



THE EAA WAY

COACHES GUIDE TO HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

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“CULTURE and COACHING PHILOSOPHY”

Mission: We are an Elkhorn-based non-profit youth sports organization dedicated to providing a safe, enjoyable, positive learning environment. We serve families with children of all ages and all skill levels from the community and across the region. We encourage and support the holistic development of every child, teach leadership and other essential skills, and inspire our athletes to seek excellence in all aspects of their lives. We will accomplish this by encouraging parental involvement and by providing professional staff, state-of-the-art facilities, and programs commensurate with ability, potential, and interest at the developmental, recreational, and competitive levels.

Vision: We aim to develop a culture of excellence that establishes standards and expectations that are shared among all of our coaches, parents, players, volunteers, staff, board, and the community. Every member of the organization will hold each other accountable and strive to make meaningful contributions. Our ongoing success will be determined by every individual's character, leadership, beliefs, passion, and commitment, resulting in a first-class youth sports organization.

Core Values:

Integrity- Being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values.

Respect- Putting people first - players, families, officials, opponents, administrators - everyone involved in our sports.

Commitment- Everyone is committed to the developmental process, as well as to the organization's mission, vision and values.

Discovery- We use player-centered learning and teaching as well as coaching and parent education.

Inclusion- We provide programs for all children of all skill levels and abilities who want to play.

Coaching Philosophy: EAA is committed to holistic child development. Our goal is to guide every individual to their full potential as people and athletes.

Developing the Person

We are determined to have a positive influence on the holistic development of every child, teach essential life skills and inspire our athletes to seek excellence in all aspects of their lives.

Developing the Athlete

Our goal is to unlock the full potential of every athlete in a positive, safe and educational environment.

Culture of Success: The culture at EAA is built on our core values of: integrity, respect, commitment, discovery and inclusion. EAA athletes and teams should always aim to compete and win, but our goals for the holistic development of young athletes reach far beyond results. We are successful when we maximize athlete, coach and team growth and development. We are also successful when we help provide our athletes with strong roots as they grow into adulthood. When this culture spreads through our teams and entire club, the individual and team results will ultimately take care of themselves, and our time at EAA will have a meaningful impact on the lives of our athletes, members and community.

“COACHES CULTURE CODE (C3)”

1. We will contribute to a culture of sharing ideas and best practices in order to elevate each other as people and coaches, which includes receiving and providing meaningful feedback.
2. We will demonstrate courtesy, kindness and respect toward everyone involved in our sports-athletes, family members, officials, opponents, administrators and staff.
3. We will develop a culture of excellence by constantly striving to exemplify the standards and behaviors of high performing coaches as outlined in *The EAA Way*.
4. We will be open, transparent and frequent communicators to our athletes, families and coaching colleagues.
5. We will always represent EAA in a positive and professional manner.
6. We will promote and demonstrate kindness, respect and sportsmanship at all times.
7. Our decisions will be made with the best interests of our athletes, families and EAA in mind.
8. We will be life-long learners and continually seek ways to improve by attending coaching clinics (in-house and through outside organizations) and staying up-to-date on best practices for coaching young athletes.
9. We will not measure success solely by wins and losses. We will place an emphasis on developing our athletes' attitude, commitment, effort and improvement. Winning will be a byproduct if we do the right things. We will never sacrifice development for results.
10. We believe in holistic development and will work to help athletes reach their full potential, understanding each child's needs and abilities are different.
11. We will always teach/coach within the rules, ethics and spirit of the game and teach our players to do the same.
12. We will strive to be excellent teachers and positive role models.
13. We will create enjoyable and competitive environments (“serious fun”) for our athletes in order to help them reach their goals.

“COACHING ETHICS and the DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS”

Ethics are the standards of conduct and moral behavior specific to an organization. The following statements refer to the ethical standards expected from coaches involved in educating children at EAA.

1. Ethics with regard to coaching for “process” versus “product”: Coaches who place the outcome of games ahead of the ongoing needs of the participants are being unethical.

