

VCSU Athletics Department
Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

Student Athletes at Valley City State University are expected to represent themselves, their team and the University with honesty, integrity and character whether it be academically, athletically or socially. Participation on an intercollegiate team is a privilege, not a right, and should be treated as such. It has many benefits and brings with it a responsibility to be positive and effective members of the team, department, university and broader community.

The athletics department along with the student athletes who represent our intercollegiate programs are a window to the University. Student-athletes often are in the spotlight and fair or not, their behavior is subject to scrutiny by their peers, members of the campus, local and national communities and by the media. The actions of one student-athlete may result in a generalization to all student athletes and reflects on the individual, team, department and university. It is expected that all student athletes abide by team, department and university policies. A written copy of the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct can be obtained from your coaching staff or from the website.

Student-athletes who do not conform to this code may be subject to consequences for their actions that may include but are not limited to: a warning, dismissal from the team, reduction or withdrawal of athletically related financial aid and dismissal from the University. In addition to all University policies, student athletes are responsible for the following standards as well as all campus, city, state and federal laws.

In order to be permitted to participate in VCSU intercollegiate activities, each athlete must sign the NAIA Athletes of Character Pledge. The college and department maintain high standards of behavior for student athletes and apply the disciplinary policy in a consistent and equitable manner. Student athletes, coaches and other VCSU officials are expected to report violations to the athletic department.

Procedures for reporting any breach of athletic disciplinary policy and or team training rules **during the academic year:**

1. An incident report form should be filled out by the head coach of the sport in which an athlete or athletes have been in violation.
2. A report form should be filled out each individual athlete if there are multiple athletes involved in an incident.
3. The report shall be submitted to the Director of Athletics within three working days after the coach is aware of the incident.

Note: **Departmental** sanctions are minimums. Each Head Coach may, with concurrence of the Athletic Director, provide stiffer penalties. Coaches may not dismiss sanctions without the concurrence of the Athletic Director. The **departmental** sanctions cover **team members during academic year**. In case of a felony, assault or drug conviction the sanctions will apply regardless of the date and time they occurred.

Departmental sanctions severity will be cumulative during a student athlete's career.

Team rules such as curfew, dress code, etc. will vary from sport to sport and can be established by the head coach.

Category I - General Alcohol Offenses

If a student-athlete is found responsible for any alcohol offense (on or off campus), upon investigation by the Athletic Department, the following general sanctions will be imposed. A meeting will be scheduled with the head coach, student-athlete(s), and the Director of Athletics (or designee) whereby sanctions will be imposed that include the following:

First Offense:

1. The student-athlete is immediately suspended for all athletically related activity until such time that an appointment has been confirmed with the Counseling Center for assessment, followed by an additional session to discuss the results.
 - a. After confirmation of appointment with Counseling Center, SA may return to practice/play.
 - b. In addition, the student-athlete will be assessed 10 hours of VCSU Viking service hours.
2. Confirmation of the assessment is reported back to Anna Bratsch, Director of Sports Medicine/Associate Athletic Director, Mark Nelson, Vice President for Student Affairs and other appropriate personnel.
3. The student-athlete is required to follow recommendations of the assessment professional. If off campus services are needed, the student-athlete assumes all financial responsibility.
4. Information regarding allegations and athletics investigation will be provided to the dean of student life office for action under the VCSU Student Rights and Responsibilities: A Code of Student Conduct.

Please note: If the sanction to contact the Counseling Center on campus is not completed, the student athlete will be suspended from all team functions until which time the requirements have been met.

Second Offense:

1-4. from First Offense are applied.

5. The student-athlete will be suspended from a minimum of 10% of all scheduled contests. Note: Suspension will be for the next consecutive scheduled contests during regular/secondary seasons. If a season ends during the suspension, the sanction will be carried over to the following season. Suspension must be immediate; furthermore, coach and/or Director of Athletics (designee) have the right to add to game sanctions to span secondary and championship segments.

Minimum suspension: 1 game FB, 1 date in golf, XC/T&F, 2 dates in all other sports

6. Athletic Department reserves the right to revoke any/all privileges afforded to an VCSU student athlete including but not limited to:

- Removal of athletic related scholarship aid
- Separation from athletic academic support services
- Separation from athletic training services
- Retention of all VCSU athletic issued equipment and supplies

Third Offense:

1-6. from First and Second Offense are applied.

