

ANDOVER HIGH SCHOOL
Andover, Massachusetts

Home of the Golden Warriors

COACHES' HANDBOOK

January 2019



ANDOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS

Philip Conrad, Principal
William Martin, Athletic Director

INTRODUCTION

Athletics is a vital component of high school life for many students. Its effects stretch beyond the students to the families, staff, district, and community. Andover High School (AHS) takes immense pride in the athletic efforts and accomplishments of its student body.

The coaches who direct the athletic activities and who interact most closely with the student-athletes play a key role in shaping our student-athletes and, by association, the culture of our school. The coaches' actions, decisions and leadership styles help to determine whether the athletic program has a positive or negative impact, whether it bolsters or undermines the district's mission, and whether it enhances or hinders a student's growth.

If coaches are held collectively in high esteem, it's because they have earned it by consistently meeting high standards of personal and professional conduct. Every coach recognizes the importance of teamwork. Teamwork is the ability of each team member to perform key individual functions while teammates simultaneously carry out their own assigned tasks. An effective team is vital to all members of the team attaining their highest levels of growth and success. Teamwork is essential, and teaching this ideal is an important aspect of athletics at Andover High School.

Coaches play an important role in each student-athlete's development. Coaches, parents/guardians, students, teachers, and administrators all work together as part of the district team—teaching, endorsing, commending, reflecting, and modeling the traits embodied in Andover Public Schools' theory of action.

THEORY OF ACTION

WHEN we collaborate to . . .

- Create safe, caring, and culturally responsive classrooms and schools, and partner with families and the community to support students' academic growth and their social, physical and emotional wellbeing;
- Ensure that every student engages in a rigorous curriculum that is implemented consistently within and across schools;
- Provide inclusive instruction that engages every student in authentic learning experiences, demonstrates the power of effective effort and fosters inquiry, creativity and positive risk taking; and
- Monitor student progress diagnostically and plan instruction after thorough and thoughtful data analysis to ensure each student reaches proficiency . . .

THEN all students will . . .

- Demonstrate academic growth in foundational content and skills;
- Communicate effectively, think critically, problem solve creatively, work collaboratively, and evaluate objectively;
- Be self-directed and persevering agents of their own learning; and
- Demonstrate cultural awareness, an appreciation of self, empathy toward others, a sense of responsibility, and commitment to civic engagement . . .

SO THAT all students are prepared to . . .

- Be lifelong learners able to pursue their personal and professional goals;
- Face adversity and ambiguity with intellectual skill, open-mindedness, adaptability, courage and confidence;
- Make informed, just and ethical decisions; and
- Be connected and compassionate citizens who contribute to a diverse and global society.

Beyond their obvious role with student-athletes, coaches interact with many other people in the course of carrying out their responsibilities. Parents/guardians entrust their children to the guidance of the coaches for many out-of-school hours, month after month and year after year. These parents/guardians have the right to expect that all coaches have the students' best interest at heart and that the coaches' decisions place students' welfare above any emphasis on competition or winning.

Accordingly, all coaches in Andover Public Schools (APS) are expected to take a developmental approach to athletics, recognizing that student-athletes are at a critical growth phase of their lives—not just physically, but mentally, emotionally, and socially. This developmental approach accepts all student-athletes at their present level and then provides the skill training, encouragement, and other support needed to progress to the next level, with a goal of enabling each person to continually improve his or her personal best performance. In addition, because a developmental approach views sports as a lifelong experience, it is intended to help student-athletes find enjoyment and personal satisfaction in athletics so they will be more likely to continue engaging in some type of team or individual sport as adults.

Coaches also have obligations toward their colleagues in the classroom. Recognizing the need for an appropriate balance between students' athletic and academic pursuits, coaches should actively support teachers' expectations for quality performance from student-athletes in such areas as homework and assessments. Keeping in mind that students are addressing academic goals throughout their high school careers as they look towards future endeavors and careers, coaches should work with student-athletes, their families, and their classroom teachers and counselors to help students reach both their academic and athletic objectives.

