

CLYDE A. ERWIN MIDDLE SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

Handbook for Parents of Athletes:

Being a parent is often challenging. This effort and responsibility is frequently complicated by being a parent of an athlete. This handbook, with its guidelines and suggestions, will give you some insights into this responsibility.

There are many relationships which are involved in being the parent of an athlete.

The Player-Coach Relationship:

Unfortunately, through televised games and the recent proliferation of cable TV, many adults feel that they understand or perhaps know more than many coaches. Everyone becomes an expert. While this new found expertise may heighten your appreciation of a sport as a parent, however, you are not the coach.

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical one in athletics! Unfortunately a parent can have a pronounced effect on this very important and delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a decided effect upon your child.

If you express a negative opinion in front of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and may carry with him or her your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach. You, as the parent, can greatly affect this delicate relationship.

Receiving technical or strategic instruction at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions and games. This may ultimately impede your son or daughter's progress and affect their playing time or whether they win a starting position.

As much as a parent or parents can negatively influence this relationship, the opposite is also true! Parents can help an athlete deal with events which transpire during the course of a practice, game, season, and career. Not every experience in the athletic world can be successful or positive . . . BUT, most CAN be turned into a learning experience to make better citizens of our students. In this area, parents are invaluable, as they will see the athlete once he/she leaves the field, gym, locker room, etc. Rather than feed a negative experience or situation, help turn it into a —bump-in-the-road—an obstacle to be overcome.



The Parent-Coach Relationship:

In your role as a parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want the best for him or her. But an athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial in many respects.

Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and it may be an emotional time. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm, courteous and logical manner.

One of the responsibilities which a coach has at the conclusion of a contest is to have a brief meeting with his/her players. Athletes should not pause to talk to parents or friends immediately after games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in athletics.

The Parent-Player:

Some parents may try to live through their child's athletic efforts. Being positive and supportive is important, but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations can be extremely harmful. Allow your son or daughter to enjoy and grow from this valuable experience. In numerous national studies, it has been determined that most athletes participate for enjoyment or fun. Excessive pressure or expectations can alter this most fundamental reason for playing.

When you do speak with you child after a contest OR practice, don't dwell on his or her play; how many points they scored; if they started; what position so-and-so was playing etc. . . .Instead, first ask how the team did or how practice went today? Did your son or daughter play hard, give 100%, and have a good experience? General dialogue which does not place so much emphasis on winning and losing, starring roles, starting vs substituting, etc.

Relationship with Officials:

There is an age-old refrain often used by irate fans, "How much are you paying the officials?" The home school does not get the officials. All officials are selected for particular games by the assignor of the particular sport, and neither team has control of which officials are present.

Officials agree to and follow a code of ethics. They really do not care or have a vested interest in which team emerges as the victor. It is also important to understand that they are a very necessary part of a game. A contest cannot be played without them. There is an ever-growing shortage of officials in almost every sport! This is due in part to criticism by fans and coaches alike.

So while you may not agree with all of their calls (WHO DOES?), please do not harass and taunt them. It is also important to remember that they are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. In many sports, a team will see the same official several times during a



season. Coaches, athletic administrators and schools often work hard to establish a rapport and good working relationship which can easily be damaged by spectators.

Spectator-Cheerleader:

Cheerleaders try to infuse spirit into the fans/spectators and to lead them in selected cheers. Taking this responsibility into your own hands is not appropriate. Fans who leave the stands to direct cheers may often cause or lead to confrontations with the opponents. Following the cheerleaders' directions, therefore, is absolutely necessary at all athletic contests.

The emotion and atmosphere at athletic contests can be very exciting and the cheerleaders need to be allowed to direct and control this aspect. Over the years here at Erwin, we have developed a very enthusiastic and involved fan base, with many parents, alumni, former cheerleaders, etc., incorporating their own chants/songs/cheers. This has created a special feeling of excitement and belonging for both fans and players alike. As long as these activities in support of our teams are done in concert with and with consideration for our cheerleaders, no one could pick a more enjoyable atmosphere in which to play or watch an athletic contest.

With regards to the visitors spectator area, respect should and must be shown to the feelings of the fans of our opponents. This is of PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE!!!

Athletic Chain of Command:

Clyde A. Erwin Middle School the following chain of command is in effect. . .

School Board

Superintendent

Principal

Athletic Director

Head Coach

Assistant Coaches

Players

If there are any questions or concerns, the athlete AND/OR his or her parent should first contact the Athletic Director. If there is no resolution, he or she would then go to the next level, etc. This is EXTREMELY important in order to establish an efficient line of communication.

Sportsmanship:

Since athletics should be educational in nature, it is important that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our athletes and students. Sportsmanship is an overt display of respect for the rules of sport and for all others – players, coaches, officials, and fans. It also involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. This means.



*There can be no vulgar or inappropriate language from our fans or spectators.

*Taunting or trash talking of our opponents and their cheerleaders cannot be tolerated.

*Spectators cannot leave the bleachers or enter onto the court or field during a contest or until an appropriate time thereafter.

*Fans should be supportive and positive. Cheering should be done for our team and not against our opponents.

*We should not impede or interfere with our opponents' cheerleaders from leading their cheers.

*In some specific sports, such as basketball and volleyball, we should not yell while an opponent takes a foul shot or as a player attempts to serve.

