



GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MODEL

This is the source of the Life of An Athlete Educate, Correct, and Restore process for code violations. It is one of the only processes utilized to successfully help youth learn from mistakes.

Codes should establish a process to help the student-athletes learn from their mistake and take corrective action.

Playing sports is a privilege, not a right. With this privilege there are the traditional expectations for sport involvement: skill, commitment, focus, dedication, team work, and loyalty. To achieve a program of excellence lifestyle outside of the game affects the outcome. Grades, sleep, nutrition and refraining from alcohol and drugs are just as important as the plays themselves.

Unfortunately some students will not be as dedicated to the sport as others and when violations occur, it is important enforce the rules for ALL players.

Instead of just issuing a punishment for bad behavior, the Code should establish a process to help the student-athlete learn from their mistake and take corrective action. The restorative justice model is educationally based and includes provisions for the following:

EDUCATE

Alcohol and drugs are at an all-time use among youth, including student athletes. If a student athlete violates the code it is important to correct the behavior while offering the education and support to do so. There can be many influences for a student's behavior: family, friends, emotional or psychological. By teaching the risks, conducting an assessment and offering counseling we can address the negative behaviors and help the student succeed on and off the field.

Process:

- The parent and student-athlete must see a qualified student assistance person (SAP) or counselor to discuss the magnitude and status of the chemical health of the individual.
- They (parent and student-athlete) must also see the School Resource Officer to discuss the legal ramifications of the behavior of concern and to discuss the law and youth risk behaviors such as drinking and driving.

CORRECT

When confronting an athlete who has incurred a violation, it is recommended to use a well-accepted intervention approach to achieve maximum results. The person who meets with the athlete should:

1. Confront the student and address the violation.
2. Show concern for the student and express that out of concern for the student, the violations are taken very seriously.
3. Listen to the athlete's explanation (which may include denial and rationalization).
4. Explain the desired behaviors and the consequences of noncompliance, being specific about the official sanctions involved.
5. Enforce all mandates for reinstatement.

By educating, correcting and restoring it shows we care about each individual's success - on and off the field.

More chances do not equal more learning. Not enforcing all actions for reinstatement models to the student that the offense and the code is not to be taken seriously. There are many athletes who will keep drinking or doing drugs, because their coach did not hold them accountable. By enabling, our student athletes, we risk many of them ending up with:

- serious addiction problems that can result in incarceration
- questioning if they would have these issues if someone had:
- immediately held them accountable for actions
- dealt with the severity of the issue
- refused to deny and ignore the behavior

Process: Consequences for code violations must be enforced for ALL offenders. Life of an Athlete promotes:

1. 25% of games missed for the first offense (cross over to other seasons if necessary).
2. Three strikes you're out. If the athlete has not learned to follow the expectations laid out in the code by the third violation, it is reasonable to conclude that the athlete does not take their athletic performance seriously. Furthermore it shows an unwillingness to play by the rules as well as a lack of respect for the organization.
3. Consequences follow student for athletic career, not just that year.
4. Students must attend practices but can't play.
5. Students can't dress in uniform for the game.

RESTORE

Restorative justice is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused and is best accomplished through cooperative processes that include all stakeholders.

Process: It is important for the athlete to take responsibility for his/her actions.

- The violation was an infraction to a code that he/she signed, and sitting on the bench was not a punishment from the coach but a result of bad choices.
- The athlete needs to understand that their actions affect the whole team.
- To establish this understanding it is imperative for the student to apologize to the coach and the team. It is recommend the student:
 - Submit, in writing, an apology to the coach that includes what rule was broken and how the student plans to ensure not breaking the rule again.
 - Stand in front of the team to apologize and ask for their help with accountability.
 - Re-sign the code with a new commitment to the standards set within the code.

This is a great opportunity to teach the team to offer forgiveness and show understanding. *It is not the student who is bad, but the choice of violation.*

SUMMARY

The Life of an Athlete program recommends the above model to ensure a strong athletic program and the development of responsible, respectable young adults. To only set the standards but not to enforce them, will encourage the athletes to not take the codes seriously and will continue to engage in poor lifestyle choices. To only enforce the codes will simply teach the athletes that we only care about following the rules. The restorative justice model achieves a balance.