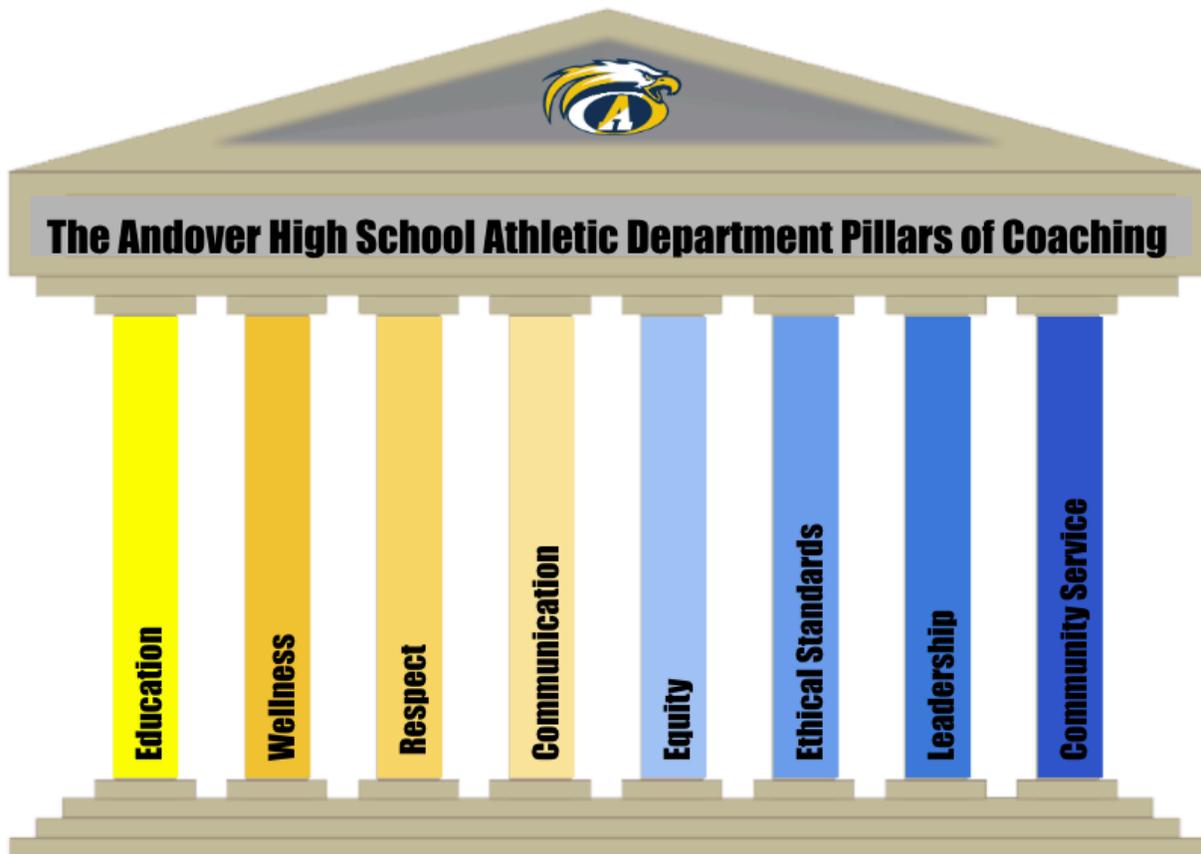
The mission statement for the Andover Public Schools' athletic program reads: "The athletic program is committed to the physical, emotional, social, and mental development of all who participate." To help ensure that this commitment is honored, AHS provides this handbook for its coaches. The handbook does not create new policies, nor does it specify procedures for implementing the athletic program. That information is available elsewhere. Rather, this handbook is intended to bring clarity to the standards by which AHS coaches are expected to conduct their programs. While coaches are the primary audience for the pages that follow, parents/guardians and coaches' colleagues can also find herein the expectations that coaches agree to uphold and abide by when they sign a contract with the district. By committing these beliefs and concepts to paper, Andover Public Schools and Andover High School are publicly affirming the value placed on the role of athletics as a means of uplifting every student, regardless of individual athletic talent. Translating that role into action and interpreting those beliefs in daily situations are hereby acknowledged as critically needed and deeply appreciated functions of the AHS coaching staff, operating both individually and collectively—as a team.

