

SOUTH AFRICA LACROSSE ASSOCIATION (SALA)

CODE OF ETHICS & CONDUCT GUIDELINES

Operational Governance, Participant Standards, National Squad Disciplinary Framework & Legal Policies

1. Introduction & Affiliation

Although South Africa Lacrosse Association (SALA) is responsible for setting standards and making decisions regarding the growth and governance of lacrosse across South Africa, it relies heavily upon volunteers. Officers of the association, club administrators, coaches, umpires, and other volunteers give their time voluntarily to support the sport. The expectation is that participants behave in a respectful, sportsmanlike manner at all times.

By committing to SALA events, meetings, specific administrative tasks, and official domestic or international fixtures, participants automatically accept the obligation to abide by the SALA Code of Ethics & Behaviour. Affiliation to SALA signifies agreement to adhere strictly to these principles.

2. General Code of Behaviour

The General Code of Behaviour sets the standard for all individuals participating in SALA-sanctioned activities, regardless of their role. All participants must:

- **Protection & Safety:** Protect themselves and others involved in the game from verbal, physical, or emotional abuse.
- **Appropriate Conduct:** Never use inappropriate, offensive, or abusive language, gestures, or intimidating behaviour.
- **Safeguarding Policy:** Abide by the SALA Safeguarding and Protecting Young People Policy at all times.
- **Gender Equality Policy:** Abide by the SALA Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy.
- **Anti-Doping Rules:** Abide by the SALA Anti-Doping Rules and relevant national/international anti-doping statutory guidelines.
- **Insurance Responsibility:** Take personal responsibility to ensure they are suitably insured for their participation in lacrosse activities.

3. Code of Behaviour for Players

This Code of Behaviour is an extension of the General Code of Behaviour and applies to all active lacrosse players in South Africa:

- Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all fellow participants regardless of background or ability.
- Respect umpires, match officials, coaches, team personnel, opponents, and spectators at all times.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that protects their safety and the safety of others on and off the pitch.
- **Substance Prohibition:** Never participate in training or matches while under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs.

- Promote the reputation of lacrosse and take all reasonable steps to prevent the sport from being brought into disrepute.
- Accept success and failure, victory and defeat, with grace, sportsmanship, and dignity.
- Set a positive example for others, particularly young participants and spectators.

4. Code of Behaviour for Young Persons

The promotion of FUN, POSITIVE ATTITUDES, and GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP is the core dynamic of youth lacrosse. Young participants are expected to uphold the following standards:

- **Respect for the Game:** Play within the rules of lacrosse. Youth sports are about enjoyment, learning skills, and making friends.
- **Punctuality & Effort:** Arrive on time for training and matches, giving maximum effort and commitment.
- **Sportsmanship:** Always thank opposition players, coaches, umpires, and officials at the end of matches.
- **Respect for Others:** Value umpires, officials, coaches, and spectators. Respect opposition players and team-mates.
- **Self-Respect & Responsibility:** Take responsibility for actions on and off the pitch, including caring for facilities and equipment.
- **Reporting Concerns:** Inform a trusted adult (coach, safeguarding officer, parent) if the behaviour of anyone makes them uncomfortable.

5. Code of Behaviour for Clubs, Associations, Leagues, Staff & Education Sector

All member Clubs, Regional Associations, Leagues, Staff, and participating Educational Institutions must actively adopt and enforce the SALA Code of Conduct:

- **Equality Advocates:** Actively promote equality, fair play, and participant safety in both administrative and competitive operations.
- **Communication:** Ensure all members, participants, parents, and staff receive and acknowledge copies of SALA policy guidelines.
- **Fair Play & Standards:** Maintain high standards of honesty, consistency, objectivity, and transparency in all dealings.
- **Safety Procedures:** Maintain working knowledge of Normal Operating Procedures (NOPs), Emergency Operating Procedures (EOPs), and facility risk assessments.
- **Child Welfare:** Prioritise participant wellbeing over competitive performance, responding promptly to any welfare concerns.
- **Professional Boundaries:** Ensure staff and leaders maintain professional boundaries and appropriate conduct at all times.

