



**Winning More
Than The Game**

Introducing Athletes for a Better World

Some Suggested Steps and Ideas

The Simplest and Easiest Thing Do

For those interested in introducing a sportsmanship program into their team, school, club or league, the simplest method we suggest is as follows:

1. Adopt the Code and present it at the beginning of the season.
2. Award an ABW medal at the end of the season to the athlete who best exemplifies the Code. If you allow the players to vote for the recipient (and tell them that at the beginning of the season) it will increase their awareness of the Code.

More Ideas and Greater Detail:

A Coach, Team, School, or League Adopts the Code for Living

1. When the Code is adopted, it can be personalized by the coach, school, or league. For example, some coaches include a statement of their own principles or team rules, and some athletic or league directors include their own goals and philosophies of sport. We encourage this, as it both preserves the idea of a common Code that is held everywhere and allows local leadership to personalize it in a way that is important to them.
2. Once the document is finalized, it can be signed by the coach, athlete, and parent/guardian. We believe that it is important for everyone to sign the same piece of paper, rather than athletes signing one document, parents another, and coaches another. All of the problems that can possibly arise are covered by the points in the Code for Living. The Code can be signed individually, or for example, it can be attached to a large piece of poster board and signed by all as a public document.

Leadership Promotes Awareness of the Code and ABW

1. ABW provides color posters at no cost, which can be posted in locker rooms, gyms, or at playing fields with bulletin boards. Most high school athletes sign "penal codes," that is, codes that articulate the penalties that will be assessed for bad behavior. These codes are usually signed for the protection of the institution and then put in filing cabinets. By contrast, the Code for Living is intended to be a positive, living document, or one that is a part of the ongoing experience of the athlete. Therefore, visible reminders are important. Having the Code posted in several visible places helps accomplish this.
2. Coaches can refer to the Code when talking with their players. For example, if a player works hard on skill development after practice, the coach may not just praise the player but refer to "developing your skills to the best of your ability." If a player clearly sacrifices for the good of the team, the coach will refer to "team goals above personal goals" in praising the player. The website homepage has the "Tip of the Day" which can be emailed to anyone who wants to receive it.
3. To be a partner/member is to commit to the Code for Living, and membership is free. Members also receive the newsletter and can make copies of articles of particular interest. The main purposes of the newsletter are to be a constant reminder of ABW principles and

to encourage and reinforce participants. Several statewide organizations have reproduced ABW newsletter articles for their own newsletters.

Leadership Reinforces the Tenets of the Code

1. All coaches and teachers seek to communicate the values in the Code in ways in which they are comfortable, and encompass a number of teaching approaches. ABW has developed two curriculums to serve as resources and aids for those interested, and to reinforce the coaches' own teaching. They can be used as a source for coaching points or as a complete curriculum in a classroom or camp setting. On the website there are other resources available such as the "Tip of the Day," as well as back newsletter articles to use in teaching the Code.

Leadership Reinforces the Program - Recognition and Service

Recognition and service are both important. Each has the additional benefit of helping in other aspects of character development such as team building, self-esteem, and civic responsibility.

1. A recognition program
 - ABW encourages a "Spirit of ABW" award to be given out to the athlete who best exemplifies the Code, either on the team or in the league, as decided by the leadership. These can be voted on by the athletes themselves, which will help build their awareness of the Code as their season progresses. ABW will provide medals and guidance on these awards. Nationally, ABW recognizes outstanding athletes each year at the annual luncheon in Seattle.
2. Team service projects
 - Coaches may want to discuss with the team what they would like to do to give back to their community. Some teams have done this during the season, others at the end of the season. Some teams have adopted their own service projects, such as painting ball-field bleachers.
 - ABW encourages teams to participate in local service opportunities such as Habitat houses, walks for cancer, hunger programs, etc.



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The Code for Living

Life Principles Learned Through Sports

***Because** I am a role model and have the opportunity and responsibility to make a difference in the lives of others, I commit to this Code. I will take responsibility and appropriate actions when I fail to live up to it.*

As an individual:

- ✓ I will develop my skills to the best of my ability and give my best effort in practice and competition.
- ✓ I will compete within the spirit and letter of the rules of my sport.
- ✓ I will respect the dignity of every human being, and will not be abusive or dehumanizing of another either as an athlete or as a fan.

As a member of a team:

- ✓ I will place team goals ahead of personal goals.
- ✓ I will be a positive influence on the relationships on the team.
- ✓ I will follow the team rules established by the coach.

As a member of society:

- ✓ I will display caring and honorable behavior off the field and be a positive influence in my community and world.
- ✓ I will give of my time, skills, and money as I am able for the betterment of my community and world.

For more information about Athletes for a Better World visit our website: www.ABW.org

Here's how you can personalize the Code for your school:

Your School or Team's Name

YOUR PHILOSOPHY

In this space you write whatever you want, such as "Our team offers young athletes an opportunity to have fun, develop their skills, and play in a competitive league. We expect every player to"

As an expression of these values, we expect everyone who is a part of our athletic program to commit to the following:

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(if desired those involved can sign)

Athlete _____ **Team** _____
Coach _____ **Parent** _____

WHY HAVE A CODE?

Webster's Dictionary defines "code" as "any system of principles or rules." Codes are important in our lives. They surround us in written and unwritten forms. The written ones are such things as the laws by which we live, the religious creeds or affirmations that we make, the oaths and mottoes we take as part of social, service, and scouting organizations as well as the "mission statements" that are a part of corporate America. There are many unwritten but clearly understood codes at home, at work, and on the street.

ABW's Code for Living is intended to be a unifying set of principles around which people of all ages and sports interests can join together. It is not intended to replace either the written or unwritten codes of one's religion, family or work, but to provide unity, focus, support and direction to those who care about sports leadership and our country.

The Code for Living is important for the individual because:

1. It provides a clear standard for each person. It reminds us that we have responsibilities to our teammates, our society, and ourselves. The Code provides foundational principles upon which each of us can build and develop our lives.
2. It allows us to set our own goals within it. That is, while it provides a clear framework, we have the freedom to focus on different elements within it according to our age, gifts, and desire. Therefore, how we choose to live it out will be a challenge that will require constant reflection, with new goals set for ourselves as each year passes.

The Code is important for the team because:

1. It provides a common set of values on which the team can build. Teams are made up of individuals, and yet a team only emerges when the individuals come together in support of common goals. The Code provides one of the foundations upon which a true team can be built.
2. It recognizes that we have a collective responsibility for one another and for our communities. We need each other and can only be successful with each other. In other words, no one person can make a team or a community.
3. It represents a commitment to the team. Each person knows what he or she can expect from the other. That knowledge builds confidence and promotes team spirit.

The Code is important to society because:

1. It acknowledges the responsibility we all have as members of society, and represents a commitment to the betterment of our communities and world.
2. It makes it clear what our values are and encourages others to follow. We are at a time when it is important for people who share common values to stand together, and by doing so to provide an example for others to follow and join.