PILLARS, PRINCIPLES, AND PRACTICES

AHS coaches are expected to conduct themselves and carry out their duties within a framework of pillars, principles, and practices. This framework clarifies and solidifies the consistency with which the philosophy of the Andover Public Schools should be implemented throughout its athletic as well as its academic programs.

THE PILLARS OF COACHING

A “pillar” is something that provides essential support, something that is reliable and dependable, something you can count on even in difficult situations. AHS has identified eight pillars—education, wellness, respect, communication, equity, ethical standards, leadership, and community service—that establish the foundation for its coaching practice. These pillars are the qualities that AHS parents and students can expect to see reflected in the day-to-day activities of each coach who is connected with the school district’s athletic program.



EXPANDING THE PILLARS INTO PRINCIPLES OF BEHAVIOR

A “principle” is a basic truth that serves as the foundation for a system of operating. It is a rule or belief that governs an individual’s behavior. A person of principle is one who demonstrates attitudes that are commonly viewed as socially acceptable and morally appropriate in a given situation. A principle is also a fundamental quality or attribute that determines the nature of something. Each of the eight pillars of the AHS coaching program can be defined or expanded upon in terms of principles of behavior that clearly align with the district’s core values and statements of belief. These principles determine the intrinsic nature of the AHS athletic program.

Education: Coaches will use athletics to support the APS and AHS mission of providing all students with a high-quality education that prepares them to succeed in the global community.

Wellness: Coaches will promote the physical fitness, mental health, and social and emotional characteristics that are necessary to the well-being of every student-athlete and to the success of the athletic program.

Respect: Coaches will at all times and in all situations interact with student-athletes, parents, teachers, administrators, officials, spectators, and other coaches in a respectful manner, requiring the same level of respect to be displayed by all student-athletes, and expecting it from parents, officials, spectators, and others.

Communication: Coaches will establish and utilize modes of two-way communication with student-athletes, parents, and AHS faculty/administrators that strengthen the athletic program, develop positive relationships with others, and maintain confidentiality regarding matters associated with their athletes, team, parents, school and community.

Equity: Coaches will treat all student-athletes equitably, helping all individuals to develop academic and athletic skills to the best of their ability.

Ethical Standards: Coaches will carry out their duties with honesty and fairness and will avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest between their responsibilities to the AHS athletic community and their personal pursuits.

Leadership: Coaches will serve as role models for student-athletes and will work to build skills that enable each athlete to be a leader within the community.

Community Service: Coaches will foster pride in the school and town, helping students recognize the connection between the privilege of participating in athletics and their responsibility to give back to the community at large, while building school and town spirit.

TRANSLATING THE PRINCIPLES INTO DAILY PRACTICES

A “practice” is the application of an idea, belief, or method. It is the customary way that things are done, the expected procedure in a given circumstance. Each of the principles underlying the AHS athletic program can be translated into the practices that coaches implement as they fulfill their daily responsibilities. These principles and practices apply across all sports, teams, and coaches and imbue the athletic program with a consistent culture of expectations and behaviors. The way coaches interact with student-athletes, parents, colleagues and the community and the way coaches interpret what the athletic program is all about—during routine practices in the gym, competitions, and conversations in the locker room—breathes life into the eight pillars and helps to unify the academic and athletic components of students’ high school experience.

EDUCATION

“You move on and you learn from it and you keep getting better.” – Alex Cora, Manager of the 2018 World Champion Boston Red Sox

“In the end, it’s about the teaching, and what I always loved about coaching was the practices. Not the games, not the tournaments, not the alumni stuff. But teaching the players during practice was what coaching was all about to me.” – John Wooden, UCLA Basketball Coach, Basketball Hall of Fame 1960 and 1973

The term “student-athlete” begins with “student.” That word order is purposeful. It reflects the mindset that education is the primary mission of the school, and athletics plays a supporting role in achieving that mission. Coaches are key to establishing and preserving an appropriate balance between these two components of many students’ lives.

