

Albuquerque Home School Athletic Association (AHSA) Coach's Handbook

"Win with Class, Lose with Dignity"

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A Word from the Board

Coaching is a unique opportunity to make a lasting mark on a young person's life. That mark is positive when Christ-like character is displayed through you. It is imperative that you see each contact with your players as an opportunity to influence them to walk with Christ. We do not require our membership to be Christians. Many of our games are played against non-Christian teams. Never forget when you step out on that court or field, that you are an ambassador for Jesus Christ.

You will face challenges this year. Those challenges will help build your character as well as the character of your players. You have the opportunity to mentor our players in how to take a diverse group of individuals, form a team, focus on objectives, and discipline themselves to achieve that objective, and deal with both winning and losing.

These teams would not exist without you, the coach. Thank you for volunteering your service this year. Remember to pray earnestly for your team. We are here to support you in any way that we can. Please feel free to call upon us at any time. Know that we are praying for you and your team throughout the season.

"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ" Col 3:23-24

Mission

The mission of Albuquerque Home School Athletic Association is to bring glory to God by providing an opportunity for home school students to develop Christian character and athletic skill while participating in competitive athletic programs under Christian leadership.

Philosophy of Athletics

We believe that participation in competitive athletics can play an important part in the physical and spiritual growth of home school students. It is an educational experience that teaches the value of hard work, discipline and determination, respect for others, handling adversity and honoring God. It contributes to good character development, good sportsmanship and the development of God-given talents and abilities. We expect our student-athletes and coaches to work hard, enjoy the competition, respect each other and their opponents and honor Christ in all they do. We will strive to teach and train home school students how to use their God given talents to compete with intensity ("Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training..." 1Corinthians 9:25a), integrity ("The integrity of the upright guides them..." Proverbs 11:3), and for the glory of God ("And

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whatever you do..., do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:17).

Although God has given parents the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth of their children, we believe that God often uses committed Christian coaches to make a lasting impact for Christ in the lives of young student-athletes. We are committed to providing quality coaches who teach fundamentals and train for competitiveness while remaining pure in their motives and actions before God.

Because we participate in competitive leagues, winning will always be one of our goals but we believe that God cares far more about how we compete and how we respond to winning and losing than about the outcome of a competition. We believe that it honors God to compete with maximum effort and then to demonstrate humility in winning and respect for the opponent in losing. We require our coaches and student-athletes to dedicate themselves to this goal. We recognize that losing can present a beneficial learning experience. We will strive to stand in contrast to a sports world that all too often emphasizes winning at any cost.

We believe that every member of a team plays an important part in the team's success regardless of the amount of playing time that they receive. However, we are committed to finding coaches that will balance the goal of winning with the goal of providing playing time for each athlete and that will teach fundamentals and develop each athlete to their full potential.

2.0 COACH SELECTION AND BEHAVIOR

Coach Selection

Coaches will be nominated by the Athletic Director and subject to approval by the Board.

- **First Time Coaches:** Individuals who have not coached in AHSA before are required to fill out a coach application, agree to the statement of faith, pass a background check, and be interviewed by two Board Members (a Sports Director who is not part of the Board may substitute for a Board Member). Once approved, the coach must review the Coach's Guidelines, the Coach's Code of Conduct, take the online concussion training and sign the Coaching Agreement.
- **Returning Coaches:** Must have a background check and sign the Coaching Agreement indicating they have read The Coaches Handbook and are in continued agreement with the AHSA mission, philosophy, objectives, Statement of Faith and Coaches Code of Conduct.
- **High School Graduates:** The Board may approve high school graduates under the age of 21 to coach younger teams or assistant coach older teams as allowed by league specific guidelines.
- **AHSA High School Student Coach:** An AHSA high school student may act as an assistant coach or team helper for a middle school team in a sport they play in AHSA at the high school level. A student coach/helper does not require a background

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check but the head coach for the sport must submit the name of the student(s) to the Board and receive Board approval.

- The Board is the deciding body for new coaches. A coach who is stepping down can recommend their successor to the Board but have no authority to appoint a replacement coach. A coach is strongly discouraged from discussing coaching positions for future teams with parents and players during the current season.

Department

The coach must be a strong example of Christian character to the athletes. The coach must be firm and consistent and have a Christ-like love for the athletes, putting their interests first. The goal of the coach's instruction is to see each player develop a greater love for God and his/her teammates while developing their athletic skill to its full potential.

- The coach will never use profanity or use the name of the Lord in vain.
- The coach must show respect and patience with referees and officials at all times and seek to model these qualities to the players.
- The coach is responsible for the deportment of the players and spectators at all games and will address any issues with player or fan misconduct immediately.
- 24 Hour Rule: Directly following a game, coaches are not to discuss the game with an athlete's parents, relatives or friends in regards to concerns about playing time, game strategy, player rotation, or any other strategic or tactical aspects of the game. Coaches are to inform the concerned party that they may contact them the following day to discuss their concern.