The primary reasons children play sports are to participate and learn new skills, to be with friends, compete with and against others and to have fun. They enjoy learning from new experiences and, as time goes on, from direct instruction. They do not like being scolded or abused for making mistakes, and they would rather play in a losing effort than sit on the bench during a victory. They would also rather play in a close game than in a blowout. Very young children rationalize winning and losing to working hard. Older children equate winning and losing with their skills and abilities, directly influencing their self-confidence. Care must be taken to allow players between the ages of four and fourteen the opportunity to become skillful and game savvy by focusing on their long-term development rather than their win-loss record.

2. Ethics with regard to rules: Coaches who bait, antagonize or otherwise challenge the decisions of the officials are being unethical.

It is the responsibility of the coach to understand the rules of play and educate their players to perform within the letter and spirit of the rules to the best of their abilities. Both novice and expert coaches, and especially those coaches who are also registered officials, should appreciate that the application of the rules of the game is based on the interpretation of the officials. It is the coach's responsibility to model good sportsmanship and to demonstrate respect for the game. It is also the responsibility of the coaches to monitor and control any form of referee abuse by players, parents and other spectators affiliated with EAA.

3. Ethics with regard to blowouts: Coaches who deliberately run up scores are being unethical.

Lopsided games in youth sports are inevitable and care must be taken to appreciate the sensitivity of young children to such events. Playing short-handed, playing key players out of position, and sitting key players for longer periods are some possible options for dealing with blow-out situations. Coaches should speak with their director for other strategies specific to their sport.

4. Ethics with regard to player advancement: The coach who seeks to retain a player(s) who has outgrown the knowledge and abilities of the coach for the implicit or explicit purpose of winning games is being unethical.

Players improve by: playing with and against other good players, through personal motivation and independent practice, through study, through observation and through good coaching. By far the most important factors in player development are coaching and environment. At the top level, the successful coach is one who develops players to their full potential and reaps the rewards through the play of the team. In contrast, the successful youth coach helps individual players develop to their full potential, or to the limits of the coach's knowledge, before moving them along to a higher level of play and a new learning environment. The unethical youth coach often seeks to covet his or her top performers for reasons of self-worth and personal gain, regardless of the short and long-term impact on the individual player.

5. Ethics with regard to game tactics: Coaches who use negative tactics and minimize the enjoyment of the players in order to win games are being unethical.

Winning youth games is relatively easy. The coach who tells his or her players to take no risks will win a higher percentage of their games. The younger the players are when a coach displays this attitude, the less likely it is that they will ever experience the joy of actually playing the sport as it can be- an exercise in creative self-expression. It is quite easy to be a “winning” youth coach. It is much more difficult to be a “successful” youth coach.

6. Ethics with regard to respecting the game

It is the responsibility of each coach to demonstrate respect for the game by honoring players, spectators and officials, and by promoting positive character development to all young players in words and deeds. Coaches who fail to meet these standards by displaying poor sportsmanship and overreacting to the natural ups and downs of the game are being unethical.

“TRAINING EXPECTATIONS”

Develop a Lesson Plan

- Detailed planning in advance (written lesson plans)
- Establish specific objectives for every training session
 - Ex. Improve receiving the ball with the inside of the foot
- Follow age-appropriate club curriculum
 - Technical, tactical, physical, psychological
 - Ask your Sport Director for training plans and ideas

Organization

- “Visual Cultural Standards”- training environments are safe and organized
- The training environment, including equipment, is organized prior to the start of each session
- Always check the training area for safety prior to the start of each session

Game-Like

- The training environment should be as close to the game/competition environment as possible
- All activities must be realistic to the sport

Repetition

- No laps, no lines, no lectures
- Players must receive as many reps as possible during each session with very little downtime- make every minute count

Challenging

- All players must experience success and challenge regardless of their ability
- Competition within the training environment

Effective Coaching

- Use of keywords, guided questions and demonstrations
- Use the “Coach’s Toolkit” when delivering coaching points and asking guided questions:
 - At natural stoppages (when the ball goes out of play or the game stops)
 - At planned stoppages (between rounds/activities, during water/rest breaks)
 - In the flow/During activity
 - Coaching individuals 1 on 1
 - In the situation/Stop-Freeze method (only when necessary and when it can benefit the entire team)
- Showing and explaining
- Provide meaningful feedback
- Goal: Players should leave every session wanting to play more and having learned something new

