



# GAUTENG CLIMBING

## COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT - 2026

### Introduction

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish and uphold standards for coaches, while informing their individual athletes, organizations seeking their services, and the public at large.

Ethical standards encompass values such as integrity, competence, confidentiality, and responsibility. By agreeing to this code, Gauteng Climbing coaches acknowledge their responsibilities to athletes, the community, and Gauteng Climbing. The interests of the athlete are paramount; however, in situations where coaches face conflicting responsibilities, they must exercise sound judgment. Thus, this Code of Conduct serves as a guiding framework rather than a prescriptive set of instructions.

### General Principles

Coaches are instrumental in shaping the ethical landscape of sport climbing. Their understanding of ethics and their attitudes significantly influence the behaviour of the athletes they supervise. Therefore, coaches must prioritize the moral dimensions of their conduct.

It is crucial for coaches to recognize that nearly every decision and strategic choice they make carries ethical implications. While the pursuit of victory is an inherent concern for coaches, this code emphasizes the importance of distancing oneself from a "win-at-all-costs" mentality. Coaches working with young athletes are increasingly expected to prioritize the health, safety, welfare, and moral development of these individuals over the achievements or reputations of clubs, schools, coaches, or parents.

### We assert the following principles:

- The coach-athlete relationship should be mutually beneficial, intentionally structured to serve the athlete's best interests.
- Athletes possess inherent knowledge about what is best for them and are capable of making their own decisions regarding personal and professional matters. Thus, they bear responsibility for their choices and outcomes.
- The primary role of the coach is to provide athletes with opportunities to explore, discover, and clarify pathways to a more fulfilling, effective, and resourceful life and career.
- In the coaching process, the goals, resources, and choices of the athlete take precedence over those of the coach.
- Below is the Gauteng Climbing Coaches Code of Conduct, aligned with the standards set forth by the National Association of Sports Coaches. This code serves as a benchmark for all individuals involved in coaching:

#### 1. Responsibility

- As a GC coach, I must respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every individual, treating all participants equitably within the context of the sport.
- Coaches must prioritize the well-being and safety of each athlete above all other considerations, including performance development.
- Coaches must adhere to all guidelines established by governing bodies.
- Coaches must consistently follow safeguarding rules and regulations.

- Coaches should foster a working relationship with each athlete based on mutual trust and respect.
- Coaches must refrain from exerting undue influence for personal gain or reward.
- Coaches should encourage athletes to take responsibility for their behaviour and performance.
- Coaches must ensure that the activities they direct are suitable for the age, maturity, experience, and abilities of the athletes.
- Coaches should clarify expectations for athletes (and, where applicable, their parents) at the outset, as well as what athletes can expect from their coach.
- Coaches should protect and secure their athletes' confidential information, maintaining accurate records of their work and ensuring these records are stored securely.
- Coaches must refrain from public criticism of fellow coaches, athletes, parents, judges, and organizations such as Gauteng Climbing, the Gauteng Sport Council (GSC), the South African National Climbing Federation (SANCF), the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee, and the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC).
- Coaches must avoid using profane, insulting, harassing, or otherwise offensive language in the performance of their duties.
- Coaches must ensure that the activities undertaken are appropriate for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the athletes, while educating them on their responsibilities in fostering a safe and enjoyable environment.
- Coaches must prioritize the athlete's future health and well-being when making decisions regarding an injured athlete's ability to continue climbing or training.
- Coaches should seek opportunities for professional development, maintain connections within the climbing community, and stay informed about Gauteng Climbing rules and policies.
- Coaches must treat opponents, facility personnel, judges/officials, parents, and Gauteng Climbing associates with respect, both in victory and defeat, and encourage their athletes to do the same.
- For minor athletes, coaches must communicate and cooperate with their parents or legal guardians, involving them in decisions regarding the athletes' development.
- Coaches must be mindful of the academic pressures faced by student-athletes and conduct practices and competitions in a manner conducive to academic success.
- Coaches must treat all individuals fairly within the context of their activity, regardless of gender, age, nationality, race, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, or team affiliation.
- Coaches must direct comments or criticism toward the performance rather than the individual athlete.
- Coaches must consistently demonstrate high personal standards and project a positive image of their sport, Gauteng Climbing, and the coaching profession.