Discipleship

As a committed Christian coach, you can be a great influence on the lives of your players by demonstrating that you care about them and are guided by the Lord. Each week, enthusiastically point out the improvements they are making. Compliment them when they give good effort. Emphasize the importance of each of them to the team and how each brings a different skill to the team. Make prayer a part of every practice and game. You are also encouraged to share a devotional with your players at practice and/or allow players to lead the devotional as they grow and mature.

3.0 GAME AND PRACTICE POLICIES

Practice Policies

Practices will be conducted with approved coaches, team helpers and registered players only.

- The coach will not allow any player to participate in practice or pre-season conditioning before they have registered for the season or have a signed liability waiver from the parent.
- If a practice or game is to be missed, and another coach or assistant coach can't be there, the coach or assigned parent will call, text, or e-mail each parent/player and cancel that session of practice and inform the AHSA Scheduler.

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- The coach will begin and end practices on time out of respect for players and parents.
- Coaches are not to allow anyone outside of the AHSA organization to participate in practices without permission from the Board.
- For sports where there are boys and girls teams, they will not practice together or scrimmage each other. Athletes from a boys team may not practice with a girls team and vice-versa.
- Coaches with small children will try to make arrangements for them to not come to the practice if possible so the coach and players can focus on the practice time. If the coach needs to take them to practice, the coach will make the attempt to minimize any possible distraction.

Supervision

The coach should arrive at least 5-10 minutes before practice, 30-60 minutes before games, and not leave until all players depart or are picked up by parents. The coach has the responsibility to supervise the players during all scheduled practices and games.

Two Adult Rule: If only one coach is at the practice, the coach will not conduct practice without another adult present. The second adult does not have to be an approved coach, but must be present to observe the whole practice and be available to assist in the event of an injury. The second adult will remain at the practice or activity until all players depart or are picked up by parents.

- Adult Observer: An Adult Observer is an adult at least 21 years of age who is at the practice but has not undergone a background check. They cannot take an active role in the practice.
 - An approved coach under the age of 21 can count as an adult observer so long as an adult over 21 years of age is present for the entire practice.
- Team Helper: A Team Helper is an individual 18 years or older who has passed a background check. A Team Helper can, at the discretion of the coach, assist with practices and interact with the players but cannot substitute for a head or assistant coach at a practice or game even if the result is a forfeit.

Three Activities per Week

During the regular season, coaches will limit the total number of practices and games to no more than 3 days per week (e.g. 2 practices and 1 game, 1 practice and 2 games, etc.). This does not apply when preparing for and playing tournaments. If a coach would like to hold more than three activities in a given week, he/she may request approval from the Board or hold the activity as optional for the team.

Off/Pre-Season Practice Policies

Coaches will adhere to the off-season/pre-season practice rules and game rules set by the leagues in which we play (i.e. ACSL, USTA, & ACAA). Failure to adhere to these rules will result in disciplinary action by the AHSA Board and may affect the team's ability to play in

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the league that year. Coaches may coordinate off-season conditioning and skills development with their teams subject to Board approval. Conditioning and skills development prior to tryouts or commencement of official team practice is entirely optional for players.

Try-Outs

See AHSA Varsity Tryout Policy for details on Varsity tryouts. In general, Middle School players (grades 6-8) will not be allowed to play up on Varsity teams unless there is a shortage of high school players. Middle School coaches will conduct evaluations during the first weeks of regular practices to place players on A, B, and C teams as player grade, ability and team availability within the league dictates.

Rosters

After the registration deadline, no players may be added without permission from the Board.

Playing Time

The coach has the responsibility to balance the goal of winning with providing game time experience for each player. Middle School teams are especially focused on player development and so playing time should be more balanced.

- Communicate clearly to your players and parents how you will grant playing time. At the beginning of the season, let players and parents know what to expect. If a player expresses the desire to earn more playing time, give them achievable goals to work towards. While playing time does not need to be equal among players, it should be a goal of the coach to try and get each player in each game.
- Invest time early in the season on skill and player development. When you have first time or low skill players, make it your goal to get them the coaching and game experience needed so they can contribute by tournament time.

Tournaments and Traveling

Most if not all league games and some tournaments will be played in the Albuquerque area. Travel is permitted for teams to participate in other tournaments and play teams outside of our leagues, subject to the rules of each league. Travel will be limited to two overnight trips per year (not including Nationals). Additional travel may be submitted to the Board for consideration. The cost of participating in any tournaments or games outside of league games and end of season tournaments, including coach's expenses, shall be borne by each team.

The coach shall notify players and parents of the desired commitment prior to tryouts and that participation in these activities is voluntary but recommended. At the Varsity level, some form of commitment to a minimum number of out of town tournaments may be required to be placed on the team. The coach shall consider fundraising activities to offset the cost of these trips, particularly to help out families that cannot afford them.

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Coach's Notebook and Equipment

Coach's Notebook: At the beginning of each season, the head coach will be issued a Coach's Notebook. Coaches are required to have this Coach's Notebook with them at every practice and game. Coaches are responsible to turn in their Coach's Notebook to a Board Member at the end of the season.

