

## **MTSU Statement on the Conduct of Athletics Staff**

MTSU is committed to the education, health, and well-being of all student-athletes. In addition, the University is committed to the spirit of fair, honest, skillful, and civil competition. Coaching styles vary, and acceptable coaching practices may look very different from the instructional techniques of classroom educators. "Tough" coaching, intended to help develop player and team skills, does not necessarily constitute abusive coaching. At the same time, good judgment must be demonstrated to protect a coaching and learning environment from being tainted by discrimination, bullying, or harassment.

This Statement on the Conduct of Athletics Staff acknowledges the unique status of the athletics program, the coaching staffs, and other athletics staff within the overall framework of MTSU. Note that the expectations stated below are in addition to other responsibilities for athletics staff that may be contained in their employment agreement, if any, or other policy or rule.

Expectations for the conduct of all Athletics Staff:

1. Conduct the University athletic program, and individual sport programs, to reflect our shared understanding that student athletic programs are primarily educational experiences.
2. Consider the impact to student-athlete academic responsibilities when establishing competition, practice, or other sport-related expectations.
3. Set high expectations for student-athletes regarding academic performance, and address with the student-athlete any known deficiencies related to class attendance, performance during class, completion of assignments and exams, or classroom behavior.
4. Refrain from any interaction with academic faculty that may be perceived as intended to influence any evaluation of a student's academic performance or grading.
5. Permit student-athletes reasonable freedom to engage in campus and extracurricular activities, save those that may negatively impact team activities or academic, athletic, or player performance.
6. Refrain from any violation of applicable MTSU, NCAA or Conference USA (C-USA) requirements and address with a student-athlete any conduct, which falls below the standards outlined in the Student Athlete Handbook and/or NCAA or C-USA requirements.
7. Conduct themselves both on and off campus as public representatives of MTSU and the MTSU Athletics program. Any conduct that could be perceived as improper or unfitting of a University representative shall be avoided.
8. Refrain from taking advantage of their relationship with and influence over student-athletes for any personal advantage.

9. Refrain from engaging in any sexual or romantic relationship with any MTSU student-athlete or any individual over whom they exercise authority or control as set forth in [Policy 817 Consensual Relationships](#) or other conduct that may be considered sexual misconduct, sexual violence, or sexual harassment under University policy.
10. Treat every student-athlete fairly and equitably, refraining from any display of prejudice or bias based upon any protected category as noted in [Policy 26 Discrimination and Harassment Based on Protected Categories Other than Sex](#), [Policy 27 Misconduct, Discrimination, and Harassment Based on Sex Including Pregnancy, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity/Expression](#), or [Policy 29 Title IX Compliance](#). Coaches shall not permit members of their staff or those under their control to display any such prejudice or bias.
11. Consistently using disparaging, vulgar, and/or insensitive comments that could be construed as being attributed to a student's and/or team's national/country of origin, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity/expression in a way that is severe, pervasive, or objectively offensive.
12. Refrain from physical or verbal intimidation, hazing, bullying or physical or emotional abuse of a student-athlete and/or a group of student-athletes, including but not limited to the following:
  - A. Consistently using profanity or other degrading language or name-calling towards a student-athlete in a way that is severe, pervasive, or objectively offensive.
  - B. Intentionally throwing any object at or in the direction of a student-athlete including, but not limited to:
    - Clip boards
    - Books
    - Manuals
    - Enclosed drinks (such as coffee, soft drinks, tea, lemonade, etc.)
    - Pens, pencils, and other writing-implements
    - Athletics equipment, in a non-instructional manner
  - C. Racial, gender, or ethnic stereotyping and/or expressions of such stereotypes.
  - D. Insistence on the play or performance of a student-athlete who has been deemed injured by the athletic trainer, the team physician, and/or any other licensed medical personnel.
  - E. Allowing others to physically abuse and/or haze a student-athlete or, after knowledge that such activities have occurred, failing to report the incident(s) to the appropriate authority.
13. Cooperate in any investigation into the alleged wrongful conduct of student-athletes or Athletics Staff and refrain from any attempt to interfere with or intervene in such an investigation.
14. Refrain from any retaliation against anyone reporting a violation of this policy or any other MTSU, NCAA or C-USA policy.