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Sample Student-Athlete Participation Agreement

STUDENT-ATHLETE
NAME_____SPORT_____

I understand that a fulfilling educational sport experience requires the exercise of responsibilities on the part of both personnel associated with the athletics program and student-athletes. As a student-athlete, I understand my responsibility to commit to the principles of self-discipline, collaborative effort and team building, and to be an ambassador for the institution.

Academic Standards

I understand that the athletics department is committed to the philosophy that student-athletes are students first and foremost and that all student-athletes must exhibit behaviors that demonstrate a commitment to maximizing academic success as their first priority. I understand that the athletics department has created the following standards, strategies, and policies to maximize the possibility of student-athletes meeting their academic goals. I understand that I am obligated to comply with these standards:

- Student-athletes must adhere to all academic requirements (study halls, tutoring sessions, etc.) specified by the academic counselor.
- Student-athletes' academic progress is monitored by the academic support program staff. If at any time, the Assistant Director of for Academic Support Programs receives academic information that a student-athlete is not meeting his or her responsibilities (i.e. warning notices, probationary status notices, grade point average reduction, excessive absences notices, etc.) the Assistant Director will meet with the head coach and to determine if playing or practice privileges will be restricted, suspended, or terminated.
- If a student-athlete's grade point average drops below a 2.0, he or she will become automatically ineligible to participate until the grade point average returns to the 2.0 minimum.
- Sports schedules are designed to minimize missed class time. While classes missed for regular- or post-season contests are university approved, the expectation is that student-athletes will make every effort not to miss any additional classes and will only do so under extenuating circumstances such as illness or family emergency. Excessive absences may result in restriction

of a student-athlete's participation in practice or competition.
- Student-athletes are not permitted to miss any regularly scheduled classes for activities other than scheduled athletics competitions, unless approved by the Assistant Director of Academic Support Programs and the professor of the class involved.
- Student-athletes are expected to meet all deadline dates for class assignments and are required to make pre-arrangements with instructors when quizzes, tests or special assignments conflict with contest dates.

Behavioral Expectations

I understand that student-athletes are visible representatives of the institution both on campus and off-campus whose behaviors are often closely scrutinized by the media and general public. Student-athlete behavior affects public perception of institutional ethos, athletics department standards, and the character of the student body. Therefore, it is an expectation that student-athletes will demonstrate consistent role model behavior, sportsmanship and self-control. More specifically:

- Student-athletes must be committed to fair play. Intentional acts of unsportsmanlike behavior or cheating will not be tolerated.
- When representing their teams during competition, student-athletes will exercise self-control in all ways including, but not limited to, resisting the use of profanity, demonstrating unnecessary aggression or hostility towards others, making inappropriate physical gestures, taunting or excessively celebrating, and disrespecting coaches, officials, teammates or opponents.
- Student-athletes are prohibited from interacting in any negative way with fans.
- When interacting with the media, student-athletes are expected to remain positive and not use media interviews as a platform to share personal frustrations about the team, coaches, the athletics department or the institution or to make any negative comments about opponents or officials.
- Any actions that result in a student-athlete being sanctioned by school, local, state, or federal authorities may also result in sanctions from the athletics department.

Physical Conditioning and Training

I understand that physical conditioning and training programs in preparation for athletics performance as designed and supervised by coaches and support staff (trainers, strength coaches, etc.) require intense physical activities, constant feedback, and creating benchmarks to maximize each athlete's potential and team success. I understand that participation in training and instruction is an educational process that requires collaboration between athletics staff and student-athletes, especially as such collaboration is intended to minimize the inherent risks associated with intense physical activities that can also be mentally and emotionally challenging. Therefore, I understand the need for and accept the following participation responsibilities:

- Report to my coach or an athletics trainer, any change in my physical, mental or emotional well-being that may affect my ability to participate safely. This includes any additions of prescription medications or over the counter supplements.
- Commit to completing all conditioning activities and practice session I am asked to perform to ready me for the physical, mental, and emotional stress associated with my sport unless I have documented limitations that have been approved by the medical or counseling staff.