7. Athlete will be suspended from 50% of all scheduled contests. Note: Suspension will be for the next consecutive scheduled contests during regular/secondary seasons. If a season ends during the suspension, the sanction will be carried over to the following season. Suspension must be immediate; furthermore, coach and/or Director of Athletics, (or designee) reserve the right to add to game sanctions to span secondary and championship segments.

Fourth Offense:

1. Student-Athlete will be immediately dismissed from their team(s).
2. Information regarding allegations and athletics investigation will be provided to the dean of student life office for action under the VCSU Student Rights and Responsibilities: A Code of Student Conduct.

Please note: The calculation of the number of offenses is cumulative throughout the term of enrollment at Valley City State University. Any subsequent violation of the Alcohol and Controlled Substance Infraction Policy after the initial violation will result in a more severe penalty than the previous violation regardless of designation as Category I or II. As such, during the meeting with the head coach, student athlete(s), and the Director of Athletics (designee), the student-athlete will be informed of the penalties they will face for future violations.

Category II – Controlled Substance/Drug Offenses and/or Serious Offenses Involving Alcohol (Any)

If a student-athlete is found responsible for use (drug tested), possession and/or misconduct involving controlled substance/drugs other than alcohol as stated in the Valley City State University Alcohol and Drug Testing Policy, is arrested and/or convicted of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) or Driving Under the Influence (DUI), or, participates in practice or competition under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs at any time as a representative of a Valley City State University athletics team and upon investigation by the Athletic Department, the following general sanctions will be imposed.

A meeting will be scheduled with the head coach, student-athlete(s), and the Director of Athletics (or designee) whereby sanctions will be imposed that include the following:

First Offense:

1. Within 72 hours of meeting with the head coach, and Director of Athletics (or designee) the student athlete must contact the Counseling Center for assessment, followed by an additional session to discuss the results.
2. Confirmation of the assessment is reported back to Anna Bratsch, Director of Sports Medicine/Associate Athletic Director, Mark Nelson, Vice President for Student Affairs and other appropriate personnel.
3. The student-athlete is required to follow recommendations of the assessment professional. If off campus services are needed, the student-athlete assumes all financial responsibility.
4. If a student-athlete refuses an assessment they will be subject to indefinite suspension from all regular season and/or secondary season practices and contests until the assessment is made.
5. If a student-athlete refuses treatment recommendations they will be subject to indefinite suspension from all regular season practice and contests until treatment recommendation is initiated and/or completed, depending on the treatment recommendation.
6. Information regarding allegations and athletics investigation will be provided to the VPSA office for action under the VCSU Student Rights and Responsibilities: A Code of Student Conduct.
7. The student-athlete is immediately suspended for one (1) week from all countable athletically related activities. Student-athlete will serve 10 hours of VCSU Viking service.
8. Athletic Department reserves the right to revoke any/all privileges afforded to a VCSU student-athlete including but not limited to:
 - Suspension from the team
 - Loss of eligibility and dismissal from the team
 - Loss of athletics related scholarship aid

Second Offense:

The following sanctions apply for all Category II Second Offenses; however, any student-athlete whose first and second offenses were DUI/DWI will be immediately and indefinitely suspended from all athletically related activities and all privileges may be revoked.

1-8 from First Offense are applied.

9. Athlete will be suspended from 50% of all scheduled contests. Note: Suspension will be for the next consecutive scheduled contests during the championship I non-championship seasons. If a season ends during the suspension, the sanction will be carried over to the following season. Suspension will be immediate; however, coach and/or Director of Athletics (designee) reserve the right to add to game sanctions to span championship and non-championship segments.

Third Offense:

10. Student-Athlete will be immediately dismissed from his/her team.

This policy may be applied to off-campus violations when student-athletes are participating in university sanctioned activities such as sporting events, awards dinners, field trips, and conferences or are exercising privileges granted to Valley City State University students in general.

Note: The calculation of number of offenses is cumulative throughout the term of enrollment at Valley City State University. Any subsequent violation of the Alcohol and Drug Testing I Education Policy after the initial violation will result in a more severe penalty than the previous violation regardless of designation as Category I or II.

As such, during the meeting with the head coach, student-athlete(s), and the Director of Athletics, (or designee), the student-athlete will be informed of the penalties he/she will face for future violations.