## 2. Relationships

- At the outset, coaches must clarify expectations with athletes (and where appropriate, with parents or guardians) regarding their roles and what athletes can expect from the coach.
- Coaches must develop healthy and appropriate working relationships with athletes based on mutual trust and respect, particularly with those under 18 years of age or those considered adults at risk.
- Coaches must not use their position to incite or engage in sexual activity, grooming, inappropriate touching, or communication (in person, via social media, or any other form) with athletes under 18 years of age. Violations of this code may result in the permanent withdrawal of a coach's license.
- Coaches should avoid spending time alone with young athletes (under 18) unless in the presence of other adults or within a group setting.
- Coaches must ensure that parents or legal guardians are informed and have granted consent before taking a young athlete (under 18) away from the usual training venue.
- Coaches must never transport young athletes (under 18) alone in their vehicle without the consent of the parent or legal guardian.
- Coaches must never invite a young athlete (under 18) alone into their home without the permission of the parent or legal guardian or without the presence of another adult.
- Coaches must never share a bedroom with a young athlete (under 18) without the permission of the parent or legal guardian.

### **3. Integrity**

- Coaches should uphold the honour and dignity of the coaching profession, remaining committed to professional excellence in all endeavours. (Coaches should refrain from poaching athletes from other clubs. While athletes have the right to seek additional or alternative coaching, coaches must avoid directly contacting members of other clubs for recruitment purposes.)
- Coaches should be accountable for their actions, prepared to discuss mistakes, apologize, and offer support and remedies when necessary.
- Coaches are expected to collaborate fully with other specialists (fellow coaches, officials, sports scientists, doctors, and physiotherapists) in the best interests of their athletes.
- Coaches must consistently promote the positive aspects of the sport (such as fair play) and must never condone violations of the laws governing the sport, behaviour contrary to the spirit of those laws, or the use of prohibited substances or techniques\*. (Distribute beta during competitions and share videos or photos of routes or boulders only if permitted by the province.)
- Coaches must maintain high standards of behaviour and appearance at all times.

### **4. Documents to Accompany this Code of Conduct**

- Police clearance certificate
- Sexual offenders check
- Criminal background check
- Level 1 first aid certification
- Basic safeguarding or Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) qualifications  
(Each registered club must have a DSO. All other coaches within the club must possess at least a basic safeguarding certificate.)

### **5. Breach of Code of Conduct**

Failure to adhere to this Code of Conduct may result in the following consequences:

- The coach may be required to attend supplementary training.
- A verbal or written warning may be issued.
- A yellow card may be issued, with the registered club owner determining the appropriate course of action regarding the coach's misconduct.
- A red card may be issued, resulting in the loss of all privileges at the current event, with further repercussions for the next provincial and national event if found guilty.
- A fine may be imposed, depending on the severity of the misconduct, which may be applied independently or in conjunction with a yellow or red card.
- Depending on the severity of the violations or any instances of sexual misconduct, the coach may be reported to legal authorities, the SANCF, SASCOC, or any other regulatory sporting body within South Africa.

**Coaches Attestation**

INITIAL

I, \_\_\_\_\_, with ID \_\_\_\_\_, have read the above statements and agree to conduct myself as a coach within the guidelines set forth by Gauteng Climbing.

Furthermore, I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge, I have never been reported, registered, or convicted as a criminal or sexual offender, either within or outside the borders of South Africa, nor do I intend to engage in any activities that could place me in a position to be reported, registered, or convicted as such.

I also agree to adhere to any policies adopted by Gauteng Climbing from the Gauteng Sport Council, the South African National Climbing Federation, the South African Sports Confederation, and the International Federation of Sport Climbing.

I commit to upholding the Gauteng Climbing constitution, to present all required checks as outlined in the constitution, and to keep both my Safeguarding and First Aid qualifications current and up to date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Registered Gauteng Climbing Club Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of coach / club owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date