More information can be found in:

“EAA GUIDE TO MEANINGFUL TRAINING SESSIONS”
“EAA COACHING STRATEGIES FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT”

“GAME/COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS”

Develop a game plan

- Use the TeamSnap or Sports Engine app to know the athletes who will be attending
- Have a plan for substitutions
- System/formation and tactics
- Have a Plan B ready to go if things are not working

Provide the team with a proper warm-up

- Ask your Director and/or Sport Performance Director for ideas

Keep comments during the competition positive and refrain from constant chatter

- Constructive comments to individuals should be done when players are on the bench or at natural breaks in the game

Take notes during the competition

- Use notes to prepare for speaking with the team at breaks.
- Include up to (3) specific objectives that can help the team win.
 - Do not focus on everything that has been going wrong- look forward, not back!
 - Ex. “We need to put their guards under more pressure so they cannot hit uncontested threes.”

Make tactical adjustments as necessary to give the team the best chance at winning the game without sacrificing the development of the athletes

Allow all healthy players to participate

- Coaches should provide all athletes 12U and younger with as much playing time as possible
- Playing time for 13U+ should be earned based on attendance at practice, work ethic, coachability and other criteria established and communicated to players and families by the coach

Keep comments to the team brief and positive before sending athletes home

- At least one grow (thing to work on at the next training session) and one glow (something the team did well)

Give individual athletes meaningful feedback

Let families know what’s next (training, game, etc.)

“TACTICAL DNA”

EAA emphasizes several areas of our tactical philosophy that influence the development of our players in all sports.

- All EAA teams are encouraged to play an aggressive, attacking style- “Always Attack.”
- All EAA athletes are expected to aggressively defend as an individual.
- All EAA teams are expected to know how to aggressively defend as a team- “attacking without the ball”
- All EAA teams should always try to dictate the tempo of the game.
- All EAA coaches should encourage their players to express themselves at the right times and in the appropriate areas of the field/court.
- All EAA teams are expected to display a winning mentality.
 - Will to win and strong player leadership
 - One-of-a-kind work ethic
 - Hard to beat/ Always in the game/ Never-quit mentality
 - Courage and confidence to take the ball at all times
 - Competitive toughness
 - Recover quickly from mistakes and make up for them- immediately go to the “next thing”

“ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT”

EAA has a responsibility to promote high standards of behavior in our sports. Play your part and observe the *Player Code of Conduct* at all times.

On and off the field, I will:

- Follow the rules of the sport
- Display and promote high standards of behavior
- Always respect the official's decisions
- Never engage in offensive, insulting or abusive language or behavior
- Never engage in bullying, intimidation or harassment
- Speak to my teammates, coaches and opponents with respect
- Win or lose with dignity
- Listen and respond to what my coach tells me
- Take pride in my appearance on and off the field, and take responsibility for my uniform

I understand if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by EAA:

- I may be required to apologize to teammates, the other team, referee or coach
- I may receive a warning from the coach
- I may receive a written warning from the Sport Director
- I may be dropped from the starting line-up or substituted
- I may be suspended from training or games
- I may be required to serve a long-term suspension
- I may be required to leave the Elkhorn Athletic Association

Parent/guardian will be informed about any breach of this Code of Conduct

“PARENT/SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT”

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behavior in our sports.

EAA's *Code of Conduct for ParentS/Spectators* has been created to ensure youth sports can be enjoyed in a safe, positive environment.

Remember, youth sports is a time for our children to develop their technical, tactical, physical and social skills. Winning isn't everything.

Play your part and observe the *Code of Conduct* at all times.