A primary means of achieving this goal is for coaches to set a good example by taking advantage of opportunities for professional self-improvement. Coaches are responsible for mastering the rules of play for each sport and for teaching them to the student-athletes. To keep this knowledge of coaching practices up to date, attendance at relevant district, regional, and state-wide meetings, clinics, workshops and clinics in specific aspects of each sport, rule changes, medical updates, coaching updates, and similar in-service training programs is required. Coaches should maintain membership in professional organizations, coaches’ associations, and similar groups geared towards enhancing performance.

As coaches work to create an environment where academics and athletics are in harmony, it can be beneficial to view interscholastic athletics through an educational lens. For student-athletes, athletics is an additional learning opportunity. For coaches, it is a teaching opportunity in which coaches are responsible for every aspect of preparing for practices and competitions, supervising training, competition, and post-competition reflection. The coach is the single most important guide in preparing student-athletes, just as teachers do in the classroom. And just as teachers know that the lessons they teach will extend far beyond the content of the lesson, coaches understand that the lessons student-athletes learn will remain with them far beyond their playing careers.

Each year, coaches help student-athletes set goals that take into account their individual skill levels and personal fitness needs. Of course, the student-athletes must be taught the rules, techniques and strategies of each sport, along with the concepts of individual and group participation. In learning to play within the rules, they also learn to respect the rights of others. They learn the value of hard work and of persevering toward their goals. And they learn how to learn and recover from their mistakes. Since the vast majority of student-athletes will not engage in formal athletics after high school, the goal of the athletic program must stretch beyond the sporting competitions themselves. High school athletics is not, fundamentally, about winning or losing in competitions; it is about winning or losing at life. Effective coaches know they are providing learning experiences that will help shape and guide the remainder of the student-athletes' lives. And effective classroom teachers know that participation in a positive athletic program almost always enhances students' educational performance. With strong communication and cooperation among all of the professionals, it can be a win-win for everyone.

The interscholastic athletic program is meant to build school spirit and enhance academic achievement. It should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Coaches should take an interest in the education of each of their student-athletes. It is the coaches' responsibility to monitor and support their student-athletes' academic accomplishments and progress. Coaches who teach at AHS have the ability to access the school's database and talk with other teachers or counselors about student-athletes' academic status. All coaches should encourage student-athletes to seek extra help in their academic work when needed, even if that makes them late for practice. Remembering that education is the school's primary mission, coaches must never exert pressure on faculty members to give student-athletes special consideration in terms of disciplinary action, assignments, or grades.

One of the most important decisions facing every high school student-athlete is what to do after graduation and particularly where to apply for college, if that is the next path. As trusted mentors, coaches can assist with this decision, even helping student-athletes with college searches by facilitating campus visits and meetings with coaches and by writing letters of recommendation. For students who hope to participate in sports at the college level, coaches can be invaluable in providing video recordings of the student-athletes' high school performance or in making contacts through their professional networks.

WELLNESS

"I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." – Michael Jordan, six-time NBA Champion, Basketball Hall of Fame 2009

"Luck has nothing to do with it, because I have spent many, many hours, countless hours, on the court working for my one moment in time, not knowing when it would come." – Serena Williams, winner of 41 Grand Slam Tennis Tournaments (so far...)

The role of the coach is primarily developmental in nature, focused on supporting the

growth of every student-athlete. The coach becomes a teacher and the sports venue a classroom as the coach strives to teach life lessons that will help student-athletes build toward a strong future.

Coaches educate and guide the student-athletes in an effort to empower them to make healthy life choices. One of the first steps that coaches must take in this regard is to lead their own lives in a healthy manner for students to see and follow. Because the developmental coach is concerned about the student-athletes' physical and mental health, as well as their emotional and social state, wellness encompasses a broad spectrum of areas.

