



Code of Conduct on Sports Betting for Athletes

Prepared by EU Athletes, the European Gaming and Betting Association and the European Sports Security Association

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Your player association is there to help.

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1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct sets out the guiding principles and provides general advice to all athletes throughout Europe on the issues surrounding the integrity of sport and betting.

The Code of Conduct has been developed in a partnership between EU Athletes, the European Gaming and Betting Association (EGBA) and the European Sports Security Association (ESSA) and complements rules provided by national laws and/or sport specific regulations.

This Code is designed to underpin a comprehensive and proportionate education programme for athletes which will include tailored advice according to the sport and country with specific examples to help explain each situation. The Code will be reviewed regularly to ensure it maintains its relevance.

2. Guiding Principles

a) Know the rules

Ask your club, federation or athletes association what the rules on betting are in your sport and in your country. Many sports and countries either have or are developing regulations on sports betting and you need to be aware of these – even if you don’t bet. These rules should be explained to you in a way that is easy to understand, ideally through face-to-face meetings and supported by fact sheets and web based educational tools.

b) Never bet on yourself or the opponent

As a professional athlete you must never bet on any match you or your team is involved in as it would trigger a conflict of interest not compatible with the integrity of sport. This includes betting to win, lose or draw as well as any of the different side-bets which might not affect the result of the match.

If you bet on yourself or your opponent you risk having your image and reputation tarnished, being banned by your sport (possibly for life), losing your job and even subject to a criminal investigation.

c) Play safe – don’t bet on your own sport at all

Betting on other games within your sport may also raise questions. You are likely to know and be friends with many athletes in your sport and you are therefore best advised not to make any bets on your sport to avoid potential problems.

Note: Some sports have decided that it is easiest and best to prohibit athletes from betting on their own sport. This is supported by the sports betting industry. The benefit of this approach is that it is simple and easy to understand and minimises the danger of athletes inadvertently falling foul of regulations on a technicality. If in any doubt, then do not bet on your sport.

d) Be careful about handling sensitive information

As an athlete you will have access to information that is not yet available to the general public, such as knowing that your star player is injured or that the coach is putting out a weakened side. This is considered sensitive or inside information. This information is likely to be useful for people betting on your sport who want to secure an unfair advantage.

There is nothing wrong with athletes having sensitive information; it is what you do with it that matters. Most athletes know that they should not discuss team tactics with anyone outside of the team. The same is true of sensitive information.

Whilst the rules of your sport may cover sensitive information, the following guidance is designed to protect you from potential problems.

- You should never swap sensitive information on you, your team or your sport for reward, gifts or favours¹.
- It looks suspicious if you repeatedly pass on information to a person, even if there is no obvious reward.

e) Fixing a competition: an absolute No-No

Whatever the reason, do not seek to fix any aspect of a competition. Do not put yourself in a situation which would bring you, or even force you, to adversely influence the natural course of a match.

There is no such thing as a quick and easy win. All your actions will result in severe consequences. Fixing a match goes against the rules of sport and is illegal. Fixing a match could therefore lead you to severe criminal sanctions and a lifetime ban from the sport you love.

So do not put yourself at risk:

- Do not let yourself be “groomed” - unscrupulous individuals might try to develop a relationship with you built on favours or fears that they will then try to exploit for their benefit in possibly fixing a competition. This can include the offer of gifts, loans and support when athletes are young and trying to make it.
- If you have any concerns about anyone making offers to you then it is important that you tell someone, either your coach, a senior player or your player association.
- Try not to fall into too much debt to anyone or allow anyone to develop a hold over you. This may be a trigger for unscrupulous individuals to target you to fix competitions in return for money or support.

3. General Advice

a) Family and friends

Your family and friends’ betting behaviours or relations with unscrupulous individuals could create problems for you.

If your partner is betting on you to win or lose this could be traced back to you and will raise suspicions. In worse situations it could even land you in real trouble. If you know that one of your friends is regularly betting on you or your team this could also lead to problematic situations.

b) Detection

Do not risk it. On-line betting operators use sophisticated security measures that mean that all suspicious bets can be traced and reported to sports federations or national authorities. The European Sports Security Association (ESSA) monitors any irregular betting patterns to provide an immediate early warning to sports and bookmakers. Modern information technology allows regulated EU betting operators to record and trace your bets for fraud prevention purposes.

c) Responsible betting

Underage betting is illegal. If you are under 18 (or 21 depending on jurisdiction) do not access a sports betting website.

Be aware that gambling and/or betting could be harmful if not controlled and kept in moderation. Do not bet on credit and if you need support or advice then ask your player association for help. Betting sites will also have details of a confidential helpline number.

d) If in doubt – tell someone

If you ever feel that something is not quite right then trust your instinct and tell someone – either your club coach, federation or player association. And keep a record of this.

Some sports have regulations that require athletes to inform them immediately of any approach to influence the outcome of a competition.

Any threats should always be reported. The police and national laws are there to protect you. Your club, federation or player association will help.

Finally, if you have any queries on sports betting issues then it is always better to ask for advice than risk falling foul of the laws. Your player association is there to help.

¹ This does not include giving media interviews.