I will:

- Remain outside of the field of play/court/mat and within designated spectator areas during training and games.
- Let the coach do their job and do not confuse the players by telling them what to do during training and games
- Always respect the decisions of the referee
- Encourage the players to respect the coaches, opposition and officials
- Avoid criticizing a player for making a mistake- mistakes are part of learning
- Avoid placing undue pressure on players away from training/games
- Never engage in or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language or behavior
- Never promote/support unsporting behavior
- Never confront an official or coach
- Make every effort to be early when dropping off and picking up my child for training sessions and games
- Be positive and supportive at all times
- Avoid making negative comments about the game, coaches, referees or players in my child's presence
- Speak directly to the coach (in person) if I have questions concerning my child's participation and development
- Wait a minimum of 24 hours after a game or training session before contacting the coach with questions or concerns

I understand if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by EAA:

I may be:

- Warned about my conduct by an EAA official
- Required to meet with an EAA official
- Asked to leave the venue by an EAA official
- Requested by an EAA official not to attend future training sessions and games
- Suspended or requested to leave the Elkhorn Athletic Association along with any dependents

“TRAINING AND COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS”

Training

- Families will notify the coach of all absences or tardies as far in advance as possible.
- Athletes are responsible for bringing their own equipment.
- Athletes will wear age appropriate equipment and playing surface appropriate footwear.
- Athletes will wear the assigned training uniform if applicable.
- Athletes will not wear jewelry, watches, or piercings.
- Families will inform the coach of all injuries/illnesses, no matter how insignificant.
- Athletes will arrive at training at the designated time set by the coach.
- Prior to the start of training, athletes will only engage in activities designated by the coach.
- Only athletes and coaches are allowed on the field/court/mat.
- Family members are welcome to observe training from areas designated by the coach, but should not communicate with athletes or coaches during training (except in an emergency).

Competition

- Families will notify the coach of all absences or tardies as far in advance as possible.
- Athletes are responsible for bringing all pieces of their uniforms and equipment.
- Athletes will wear age appropriate equipment and playing surface appropriate footwear.
- Athletes will not wear jewelry, watches, or piercings
- Athletes will inform the coach of all injuries/illnesses, no matter how insignificant.
- Athletes will arrive at the designated time set by the coach.
- Prior to the competition starting, athletes will only engage in activities designated by the coach.
- Athletes/parents will not engage or criticize officials at any time. Only the coach will communicate with officials.
- Only athletes and coaches are allowed in the team bench area during the competition (except in an emergency).
- Family members should not communicate with or attempt to instruct athletes during competitions. Only the coach should communicate instructions to the athletes.

“NON-SELECT TRAINING POLICY”

The purpose of non-select sports is to provide an opportunity for the athletes to have fun, learn the sport and develop life skills without emphasis on high level competition and travel.

Guidelines for Team Practices:

- EAA non-select teams include: Hive Academy (4U-10U soccer), Futures (baseball, basketball, cheer, softball, soccer) and flag football teams.
- All coaches must be registered with EAA and complete all required certifications prior to working with a team - no exceptions.
- Teams may begin official practices at the following times:
 - **Futures Baseball, Cheer, Flag Football, Softball** - up to four weeks prior to the first official game/event
 - **Hive Academy Soccer, Futures Soccer and Basketball** - up to three weeks prior to the first official game
- Teams are limited to two practices a week (includes indoor and outdoor practices).
 - Each practice cannot exceed two hours in length.
- Teams may book up to two, 1-hour practices a month in the EAA Victory Center or Thrive Space.
 - Indoor sessions can only be booked during the prescribed pre-season window (above) and during the season.
 - Please note open times are limited and coaches cannot be guaranteed that they will be able to book two indoor sessions a month.
 - Coaches wanting to book time in the Victory Center or Thrive Space should contact their sport director.
- Athletes seeking additional training and competition opportunities are encouraged to attend EAA camps, clinics and/or Select tryouts.

“SAFE AT EAA”

THE EAA PROMISE

- We will give you a warm and friendly welcome.
- We will take pride in ourselves and surroundings.
- Your safety is our priority.
- We will go the extra mile to help you.
- We want you to enjoy your time with us.

All of our staff members are bound by this promise and will do their best to make sure you have a safe and enjoyable experience when attending events at EAA facilities.

If you have a concern about something, please speak to a member of our staff immediately. They will listen carefully and try to help or will pass the concern onto someone who can.

Our facilities are places where young people come to learn and develop. Please obey all reasonable instructions from our staff and signage when at our facilities. They are there for everyone's safety and peace of mind.