Given the physical nature of most sports, safety procedures in practice and in competition are a primary concern relative to preventing injuries. The coach must follow appropriate procedures in developing athletic skills, providing conditioning, and advancing sport-specific training. For reasons of safety, the coach must never at any time leave students unattended without appropriate adult supervision. This rule includes before, during and after practices until all student-athletes are picked up. Another physical wellness issue surrounds locker rooms and shared equipment and the role of proper hygiene in preventing illness and infections. The coach shall also take an active role in advocating a drug-free lifestyle and preventing the use of drugs, alcohol, nicotine and tobacco; under no circumstances may a coach condone or ignore the use of banned substances. Coaches should also be good role models and advocates for regular physical exercise (beyond sports conditioning) and proper diet.

In addition to supporting physical health, the coach is charged with fostering student-athletes' emotional and social development and well-being. Because coaches see student-athletes in a variety of situations and often form bonds with them, they are in a critical position to intervene or alert the proper persons if they suspect a student is facing a personal crisis, being neglected, or possibly contemplating self-harm or suicide. Positive coaching techniques help to develop important qualities such as self-confidence, teamwork, accepting success graciously, handling and bouncing back from disappointment and failure, and sacrificing for the common good. With the aid of an effective coach, even students who are struggling athletically or are less proficient than their peers can learn to recognize their own growth and develop positive attitudes toward themselves and others.

Athletics by its very nature involves a large dose of competition. Unless taken to extremes, competitiveness is a positive quality and leads many student-athletes to try harder. It can also be a useful trait for students to carry forward into certain careers. However, the spirit of athletic competition must be developed within a positive context. The goal is not to make student-athletes vie with each other for competition time or for position on their own team, but to unify them to compete against the opposing player or team. Realistically, very few student-athletes will ever compete at the professional level; still, they can learn to enjoy the give-and-take of the competitive experience and leave the field of play feeling good about themselves and their contributions to the team.

RESPECT

“Never underestimate the power of dreams and the influence of the human spirit. We are all the same in this notion: the potential for greatness lives within each of us.” – Wilma Rudolph, three-time Olympic Gold Medal sprinter (Rome, 1960)

Creating a safe and caring environment is a key element of the APS theory of action. Such an environment is strengthened by the demonstration of mutual respect among all students and staff. In the athletic program, the coach must always lead by example and teach respect for self, the team, opponents, officials, rules and the game itself. A respectful attitude includes respectful treatment of the facilities, equipment, and uniforms provided to each student-athlete, team, and coach so that they can pursue their respective sport. Coaches are ultimately responsible for modeling the desired level of respect through their own words and actions. The coach should also expect AHS student-athletes to show respect for all players on opposing teams and should forbid any demeaning behavior on or off the sports venue. The coach is responsible for communicating and reinforcing expected standards of behavior for AHS student-athletes, parents, spectators and coaches at all athletic events.

AHS remains steadfast in its commitment to the APS values of respect, inclusion and empathy. Through all of its academic and athletic activities, the school strives to be a welcoming place to all races, religions, creeds, genders, orientations, and ability levels. Thus, coaches should promote and encourage diversity among their teams. They should look for opportunities to foster a sense of school spirit within their own team and through the support of other teams in season. Coaches will establish and uphold the standard of zero tolerance for hazing, taunting or bullying of anyone, by anyone, for any reason.

Again, it is up to the coach to set the example of respectful interaction by treating all student-athletes with respect. Coaches will not degrade student-athletes or direct language toward them that is abusive, discriminatory or offensive, but rather should address them respectfully and expect the same in return. Coaches must understand the power of their influence over young athletes and choose carefully their words and their tone as they strive to motivate the student-athletes.