Criminal Acts

Student-Athletes are expected to be responsible members of the University and outside communities. Any criminal acts will be treated as serious in nature and athletics sanctions will be imposed in addition to any legal or university determined sanctions. Any act that occurs while a student is enrolled at Valley City State University and considered a member of a varsity athletics team will be treated as a violation of this code. Information regarding allegations of criminal acts will be provided to the dean of student life office for action under the VCSU Student Rights and Responsibilities: A Code of Student Conduct.

Criminal acts will be considered in two categories.

Category I: Secondary Offense:

A secondary offense is any violation of criminal law that is not classified as a felony, any violation of the Rights and Responsibilities of Community: A Code of Student Conduct, as determined by an appropriate University official; academic fraud as established by the University and as determined by an appropriate University official; or, knowingly giving false and misleading information to a university official. The Director of Athletics, (or designee) will determine sanctions for a secondary offense. Sanctions may include but are not limited to any one or more of the following:

- Verbal and written warning reprimand
- Participation in educational sessions
- Restriction in athletic department services
- Requirements for restitution
- Suspension from practice
- Loss of competition
- Loss of eligibility and dismissal from the team
- Loss of athletic related scholarship aid

Following notification of a secondary offense committed by any student-athlete, the Director of Athletics (designee) will convene the appropriate parties, including but not limited to the student athlete, head coach, to investigate and discuss the known circumstances related to the violation. If appropriate, a representative of the University's Office of Student Affairs should also be involved in such discussions or used as a resource.

Following the investigation, the Director of Athletics (designee) will implement and monitor the appropriate sanctions as determined for the student-athlete(s) who committed the secondary offense. It is important to note that the athletic administration reserves the right to suspend a student-athlete from participation on an intercollegiate team while any criminal charge is being investigated.

Category II: Major Offenses:

A major offense is any violation of North Dakota state criminal law, federal law or laws of another jurisdiction that is classified as a felony; two or more secondary offenses while a student-athlete is enrolled at Valley City State University; or, a violation of the Valley City State University Rights and Responsibilities of Community: A Code of Student Conduct that could result in an expulsion or suspension from the university.

The sanctions for a major offense are that the student-athlete shall be immediately prohibited from participation in practice, competition and any services provided by the athletic department and from any athletic related benefits; and/or the Director of Athletics may revoke or modify any athletic related financial aid to the student-athlete.

Following the immediate suspension, the Director of Athletics (designee) will convene the appropriate parties, including but not limited to the student-athlete and head coach, to investigate and discuss the known circumstances related to the violation. If appropriate, a representative of the University's Office of Student Affairs should also be involved in all discussions. Following the investigation, the Director of Athletics and the appropriate representative of the University's Office of Student Affairs will determine the length (definite or indefinite) of the suspension.

The Athletic Department will follow/support any disciplinary decisions as made by the Office of Student Affairs. As major offenses are of the most serious nature, it is imperative that the University and the athletics community are both considered when determining the appropriate sanctions.

Hazing

Hazing is an act that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of an individual (including, without limitations, an act intended to cause personal degradation or humiliation), or that destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation in, admission to, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization.

Such activities and situations include but are not limited to:

1. Physical punishment, contact, exercise or sleep deprivation that causes excessive fatigue and/or physical or psychological shock.
2. Forced or coerced consumption of food, drink, alcohol, tobacco and/or illegal drugs.
3. Forced or coerced transportation of individuals.
4. Public humiliation, ridicule, indecent exposure or ordeal.
5. Coercing or forcing illegal acts
6. Coercing or forcing acts that are immoral or unethical.
7. Blocking an individual's academic, athletic, health or personal success.
8. Personal servitude.
9. Mental harassment.
10. Sexual harassment.
11. Deception.
12. Threat of social exclusion.
13. Any activity that involves the use of alcohol or any controlled substance.
14. Any activity that is not in accordance with the University's established policies.

If a student athlete chooses to file a hazing grievance against an individual or group, it should be reported to the Athletics Director. If requested, every effort will be made to protect the identity of the person reporting the grievance, where permissible under the law. It is possible that a student athlete may initially voluntarily agree to participate in an initiation activity and that he or she may later decide within a reasonable amount of time that it was an unacceptable hazing activity. A grievance need not be filed for a disciplinary action to occur.

Student athletes committing any hazing violation are subject to dismissal from the team and disciplinary procedures outlined in the VCSU Student Code of Conduct.