation of accepted rules and regulations.

10. Accepting money or goods for endorsement of any product or commodity not in keeping with the traditions of the coaching profession is unethical. It is the coach's responsibility to be certain the working and sense of any testimonial does not bring discredit. Endorsement, directly or indirectly by active members of the Association, of alcoholic beverages and/or tobacco products is unethical.

11. Solution of professional problems should be within the profession and not in the press. Newspaper columns and magazine articles over the signature of a coach are his responsibility exclusively.

Article Six
SCOUTING

1. It is unethical under any circumstances to scout any team by any means whatsoever, except in regularly scheduled games. The head coach shall be held responsible for all scouting. This includes the use of motion pictures.

2. It is unethical conduct to violate conference rules on the exchange of film.

3. Direct exchange of film is urged by the Association.

Article Seven
RECRUITING

1. All institutional, conference, and national regulatory body rules pertaining to recruiting shall be observed strictly.

2. It is a breach of ethics to recruit a player enrolled at another school (or to recruit a prospective freshman who has avowed his intention to enroll at another school and who has taken residence therein) for the purpose of participating in regularly organized fall practice.

3. A student-athlete should not be recruited during his participation in another sport so that he misses, or is late for, practices and games.

4. In discussing the advantages of his institution, the coach must confine his statements to an honest and forthright presentation of the facts. He shall refrain from making derogatory statements about other institutions and their officials.

5. It is unethical for any coach to make statements to any prospective student which cannot be fulfilled.

Article Eight
GAME DAY AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. It is vitally important a coach's actions and behavior at all times bring credit to himself, his institution, and the game of football.
2. Before and after game, rival coaches should meet and exchange friendly
greetings.
3. During a game a coach should be as inconspicuous as possible.
Coaches are encouraged to demonstrate a friendly and kindly attitude to­
ward their players. The attitude of coaches toward officials should be con­
trolled and undemonstrative.
4. After game, visitors should not be permitted in team dressing room
until coaches have completed their post-game responsibilities, including a
careful check of player injuries.
5. Coaches should use their influence to upgrade levels of sportsmanship
by rooting sections by working closely with cheerleaders and leaders of
card sections.
6. A coach should do all he can to prevent scalping of tickets by
players.
7. A coach shall not receive compensation from professional teams for
talent scouting of or negotiation for his players.