This concept of respectful treatment extends to every aspect of the athletic program—even when passions run high in the heat of competition. A developmental approach to coaching is not punitive. When players err, it would be contrary to the philosophy of AHS athletics to humiliate them in front of other team members; rather, mistakes should be used as an opportunity to teach. Fear does not motivate student-athletes to do better, nor does it build skill or character; rather it undermines their performance and causes everyone on the team to lose confidence in their own decision-making ability. When an athlete makes a mistake, the coach should seize the opportunity to teach all team members a better way to handle a similar situation in the future. Mistakes are a necessary component of learning, and student-athletes need to feel comfortable that their mistakes are next steps in their progress rather than setbacks to their performance. On the flip side, positive reinforcement should be shared as often as possible, but only when sincerely earned based on the skill level of the individual player. Adolescents are not fooled by baseless compliments,

rightfully recognizing such comments as disrespectful to their evolving social and emotional maturity.

COMMUNICATION

“The most important thing in coaching is communication. It’s not what you say as much as what they absorb.” – Arnold Jacob “Red” Auerbach, NBA Champion 16 times (seven as a coach and nine as an executive), Basketball Hall of Fame 1969

In any situation that involves learning new skills or concepts, progress is either hindered or enhanced by the feedback that the learner receives. Giving feedback to all student-athletes is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of a coach. A strong coach offers continual, high-quality feedback at tryouts, practice sessions, competitions, and at the end of the season. To be effective in changing behavior, that feedback must be instructive and constructive, not judgmental or demeaning. It must be growth-oriented and actionable—telling the student-athletes the specific steps they need to take in order to improve.

High school athletics is often a sought-after privilege and one that triggers the competitive spirit and sometimes a student’s day-to-day involvement in the program can be highly emotional. In the case of potential conflict between the coach and student-athlete, it is vital that the issue(s) be addressed promptly and at the lowest possible level in the chain of authority. Coaches should model consistent and appropriate methods of conflict resolution.

Coaches need to ensure that team members perceive them as approachable and reasonable. An athlete who contacts a coach in a respectful manner about a concern should experience a coach who is willing to listen and work with that athlete to address the issue. School-based athletics should provide a safe and supportive opportunity for young people to learn how to address and resolve matters that affect them personally. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, parents/guardians should not become involved unless the student-athlete has first tried to resolve the matter with the coach.

If a coach does meet with parents/guardians regarding their child, it is advisable to hold the meeting by appointment and to have the student-athlete present. As always, the coach should model professional conduct and respectful language, allowing all parties to speak and maintaining control over the tenor of the exchange. If the conflict cannot be resolved by the coach, it should be referred immediately to the Athletic Director.

It is the coach’s responsibility to establish clear procedures for communication to and from parents/guardians, to share those procedures at the beginning of each school year or athletic season, to reiterate them as often as needed, and to treat all communications from parents/guardians and student-athletes as confidential. The only exception is that in a case of student safety, such as a student’s threat of self-harm, the coach is obligated to inform the appropriate authorities. Of critical importance, the coach must maintain confidentiality with respect to any complaint raised by a student-athlete or parent/guardian. No information regarding a complaint, or personal information regarding a student-athlete, should ever be released to the public or discussed by the coach in an unprofessional

manner, whether in a public setting, online, on social media, or otherwise. Nor should the coach discuss the players, the team, the athletic program, or the school in a manner contrary to the ideals set out in this handbook.

EQUITY

“Labels are for filing. Labels are for clothing. Labels are not for people.” – Martina Navratilova, winner of 49 Grand Slam Tennis Tournaments, International Tennis Hall of Fame 2000

At Andover High School, coaches are charged with enhancing the capabilities of every individual student-athlete on the team, while building cohesion and unity among the team members. All participants, regardless of skill level, should come away from the experience feeling that they grew as team members and as athletes, that the coach cared about their development, and that they contributed to the overall success of the team.

The style of coaching embraced by AHS does not focus on winning above all else. AHS coaches should understand that everyone gains when a coach focuses on the development of all the team members, which in turn makes the wins easier to secure and something that everyone on the team can celebrate.

To the extent possible, every effort should be made to allow all interested students to participate in athletics to some degree and to improve their understanding and skill in a sport. Realistically, in sports that involve try-outs, not all students will be selected for the teams, particularly at the varsity level. It is critical that coaches establish and share publicly the objective criteria by which selection decisions are made. Coaches also have a responsibility to communicate to the non-selected students the reasons they did not make the team.

