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Rustic AC Harassment, Abuse and Bullying Policy

It is the policy of Rustic Athletic Club (RAC) that there shall be no harassment, abuse or bullying, contact or non-contact of any athlete in any of its programs. RAC and its' Board of Directors expect every parent, volunteer, coach and staff member to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of its athletes and to protect them from any form of harassment or bullying.

Definition: Harassment, abuse and bullying is any behavior, verbal, nonverbal or sexual that causes another to feel intimidated, offended, embarrassed and/or humiliated. Harassment denies the dignity and respect of individuals. It is not an accepted behavior towards anyone of RAC be they athlete, coach, volunteer or parent.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of harassment:

- Unwelcome jokes, innuendo or teasing about a person's body, looks race, sexual orientation etc.
- Condescending, patronizing, threatening or punishing actions which undermine self-esteem
- Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, or may endanger a person's safety
- Degrading or inappropriate hazing rituals
- Unwanted or unnecessary physical contact including touching, patting, pinching etc.

Specific to 'bullying' which is similar to harassment in that it is defined as hurtful interpersonal mistreatment of a person. It can be broken down into four types:

- Physical (hit or kick; take or damage personal property)
- Verbal (name calling; insults; constant teasing)
- Relational (try to cut off victims from social connection by convincing others to exclude or reject a certain person)
- Reactive (engage in bullying as well as provoke bullies to attack by taunting them)

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of tactics used by bullies to control their targets:

- Unwarranted yelling and screaming directed at the victim
- Continually criticizing the victim's abilities
- Repeated insults or put downs of the victim
- Repeated threats to remove or restrict opportunities or privileges
- Threats of and actual physical violence

Guidelines for Coaches

- Coaches have the duty and responsibility to establish and maintain an athletic environment free of harassment, abuse and bullying of or between athletes.
- Coaches have a duty and responsibility to take seriously all incidents or complaints of harassment, abuse and bullying.
- Coaches will have the opportunity to pursue training and educational experiences that enhance coaches' understanding of issues surrounding harassment, abuse and bullying.

Guidelines for Athletes

- An athlete should be encouraged to immediately report an incident he/she believes is a form of harassment, abuse or bullying either by a coach or teammate.
- An athlete should feel free of any reprisals as a result of reporting harassment, abuse or bullying.
- Athletes should feel confident that a report of harassment, abuse or bullying will be listened to carefully and taken seriously.

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Procedures for Parents, Coaches and Board Members

1. Parents should report bullying incidents to the team coach or manager first, and then contact the RAC Board of Directors (BOD) in the event the situation is not being addressed to their level of need. If necessary and appropriate, police may be consulted.
2. In all cases of reported bullying, parents of the player who was bullied shall be informed immediately and may be asked to meet with the respective team coach and/or RAC BOD to discuss the incident. In all cases, strict confidentiality shall be maintained. It is not our goal to make a public example of reported incidents.
3. The bullying behavior or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped immediately. The parents of any player who is reported to be bullying will be contacted immediately by the respective team coach, manager, or RAC BOD and asked to meet to discuss the incident to help the bully or bullies change their behavior.

Consequences of Bullying

1. In a first offense situation involving bullying, an attempt will be made to encourage the bully (bullies) to modify their behavior for their benefit, for the benefit of the person bullied and other team members. An attempt will be made by the coach, manager, or parent(s) to reconcile the situation between the players (age and level of maturity and or severity of offense must be considered). Other consequences or disciplinary alternatives to stop the bullying may also be considered by the RAC BOD once reported by the parent, coach or manager.
2. If the bullying persists, disciplinary action against a player may be taken by the team coach and/or RAC BOD which may include, but is not limited to, immediate suspension from participation in practices or game(s) for a period of time. The RAC BOD reserves the right to suspend or otherwise discipline any player for bullying in addition to any action taken by the coach. In severe cases, the RAC BOD reserves the right to prohibit further participation in the soccer program by any player deemed to be involved in the bullying of other players.

After the incident/incidents have been investigated and addressed, the situation will continue to be monitored by the respective team coach, team manager and players' parents to ensure repeated bullying does not occur.