6. Code of Behaviour for Coaches, Managers, Medical Staff, Teachers, Leaders & Helpers

This code applies to all Coaches, Team Managers, Medical Personnel, Teachers, Leaders, and Helpers operating in South Africa or representing SALA internationally:

- **Qualifications & Competency:** Keep coaching, technical, and professional qualifications up to date, including valid Emergency First Aid certification.
- **Balanced Development:** Balance competitive athletic goals with participants' emotional, personal, and physical wellbeing.
- **Age Appropriateness:** Tailor all training drills and competitive tasks to the age, maturity, experience, and capability of participants.
- **Supervision of Minors:** Leaders under 18 years of age must only work alongside a qualified adult coach or supervisor.
- **Role Modelling:** Project an image of health, cleanliness, and professionalism. Never drink alcohol or smoke while coaching or supervising.
- **Safeguarding Compliance:** Strictly enforce SALA Safeguarding Policies and maintain professional boundaries with young participants.

7. Code of Behaviour for Parents & Spectators

Parents and spectators play an influential role in setting the tone at junior and adult fixtures. They are expected to:

- Focus on young people's efforts and enjoyment rather than winning or losing.
- Teach young participants that honest effort and teamwork are as valuable as victory.
- Encourage players by applause and positive reinforcement; never ridicule or admonish a participant for making a mistake.
- Respect match officials' decisions and support all efforts to eliminate bad language or harassment from the sidelines.
- Abide strictly by SALA Safeguarding and Gender Equality Policies.

8. Code of Behaviour for Umpires & Officials

This code applies to all Umpires, Referees, and Match Officials officiating lacrosse fixtures under SALA jurisdiction:

- **Impartiality:** Apply the rules of lacrosse accurately, consistently, objectively, and impartially to ensure fair competition.
- **Zero Tolerance:** Enforce zero tolerance for foul, sexist, abusive, racist, or prejudicial language from players, coaches, or spectators.
- **Safety & Pitch Control:** Ensure pitch conditions and equipment are safe for play, stopping matches if safety or participant dignity is compromised.
- **Policy Compliance:** Comply strictly with SALA Safeguarding, Gender Equality, Anti-Doping, and Ethics Policies.

9. Reporting Breaches & General Disciplinary Regulations

Prompt and appropriate handling of poor behaviour is essential for maintaining integrity and trust across South African lacrosse. SALA enforces structured regulatory frameworks to resolve concerns:

- **1. Safeguarding & Child Protection:** Deals with concerns or allegations relating to the safety or welfare of children and vulnerable persons.
- **2. Anti-Doping Regulations:** Governs substance testing, education, and anti-doping compliance in accordance with SAIDS and WADA standards.
- **3. General Conduct Regulations:** Handles general misconduct, field disputes, ethics complaints, and administrative non-compliance.

Escalation to SALA: Member clubs are required to attempt initial local resolution via their internal constitutional procedures for minor incidents. Where a matter cannot be resolved locally or involves severe misconduct, a formal complaint must be lodged in writing with the SALA Chief Executive / Executive Board for investigation.

10. Disciplinary Policy & Process for National Squads (High Performance Program)

Representing South Africa as a member of a SALA National Squad (High Performance Program) is a privilege that carries enhanced responsibilities. This section establishes the explicit disciplinary framework governing all national squad players, coaches, managers, medical personnel, and support staff during selection trials, domestic training camps, international tours, test matches, and World Lacrosse tournaments.

10.1 Scope & Application

This policy applies unconditionally to all individuals selected for, trialing for, or appointed to SALA National Squads (senior, youth, indoor, and discipline-specific representative teams). The policy remains active throughout the entire selection cycle, including international travel, team accommodation, promotional events, and official squad functions.

10.2 Mandatory National Squad Standards of Conduct

Members of SALA National Squads must adhere strictly to the following professional standards:

- **Ambassadorial Duty:** Act at all times as exemplary ambassadors for South Africa and SALA, upholding the highest standards of dignity, sportsmanship, and cultural respect.
- **Athlete/Staff Agreements:** Sign and strictly comply with the SALA National Athlete/Staff Agreement, High Performance training directives, fitness benchmarks, and medical disclosure requirements.
- **Curfew & Substance Rules:** Abide by all team curfews, accommodation rules, and alcohol restrictions established by the National Team Manager and Head Coach during camps and tours. Zero tolerance applies to illegal drugs and prohibited performance-enhancing substances.
- **Media & Social Media Conduct:** Refrain from making public, media, or social media comments that disparage teammates, coaches, match officials, opponents, tournament organizers, or SALA, or that disclose confidential tactical strategies.
- **Financial & Kit Compliance:** Fulfill all financial obligations (including tour levies and fundraising commitments) on schedule, and maintain exclusive care of official South Africa team kit and sponsor equipment.