Equipment: Each season, the coach will be allowed a budget for equipment and supplies. Contact the Athletic Director or Treasurer for the available amount. The Coach will submit a reimbursement request to the Treasurer to receive payment for the expenditure. Coaches will maintain an accurate list of their AHSA equipment and upon request provide the list of AHSA equipment in their possession to the Board. Coaches will turn in their equipment at the end of the season in which they decide to stop coaching or when requested.

First Aid and Injury

The coach is responsible to have a first aid kit at practices and games. AHSA will provide the kit or reimburse the coach for first aid supplies. The coach must fill out an Injury Notification Form as soon as an accident occurs in which medical attention may be required. The form and instructions are in the Coach's Notebook. It is the responsibility of the coach to initiate this form and inform the parents of the coverage. The coach may refer the parent to the Athletic Director or other Board member to get details of the requirements for reimbursement of any medical expenses.

Concussions

All Coaches are responsible to read and abide by the concussion policy contained in your handbook. You are also responsible for taking the free concussion training at (must register on website to take class) <http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=38000>

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND PARENT ROLES

Communicating well throughout the season with players, parents, and the Board is a critical responsibility for coaches.

Board Communication: The two areas for Board communication are with the Scheduler and the Athletic Director. Prompt responses to emails and/or text messages from the Gym Scheduler are very important as often decisions must be made quickly. If any situation arises on the team that you think requires a higher level of notification (for example, a significant disagreement with a parent or player, a player quitting, an injury, etc) notify the Athletic Director.

Parents and Players: Coaches should hold a meeting early in the season to introduce themselves, provide contact information, practice schedules and communicate their expectations. Coaches should use this opportunity to secure the support of parent volunteers to help with as many responsibilities as possible including the following:

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1. **Communications Coordinator/Team Parent.** Communicate game and practice schedules, notify players/parents in the event of a change or cancellation of an event, and coordinate planning the end of season party and team gifts and/or trophies.
2. **Gate/Admission Fees.** Volleyball and Basketball coaches will identify a parent to organize the collection of admission fees. Mid-High teams are responsible for paying referees out of the gate fees. AHSA pays ACSL for referees at the beginning of the season. Collected money will be turned in to the AHSA Treasurer periodically throughout the season. For Mid-High teams, sometimes the referee fees exceeded what is collected at the gate. In this case, contact the Treasurer to replenish the gate fee bag.
3. **Scorekeeper, Clock and Book.** Identify two to three individuals to share duties on scorekeeping and running the game clock.
4. **Concessions.** Running a concession stand is not mandatory. If teams decide to fundraise by selling concessions, the coach should solicit a parent volunteer to organize this effort.
5. **Clean-up.** The coach is responsible for cleaning up any trash after a game and putting away chairs and tables. The coach may solicit a volunteer to coordinate this activity.
6. **Uniforms.** Uniforms are the biggest investment of our association. A set of new uniforms can cost as much as \$2000. The coach will assign parent to issue and collect uniforms.* The parent shall:
 - Meet with the AHSA Uniform Manager to receive instructions for the distribution and collection of uniforms
 - Issue uniforms to each player and have uniform policy and receipt forms signed by parents. The forms will be turned in to the AHSA Uniform Manager as soon as possible.
 - Reinforce uniform care. Remind the players that the uniforms must be washed each week and drip dried to prevent the lettering from being damaged by a clothes dryer. Be sure that the uniform is returned clean at the end of the season.
 - Inspect and collect uniforms no later than two weeks after the conclusion of the season and turn them in to the AHSA Uniform Manger. Suggestion: Collect uniforms at the end of season party.

* The above does not apply for teams using non-returnable t-shirts as in Track and Tennis.
7. **Web Site.** The AHSA Web site provides information for parents and players about the organization. You have the opportunity to build your own team website on the AHSA website. Contact a Board member for details.

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Recognition and Varsity Letters

Coaches are encouraged to honor their players throughout the season with verbal praise for a job well done. It is customary to hold an end-of-season party and there is a budget for each player available for team gifts (e.g., trophy, t-shirt, etc.) Contact the Board to find the amount available for your team. Varsity coaches will be responsible for nominating Varsity Letters as per the AHSA Varsity Letter Policy.

5.0 COACH DISCIPLINE

Probation, Suspension, & Removal

It should be the goal of every coach to be a shining example of Christ in all they do. Nevertheless, we are all sinners and are occasionally in need of correction. The Board will seek to follow Christian principles when dealing with observed or reported incidents. Failure to adhere to the above policies may result in a coach's probation, suspension, or removal, depending on the severity of the infraction.

Two AHSA Board Members will investigate any reported infractions and will meet with interested parties. They will provide a recommendation to the Board of Directors for action. The Coach will be notified of the disposition of the incident by one or more Board Members.

1. Probation: Coaches placed on probation will be allowed to continue coaching with a plan in place to eliminate the questionable conduct. Additional infractions will result in the suspension or removal of the coach.
2. Suspension: Coaches may be suspended for a single game or longer depending on the severity of the infraction. Suspended Coaches will provide a satisfactory plan of corrective action before being allowed to return to coaching.
3. Removal: In the case of severe infractions, a coach may be removed for the remainder of the season, or banned from AHSA altogether.