Though equal playing time is not required, particularly at the varsity level, all student-athletes should be treated equitably. Coaches should strive to develop the skills, character, sportsmanship and sense of teamwork of all participants, bringing out the best in each team member and enabling all student-athletes to develop their skills to the best of their abilities. The coach is responsible for identifying opportunities in a manner that supports the growth of all student-athletes and allows for them to provide meaningful contributions to the team. Remembering that the AHS athletic program is intended to be developmental in its approach, coaches should seek competitive opportunities for athletes who may not be the most proficient on the team.

While some student-athletes with special needs may choose to participate in events sponsored by Special Olympics, as respected members of the AHS student body, these young people also have a right to demonstrate their school spirit and develop their own athletic skills with the help of the coaching staff. A caring and effective coach is skilled in spotting or crafting opportunities that are most likely to enable students with special needs to contribute to the team and feel supported by their peers.

Coaches must also pay attention to gender equity by treating boys' and girls' teams comparably in terms of practice schedules, mode of transportation, provision of equipment,

accessibility to trainers, locker room accommodations, opportunity to compete, and allocation of funding.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

“Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.” – John Wooden, UCLA Basketball Coach, Basketball Hall of Fame 1960 and 1973

In the course of athletic program activities, AHS coaches are clearly expected to demonstrate for students how to make ethical choices. Coaches should be aware that they have tremendous influence on the education of student-athletes. They must never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest desirable ideals of character. The development of character is the highest ideal for all coaches and student-athletes. Coaches must play within the rules and demonstrate through their ethical choices that circumventing either the spirit or the letter of the rules is detrimental to the development of highly ethical decision-makers. Trick plays are acceptable; cheating is not. Coaches shall respect and support contest officials in the decisions they make. Coaches shall not criticize officials or other teams’ coaches or players, nor indulge in conduct that might incite players or spectators to take action, verbal or physical, against an official, student-athlete, competitor, or fan. Coaches shall uphold the honor and dignity of our educational profession at all times and in all situations. In all personal contact with student-athletes, parents/guardians, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, coaches shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical, moral and professional conduct.

The AHS Athletic Department encourages all students to take full advantage of the many activities offered and to become involved in more than one sport. Participation in out-of-season clinics, leagues, or other related sports activities is strictly at the discretion of the student-athletes and their parents/guardians. Participation in such activities will have no bearing one way or the other on a student-athlete’s participation on an athletic team.

Coaches must comply with state laws, the expectations of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), and Andover Public Schools policies regarding conflict of interest and the appearance of conflict of interest. Coaches are not to profit from interactions with student-athletes or their families, nor are coaches to show favoritism toward any student-athlete. Coaches are not to put undue pressure on Andover High School students to join club teams or attend private clinics in which they have a financial interest or to in any way suggest that such activities are prerequisites to gaining or maintaining membership on an AHS team. A coach who has an outside relationship with a student should not participate in decisions as to whether that student makes a team. Coaches may not use APS or AHS logos to promote private clinics or take any other action implying that such clinics are endorsed, sanctioned, or recommended by Andover Public Schools.

Coaches and members of their immediate families shall not be involved in the activities of booster organizations or clubs, including fundraising, promotion, and maintenance and expenditure of funds. However, by using approved channels of communication, coaches

may provide information to booster organizations or clubs regarding needs and news. Coaches are advised to maintain their distance from boosters to avoid even the appearance of “pay to play.” The size of any potential or actual contribution of monetary value to the athletic program shall have no bearing on a student-athlete’s gaining or maintaining membership on a team or the competition time afforded the student-athlete.

Given the highly public nature of their positions, the integrity of members of the coaching staff must at all times be above reproach. Exemplifying fairness in all relationships, coaches must strive to treat all student-athletes with respect, putting the interests of the student-athletes’ ethical and character development over other considerations. Coaches must model self-control, even in intensely competitive situations, treating student-athletes firmly, consistently, and with respect. Coaches should also promote ethical relationships among student-athletes and spectators, striving to eliminate negative behaviors that may arise before, during, or after competition. Good sportsmanship is a reflection of good citizenship and as such must be woven into the fabric of our AHS athletic program.

