

Rocky Mountain Canoe/Kayak Club

The Roles and Ethics of a Rocky Mountain Canoe/Kayak Club Coach:

Many people see coaches as those who develop exercises and sport specific skill sets to create increases in athletic performance.

I feel that the above items come only after the collaboration between the aspiring athlete and coach define what it is to become a goal driven whole athlete.

The roles of a coach must be a series of combined responsibilities. These responsibilities or titles may all be utilized at once or day to day depending on the athlete. These skills must always be accessible to assist in creating a healthy athlete.

- A coach is an **extended family** unit that assists the parents in the development of a child.
- The coach is a **teacher** to impart new knowledge and ideas of how to become an ideal person.
- The coach is a **motivator** that finds a way to inspire the athletes and assist in the overcoming of adversity that stands in the way of a goal or set of goals.
- The coach is an **agent** for the athlete assisting in fundraising and finding potential sponsorship opportunities.
- The coach is a **social worker** that assists in providing advice and counsel to create goals and solve problems that may be physical and emotional.
- A coach is a **scientist** that develops critical analytical skills to create a physical and mental approach at refining technique and fitness for athletes.
- Most importantly the coach is a **friend** that is there regardless of the outcome to support and listen to problems an athlete has. To maintain friendship the coach and athlete must have trust in each other's goals and vision.

The above descriptors or titles that a coach possesses are learned over the years by collaboration between their past coaches, associates and other athletes. The best coaches learn that there is not one right way to train an athlete, however there are

ways that are healthier and may have less attrition to sport. The most practiced rule of the RMCKC is that winning is a by-product of the creation of a world-class person. Winning is not attained until the game and process is honored nor is it essential to becoming a successful athlete.

There are many expectations of how the coach is expected to interact with the athlete and families of that athlete.

The interactions between a coach-athlete, coach-family and coach-community are **expected to be of the utmost of professionalism**. This professionalism amplifies the respect from all of the above. Respect has by-products that are pure. The athlete has continued support from the family because that athlete embodies the ethics and values that a teacher, motivator, agent, social worker, scientist and friend provides.

The following list of embodied ethics help in introducing champions within our RMCKC community.

Coaches must always be professional in all their interactions with athletes and parents.

Many parents and those in the community can mis-interpret unprofessional leaders. **The interaction between the coach and parent must be professional regardless of the surroundings. The parent may appear friendly on occasion, but the coach must understand that it is not initially a friendship but a business relationship.**

Professional interactions may include but are not limited to phone calls or contact via email. These interactions may be of a business nature, but never include personal conflicts or outside motives, unless they pertain specifically to the coaching of their athlete. **Communication between a coach and athlete that may be via the phone or internet must be limited to a professional nature pertaining to that athletes program.** Personal information should be limited to a sports-psychological or training specific nature. All information shared with the coach from the athlete or family is treated in a confidential manner and may not be a topic of conversation unless released by the parent and/or student-athlete.

Some parents consider coaches as teachers and/or employees that are expected to sometimes assist in the raising of their child. Parents generally only have their best interest in these children, therefore come across as super protective and critical of any adults being an influence in the raising of that child.

A strong friendship may be developed over time as trust is built, however there is still a separation between coach and personal friend when interacting with a parent and athlete during any event, practice or public meeting.

Professional courtesy is the only option allowed with athlete's parents. Some conversation that one would find within the confines of a saloon or club may not be used with a client or other coaches, unless it is specifically invited based on an invitation by the parent or co-worker.

Often times, competing team coaches, parents and supporters look critically at the coaches of opposing teams trying to find fault in their programs. These judgments can, at times, be made swiftly and without sway. Stories can be told in informal groups and then can be overheard by others and converted into rumors and then potentially converted into allegations, which can be harmful not only to the coach but to a team or community.

No mental games! Kids are impressionable and at times, naive. The kid and parent can misunderstand too much negative or conflicting information and this can be perceived as inappropriate information. Kids cannot necessarily see boundaries until the line a coach has drawn hits them. " If it is alright for the coach to do it..... I can too", the kid sees.

This misunderstanding can lead to a poor review by the parent and can potentially lead to an angry or confused client. This can then lead to the loss of a client or worse.

All shared information must be clear and boundaries must be set that clearly separate the adult coach and the young athlete. Initially, the coach must create a tough set of rules and boundaries. As the athlete earns respect, the coach may loosen the slack allowing a friendlier environment. This well understood boundary would allow the child to respect the coach as an adult. If a loose boundary is set, the young athlete has the potential to cross into inappropriate conversation or show disrespect towards the teacher.

In order for a healthy athlete-coach relationship the atmosphere must have room for fun. Professional fun is not necessarily boring, but is anything lacking vulgar language and inappropriate subjects not suitable for teenage youth.

A coach must have hands off policy. Despite it's difficult nature, a coach must absolutely not have physical contact with an athlete while not in workout session. There are times that a coach must help the athlete physically manipulate the athletes posture or correct their position. These adjustments or corrections are usually done around others and are not involving sexual areas of the athletes body. This correction needs to be more sensitive between a coach and athlete of opposite gender. This includes but is not limited to hugs, pats on the buttocks, kiss on the cheek, massage or therapy- when no one else is around, and wrestling with a group of kids that have the opposite sex involved in the pack.

Any topic of a sexual nature can not be tolerated as this can potentially be misperceived and looked at not only as the talk of a bigot but as a stalker or potential sex offender or just a bad influence on a child.

In review, we as coaches are role models, directors to our future leaders and support to the family network.

All of the above rules are difficult, but deviation from the rules can be highly criticized by some people.

In the tone of society today are so many "freaks and criminals" in the daily news. We must be careful and sometimes over cautious to protect ourselves from hurtful labels or accusations.

All people are not out to get coaches or those who work with children, but we must act as if we are being critiqued or under constant scrutiny to protect our passion of helping youth develop as athletes and grow into happy, well rounded adults.

Coaches Signed Name

Coaches Printed Name/Date

Certifiers Signed Name

Certifiers Printed Name/Date

Coach SS#

Driver License Number

Notary Signature

Notary Date