Responsibilities of an Athlete:

Most coaches would expect an athlete to adhere to the following general guidelines: The team's goals, welfare and success must come before any individual. An athlete needs to consistently attend practice sessions. This also includes weekend and holiday periods. Players must be receptive to coaching. Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms & equipment. As a member of a team, an athlete must agree to and follow the team rules. Athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but the entire team/program, the coaching staff, the school, the community, and their family as well. If injured, an athlete must report all injuries to either the coach or to our athletic trainer. This should be done immediately!

These general guidelines are in addition to the Player/Parent/Coach Agreement which every player is issued and required to sign/return prior to each sport season. Plus state and conference rules pertaining to all student-athletes, as well as the Clyde A. Erwin Middle School Code of Student Conduct.

Responsibilities of a Coach:

At Erwin, a coach has the responsibility for the following: The selection of the squad. The determination of the style of play, including offensive and defensive philosophy. The teaching and instruction at practice sessions. The determination of who starts and how long an athlete plays in a contest. The decision of who plays in what position. The establishing of team rules, in concert with the general philosophy of the entire athletic program. The selection of team captains. Communication with athletes and parents with respect to when practice sessions will be held, and when they will start/end.

This general guide is in addition to the —ATHLETIC POLICY HANDBOOK, which includes a much more extensive description for coaches.

Eligibility Requirements for Athletes:



The Buncombe County School District is subject to those restrictions as set forth by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association. These as well as any additional requirements are described in the Player/Parent/Coach Agreement, which each player receives prior to the season. Coaches will also make prospective players aware of these requirements in pre-season interest and organizational meetings.

Participation on an Athletic Team:

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team at Erwin is a **PRIVILEGE**, and NOT A **RIGHT**! Being on and maintaining one's membership on the team means accepting all the responsibilities of an athlete. However, unlike recreation or intramural teams, equal or guaranteed playing time **does NOT exist**. In an effort to win or achieve team success, a coach will use players best-suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.

It IS the philosophy of the athletic program here at Erwin to make every effort to play everyone in every game. This is a major challenge for coaches, both logistically and philosophically. Certain sports make substitutions easier than others, as do the score/flow of games. Players, coaches, and fans alike are focused on —winning, and can very easily lose site of the instructional nature and value of middle school contests.

So although there are no “guarantees” on starting/playing time, our coaches are working toward rewarding ALL participants who have practiced regularly, worked hard, and met all obligations expected of them. . . .With playing time on game day.

It should again be emphasized that this is a difficult and challenging task in many situations. Hopefully through planning and patience, this philosophy will achieve better morale for the entire team and keep numbers high.

Cutting the Team:

While our ultimate goal is to promote the greatest athletic participation possible at Erwin, it may be necessary in some sports to cut a squad. This may occur due to limitations of our facilities, regulations specific to some sports, travel restrictions, budget concerns, and other factors.

Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his or her team. The criteria for selecting the team is developed by the coach. A copy of the written criteria may be distributed to and/or discussed with the athletes prior to tryouts, and to parents at pre-season meetings.

It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from the previous middle school team, for example, do not automatically make either the JV or varsity squad the following year. Having been a member of the middle school team as a 7th grader does not guarantee you will be on the team as an 8th grader.

Parents should expect that every candidate is treated fairly and given every consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment; coaches will handle the task as positively as possible; and will be available to answer athletes' questions and parents' questions as well.

While we certainly understand that being cut is disappointing for any athletes and even for their parents, we unfortunately cannot always keep everyone. Anyone cut from a team is welcome and



encouraged to try out again next season or to try another sport. When parents and athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all. Efforts by all parties involved to approach this very difficult situation in a constructive manner will go a long way toward moving forward, especially for the athlete involved (this is OUR CHIEF CONCERN)!

Practice Sessions and Games:

Practice sessions are normally OPEN to spectators, as are all games. Spectators providing positive and nurturing support of teams and athletes can be very helpful to performance.

However, it is the prerogative of each individual coach to conduct closed practices. There is a very sound reason for this. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and there is real, quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to an athlete's concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting.

Practice Sessions: May last 2 hours on school days (coaches should notify in advance of longer sessions on non-school days, as well as shorter workouts when appropriate). May start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or of our facilities. **Practices Will NOT** be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather. **Practices Will NOT** be held when school is not in session due to inclement weather. **Practices May be held on Saturdays and over holiday periods.** Our coaches are encouraged to be sensitive to family planning, particularly around holidays.

Risks of Athletic Participation:

In spite of protective equipment, and the supervision and sound instruction by our coaches, there are always risks associated when anyone participates in athletics. Injuries in some of our activities can and do occur. In extremely rare cases, paralysis and even death could also result. All athletes and parents need to be aware of and understand this possibility. At Erwin, we will do all that we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our athletes. THESE RISKS UNDERLINE THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR PLAYERS, PARENTS, AND COACHES TO BE ON THE SAME PAGE . . . FROM PRE-SEASON MEETINGS THROUGH THE POSTSEASON AND EVEN OUT-OF-SEASON TRAINING!!!

Travel Policy:

All team members must travel as a group to and from all athletic contests. A team member may be released to the custody of a parent/guardian at the conclusion of an away contest, provided approval has been received in advance from an administrator or his/her designee. A note from parent/guardian seeking permission to transport the athlete after a contest should be received by the coach and approved by the principal or his/her designee. The parental note should specifically explain the reason for not traveling home with the team. This explanation may be needed in order for the principal to make an informed decision consistent with previous requests. Prior to leaving the contest, the coach should actually speak with the parent/guardian to confirm that he/she, and not another student or friend is driving. In addition, this will guard against miscommunication, and someone being left at an away site.