WHAT WE DO TO HELP KEEP YOU SAFE

EAA staff will be particularly vigilant to help prevent participants, visitors and other staff from being exposed to risk, abuse, harassment or harm. Parents, caregivers or anyone else can also help with this by reporting any concern they have.

Once people feel safe they can enjoy themselves. Once children feel safe they can grow and develop. EAA takes their responsibilities in this area seriously wherever our activities take place.

EAA has adopted and consistently applies guidance produced by USSSA, USA Football, USA Basketball, Nebraska State Soccer Association, US Youth Soccer and the United States Soccer Federation, including the SAFESPORT certification program.

RESPECT

EAA believes in respect for all. We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, victimization and all forms of discriminatory behavior.

HARM AND ABUSE

All members of the Club play a key role in keeping children safe and help to protect them from abuse or harm. If anyone fails to meet these expectations, please let us know.

Harm is identified in several ways:

- Physical – Deliberately hurting or injuring somebody else.
- Sexual – Being forced to participate in a sexual activity or being made to look at inappropriate images. Any form of “grooming” behavior.
- Emotional – When a child or vulnerable person is made to feel frightened, worthless or unloved. Being shouted at or made fun of. Exposing children to violent or aggressive behavior.
- Neglect – When a child is not taken care of includes: hygiene, diet, not keeping appointments, putting into dangerous situations, not going to school or being left home alone.
- Bullying – Repeated name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumors, threatening or undermining.
- Financial – Taking money, goods, property without permission. Fraud, exploitation or coercion to carry out financial transactions whether child or adult.
- Grooming – To build an emotional connection with a child to sexually abuse, exploit or traffic that child. This includes online grooming.

Don't forget, many of the things mentioned here have the potential to happen online as well as in person.

If you are concerned about bullying or abuse (including that which may be happening to another person), then please talk to an EAA Director (listed on website- www.elkhornathletics.org). We will always take the matter seriously and try to help.

Safeguarding & Protecting Children and Other Vulnerable People

Whether you are a member of staff, volunteer, parent, fan or participant you should:

- Be observant
 - o Staff should be constantly vigilant, understand and spot the signs of potential abuse.
- Be attentive
 - o Listen, particularly to children and vulnerable adults and those with concerns about them.
- Be careful
 - o High standards of personal conduct are expected of each individual during EAA activities. Do not engage in activities which could be misinterpreted.
- Be understanding
 - o Everyone is different and diversity should be valued. People act and communicate in different ways.
- Be ready
 - o Report any suspicion or concerns you have to EAA's Leadership Team.

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

If you are a staff member and a child, vulnerable adult, colleague or parent discloses a concern to you:

- Stay calm
 - o It will help the immediate situation.
- Remove them from further harm
 - o Get to a safe place for both of you. Seek medical help if required.
- Reassure
 - o Take them seriously and confirm that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Don't make promises "Not to tell"
 - o If it is serious you will have to tell somebody.
- Ask few questions
 - o Let them talk. Clarify what they have said.
- Make a note
 - o Record what was said noting the facts and not your own view.
- Contact an EAA Director at the earliest opportunity
 - o If it is particularly serious you may need to call the police or social services.
- Be patient
 - o All concerns are taken seriously and proper action will be taken.

If you think this code has been breached at any time then you must tell us.

"ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY"

EAA representatives should never engage in 1:1 messaging with players who are not their own children. EAA coaches and administrators must copy a parent/guardian on any message sent directly to individual players (email, text message, instant message, social networking applications). If a player initiates 1:1 communication with an EAA representative, it is the responsibility of the coach/administrator to copy at least one parent/guardian on any response.

In addition, all group chats and messaging between players and EAA representatives must include parents/guardians.

“QUESTIONS FOR COACH SELF-REFLECTION”

- Am I positive?
- Am I fun to be with?
- Do I care for my players?
- Do I know my players as people?
- Do I communicate well?
- Do I listen well?
- Am I patient with my players?
- Do I offer inspiration?
- Do I give clear directions?
- Do I offer useful feedback?
- Do I celebrate my players' and team's success?
- Do I offer constant, unwavering support?

Additional information on our philosophy and standards can be found in the EAA [*Beyond the Bench*](#) coaching journal.