10.3 Disciplinary Authority & Panel Structure

To ensure fair and swift administration, National Squad disciplinary matters are adjudicated through two distinct bodies:

- **1. On-Tour / In-Camp Disciplinary Committee (TDC):** Comprising the National Team Manager, High Performance Director (or SALA Board Representative), and Head Coach. Empowered to resolve urgent on-tour or in-camp infractions immediately.
- **2. SALA High Performance Disciplinary Board (HPDB):** Appointed by the SALA Executive Board to handle non-urgent matters, post-tour disciplinary reviews, or major misconduct referrals.

10.4 Categorisation of Misconduct & Tiered Sanctions

Infractions are categorised by severity, carrying proportionate penalties:

- **1. Minor Infractions:** Includes minor tardiness, minor kit non-compliance, or minor administrative oversights. Sanctions include a formal verbal reprimand, internal squad duties, or temporary exclusion from a single training session.
- **2. Moderate Infractions:** Includes curfew violations, inappropriate public behaviour, minor insubordination, or unauthorized media commentary. Sanctions include an official written warning, forfeiture of match selection for specified non-cap or cap fixtures, loss of team leadership titles (e.g. captaincy), or financial levy penalties.
- **3. Major / Severe Infractions:** Includes gross insubordination, physical or verbal abuse, anti-doping rule violations, safeguarding breaches, severe tour property damage, or criminal acts. Sanctions include immediate suspension from the High Performance Program, immediate repatriation from an international tour at the individual's personal expense, and referral to the SALA Executive Board for domestic membership expulsion.

10.5 Expedited On-Tour Procedure & Appeals Mechanism

During international tours or residential camps, disciplinary matters require rapid resolution:

- **Notice of Allegation:** The accused individual is provided with written notice of the alleged breach within 12 hours of the incident.
- **Expedited Hearing:** An expedited hearing is convened by the On-Tour Disciplinary Committee within 24 hours, giving the individual a fair opportunity to state their defense and present evidence.
- **Immediate Determination:** The Committee issues a written determination immediately, with sanctions taking effect without delay.
- **Appeals Procedure:** Any individual subject to major sanctions (e.g., repatriation or program expulsion) may lodge a written appeal to the SALA Executive Appeals Panel within 7 days of returning to South Africa. The decision of the SALA Executive Appeals Panel is final and binding.

11. Equality & Non-Discrimination Policy

South Africa Lacrosse Association (SALA) is fully committed to eliminating unfair discrimination, promoting equal opportunities, and ensuring that no participant, employee, or volunteer receives less favourable treatment on grounds of protected characteristics.

11.1 Legal & Statutory Commitment

SALA conducts its operations in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Section 9), the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA), the Employment Equity Act, and national sports sector transformation guidelines.

11.2 Positive Action & Implementation

- **Access & Inclusion:** SALA institutes proactive measures to remove physical, cultural, or financial barriers to participation in lacrosse.
- **Executive Responsibility:** The SALA Executive and Board hold overall accountability for ensuring equality policies are implemented across all national programs and regional structures.
- **Membership Requirements:** Member clubs, universities, and regional associations must formally adopt equivalent non-discrimination provisions in their constitutions.
- **Review Cycle:** The SALA Board reviews equality initiatives annually and conducts a full policy audit every three years, reporting outcomes at the SALA Annual General Meeting (AGM).

12. Participation Guidelines During Pregnancy

SALA is committed to offering a safe, inclusive environment for all lacrosse participants and respecting the rights of pregnant athletes and officials.

12.1 Participant Guidelines

- **Medical Consultation:** SALA strongly advises pregnant participants to consult a qualified medical professional to assess personal health considerations prior to engaging in training or competitive matches.
- **Informed Risk:** Participation during pregnancy remains the voluntary decision and responsibility of the individual participant, in consultation with their medical advisor.

12.2 Organisational & Coaching Support

- **Open Communication:** Clubs and administrators must maintain clear protocols providing confidential channels for participants to disclose pregnancy when they choose to do so.
- **Supportive Role:** Coaches and leaders must respect and support an athlete's informed decision regarding participation, adapting training activities where requested.

Appendix 1: Relevant Legal Frameworks & Discrimination Definitions

In South Africa, legal rights regarding non-discrimination are founded upon Section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and enforced through statutory enactments including PEPUDA and related sports policy guidelines.

Protected Characteristics

SALA prohibits unfair discrimination directly or indirectly based on race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, or birth.

Forms of Unacceptable Behaviour

- **Direct Discrimination:** Treating an individual less favourably than others in similar circumstances on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** Applying a requirement, condition, or practice that appears neutral but disadvantages a specific group without objective justification.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation:** Subjecting an individual to detrimental treatment because they have made a complaint, acted as a witness, or supported an equality grievance.