

We are occasionally asked by coaches how to improve player/parent conduct (and sometimes by parents and hosts about coach conduct). Many basketball associations and coaches use a “Code of Conduct,” which all players, parents and coaches sign before each season. These “Codes” not only outline what is expected of players and parents, but also expectations about coaches. Printed below is a sample of one such Code of Conduct that the League believes covers most of the key topics. Please feel free to use and edit as you wish. Note that if you use the form below, there are some blanks that need to be filled in. Also, certain sections may need to be removed or revised, depending on your team’s circumstances (e.g. Item #9 in the player/parent section). Also note: there is no requirement that this Code be used – it is only printed here as a service to coaches to help define expectations and improve team harmony.

2009-2010 <INSERT NAME/GRADE/GENDER OF TEAM>
TRAVELING BASKETBALL TEAM
CODE OF CONDUCT

I pledge to do the following during the 2009-2010 basketball season in order to remain a member in good standing of the <insert Name/Grade/Gender of Team> Traveling Basketball Team:

1. I understand that attendance at practice is important. For those practices for which I have at least two weeks’ advance notice, I promise to try for 100% attendance. I understand that the only appropriate excuses for not attending are illness, a family emergency (e.g., a parent in the hospital, a neighbor’s funeral, etc.), a family vacation or a significant extracurricular school activity. I understand that if I miss school the day of practice because I was ill, I will not practice, even if I feel better later in the day. On the other hand, if I was in school, I understand that I will be expected to be at practice. If I don’t have a ride to or from practice, I promise that I will call however many teammates are necessary until I have a ride. I understand that the penalties for failure to attend practice (except for a legitimate excuse as outlined above) will start with a warning, with repeat offenders experiencing reduced playing time, up to and including expulsion from the team.
2. I understand that my coaches are donating valuable free time to volunteer their services. As a result, I promise that I will not waste their time, or the time of my teammates, at practice. That means I will do the following at practice:
 - Arrive at practice on time.
 - Before a coach blows the whistle to start practice, I will not stand around socializing with friends, but will work only on skills (like dribbling) and shots from a distance that I could reasonably expect to shoot from in a game.
 - Whenever a coach blows the whistle, I will immediately stop what I am doing, store or hold whatever equipment (if any) I was using, stop talking and listen for the coach’s instruction.
 - Whenever a coach is speaking, I will concentrate on what is being said, look at the coach and not speak with other team members.

- While participating in drills and/or scrimmages, I will not gossip, joke around or otherwise fail to concentrate on what my teammates and I are being asked to do.
3. I understand that good sportsmanship is important. I understand that the only people associated with our team who are allowed to complain to a referee or another coach is one of my coaches. I will not, under any circumstances, shove, punch, intentionally trip or do anything of a similar nature to an opposing player. I will not talk trash to a member of the opposing team, the opposing coach, the opposing team's fans or a referee. If I, or a member of my family, have a complaint about what a referee or member of the other team is doing, we will talk to one of my coaches, and he or she will speak to the coach of the other team or a referee. I understand that if I, or a member of my family in the stands, violates this rule on sportsmanship, I will immediately be benched for the remainder of that game – and possibly longer – and be asked to leave the bench area and sit in the stands.
 4. I understand that during a game it is important to concentrate on what is taking place on the floor and to support my teammates. That means there is no conversation about topics other than basketball during the game and no goofing around. I understand that the same principles I'm expected to follow at practice will be used during a game. I understand that if I violate this rule, I will be asked to leave the bench area and sit in the stands for the remainder of the game.
 5. I understand that my parents and family may be at my games to cheer for me and my team. I also understand that only my coaches have the authority to shout instructions from the sidelines during the game and that my parents, family members and others attending the game to watch me, will not shout instructions on what to do on offense or defense during the game. They are, of course, allowed (and encouraged) to cheer for my team as loudly as they wish.
 6. My coaches realize that there is a difference in ability levels of the players on this or any team. As a result, coaches will generally not be critical if I miss a shot, fail to get a rebound, get beat on defense, etc. Coaches do, however, expect players of all ability levels to hustle, give it their all and know their assignments. As a result, I understand that I can expect to be removed from a game and have my playing time substantially reduced if I consistently do one of the following:
 - Fail to know my assignments on specific offensive or in bounds plays.
 - Fail to hustle all of the time, including getting on the floor after loose balls.
 - Fail to pick up my assigned person to guard when playing man-to-man defense.
 - Fail to go to my assigned location in a full court press or half court zone defense and attempt to execute my assignments.
 7. During games in gyms at away meets, I promise never to damage property, take something from the school or an opposing player or trash talk anyone. I understand that violating this rule will mean significant discipline – up to and including expulsion from the team.

1. **Player Development.** We are committed to expediting the development of all our players. If you ever feel we, as coaches, are falling short in the player development area, please talk to us. If you have suggestions of specific additional development opportunities, we'd also like to hear from you. However, please approach us at reasonable times, i.e., not during the middle of a game or a practice.
2. **Communication.** We are committed to thorough communication. We have certain expectations of our players and their parents, but we also believe you have a right to know exactly what we're doing, when, how and why, and that you get the communication in sufficient time to plan your busy family schedules accordingly. In addition to any written communication you will receive, we are also available to talk by phone or after/before practice (not during) about any basketball-related issue you would like to discuss.
3. **Playing Time.** We are very committed to maximizing every player's court time (see #8 above in the player/parent section). We feel the best way to accomplish that objective is to keep roster size at most meets at <insert number> players. At regular meets, this gives every player the chance to play 40-50% of the day, but still allow our team to be competitive against stronger teams. However, as noted in #9 above, we make absolutely no promise about the amount of playing time specific players will receive at any championship-level tournaments in which we'll play this coming season.
4. **Coaches' Conduct.** Some parents who have not been active in sports growing up are often put off by a specific coach's loudness. Being "loud" is not in and of itself a bad trait in a coach. At practice, we often need to speak loudly to be heard. During games, we must shout certain instructions loudly to be heard above the fans over an extended distance. On the other hand, we recognize the difference between decibel level/forcefulness and inappropriate conduct. We will not use profanity, whether directed at our own player, another player, coach or referee. We will not belittle or berate our players. We will gear whatever critical coaching comments we make to our audience, recognizing that an 8th grader needs to accept more responsibility for his/her actions than a 5th grader. We reserve, however, the right to discipline a player, which will take the form of sitting out all or a portion of a practice session or a game, rather than overt oral criticism. Essentially, we expect the same level of attention from our players as they would give in the classroom and you should expect us to behave as teachers would in a similar academic environment (e.g., like a physical education class). If you feel any coach is acting inappropriately and you do not want to confront one of the coaches of this team, we encourage you to approach Varsity Coach <fill in name> or Athletic Director <fill in name>.

 Coach

 Date

 Coach

 Date