- Refrain from outside activities that will enhance my risk of unsafe participation such as excessive exercise, alcohol consumption, using non-prescription drugs, taking over the counter supplements that have not been approved by the athletics department medical staff, taking steroids or other performance enhancing or illegal drugs.
- Follow the guidelines given to me by my coaches and trainers regarding hydration, sleep, and nutrition.
- Communicate with my coach or trainer any time I feel any abnormal or labored physical response to exercise (i.e. pain, nausea, shortness of breath, dizziness, etc.) and to stop the activity immediately.
- Communicate with my coach or trainer any time I feel incapable of continuing to participate due to any physical, mental or emotional distress. I understand that I will not be subjected to any retribution if I self-report physical, mental, or emotional distress and elect to discontinue participation and if I believe retribution took place, I am obligated to report such to the Director of Athletics.
- Communicate with my coach or athletic trainer if I come become aware of another athlete's abnormal or labored physical, mental, or emotional response to any activity.
- Willingly discontinue participation any time a coach, trainer, or strength coach tells me to and, if applicable, follow their directives regarding follow-up meetings with medical staff or other appropriate professionals.
- Recognize that participation decisions must be made by professional athletics staff members. Parents may not override these decisions.

Teamwork and Team Expectations

I understand that team unity and team chemistry are key variables for a positive and successful athletics experience. Commitment to team goals is essential which, at times, may take precedence over individual goals. However, I understand that the athletics department does not subscribe to a team culture based on intimidation or mandatory allegiance to questionable practices and requires that all student-athletes be treated fairly by coaches, support staff, and teammates. Under these conditions, I understand that student-athletes are expected to exhibit a level of selflessness that promotes team goals. More specifically:

- Student-athletes are expected to abide by team rules that have been constructed by the team, approved by the coaches, approved by the sports administrator, and attached to this agreement.
- Student-athletes are expected to abide by all NCAA rules that have been provided in the annual rules orientation session conducted by the athletics department.
- Student-athletes are expected to abide by all athletics department policies that are contained in the athletics department Student-Athlete Handbook which is available online, including, but not limited to the policies that prohibit alcohol consumption, sexual harassment, bullying, drug use, gambling, and tobacco use.
- Student-athletes are expected to report any actions that establish a class system (hazing, initiations, etc.) to their coach immediately.
- Student-athletes are expected to immediately report any behaviors they would describe as abusive by a coach, staff member, or a teammate to the Director of Athletics.
- Student-athletes and coaches are expressly prohibited from engaging in sexual intimacies and other forms of inappropriate conduct with each other. Student-athletes are expected to immediately report any such behaviors which serve to destroy the standard of impartiality and

professional trust which must be maintained by all coaches,
- Each student-athlete receives a copy of athletics department Policy 11-18 which describes the "zero tolerance" policy toward hazing, initiation rituals, sexual harassment, and physical punishment and is expected to honor and contribute to a culture of respect of self and others.

Prohibition of Retaliation

Creating a culture of personal responsibility requires an assurance to employees and student-athletes that no retaliation will occur against those who report governance association rules violations or misconduct policy violations. Staff and student-athletes are expected to report these concerns to the athletics director or are invited to utilize the institutional ombudsman for this purpose.

I agree to accept the participation standards and policies listed above and knowingly accept that violations of these standards may result in a variety of sanctions by the athletics department including, but not limited to restriction, suspension from, or termination of participation in the athletics program.

Student-Athlete Signature:

_____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature (if athlete under 18):

_____Date: _____

The above sample agreement is an excerpt from a prepublication manuscript due to be published in 2013: Lopiano, D.A. and Zotos, C. (Publication 2013) The Athletics Director's Desk Reference. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. Do not use without review by your institutional legal counsel.

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