LEADERSHIP

“I’ll do whatever it takes to win games, whether it’s sitting on a bench waving a towel, handing a cup of water to a teammate, or hitting the game-winning shot.” – Kobe Bryant, five-time NBA Champion

Student-athletes look to their coaches for leadership. The style of leadership those coaches demonstrate—by word and especially by deed—influences the style of leadership the young people will themselves display when they are in roles of authority. Coaches need to recognize that the team members view them as role models, even when they are not specifically at an athletic event, and that the way coaches speak and act as they go about their daily lives is likely being observed and taken to heart by the young people under their guidance.

The coaches’ leadership function is especially important during interactions with captains and other team leaders. Coaches need to model the many skills—such as respect and conflict resolution—that they want their team captains to exhibit in their roles as emerging leaders. Effective coaches also provide formal leadership training to these young captains, teaching them how to handle challenging situations and empowering them to serve as leaders both within the sports venue and beyond it. Coaches will additionally show leadership in regards to their time commitment at all practices and competitions. They should always be the first to arrive and the last to leave to ensure proper supervision of all team members.

The coach should impress upon student-athletes that they, too, are seen as role models by their teammates, peers and younger students. As such, student-athletes have the power to influence the behavior and decisions of others and have a responsibility to ensure their influence is positive in nature in the sports venue, in the classroom, and in the community. Coaches should help student-athletes understand and remember that they are representing AHS at all times.

As role models, coaches should actively and consciously promote positive character formation. Successful interscholastic athletic programs assist student-athletes to develop such values as organization and time management, work ethic and self-discipline, and perseverance in striving toward goals and excellence. As leaders, coaches help student-athletes learn to cope with adversity, make decisions under pressure, prepare for difficult situations they may face in the future, and be accountable for their own actions.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

“We are stronger together than we are alone.” – Walter Payton, Super Bowl Champion (XX), Pro Football Hall of Fame 1993

At AHS, athletic program participation is a privilege that brings with it the responsibility of giving back to the community. Coaches should harness the enthusiasm of their student-athletes to foster a sense of pride in both the school and the town.

Coaches can best set the tone for giving back by demonstrating their own commitment to any of a variety of civic organizations and events. They should also help young athletes make the mental and attitudinal connection between pride in their own abilities and the responsibility to share those abilities and strengths with others who may have had fewer advantages in life.

Community service by the team is a highly effective way for coaches to guide student-athletes in developing such social and emotional skills as empathy and compassion. Team members can be encouraged to volunteer at youth camps, after-school programs, and Special Olympics events. They can serve as mentors to younger students in AHS or in community programs. They can help organize and oversee occasional athletic activities, such as intramurals, for students who are not involved in competitive sports. They can offer a demonstration game or sport meet at a senior center. Given the chance, the student-athletes themselves are likely to suggest service activities that especially appeal to them. Skillful coaches capitalize on these ideas by encouraging the student-athletes to take the lead in planning, organizing, and implementing the activities.

Community service benefits the community, of course; but it benefits the athletes, as well, building their sense of teamwork and influencing their character. Combining community service with a developmental athletic program is an effective way to encourage and enable young people to become contributing members of our nation’s democratic society.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of high school athletics is to prepare students to succeed in their quest to become contributing citizens in a global society, not merely to win contests. Win or lose in a sport, student-athletes should learn lessons of a lasting and positive nature. Perhaps the most important lesson coaches can model and teach their student-athletes is this one: throughout life, always choose to do what is right and fair—even when there are no spectators in the stands.

RESOURCES

[Andover Way](#)

[MIAA Website](#)

[Positive Coaching Alliance Website](#)

[Growth mindset website](#)

[Brad Stevens discusses growth mindset](#)

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The performance evaluation of coaches will be based on the information contained within this handbook. The evaluation document is directly correlated to each portion of the AHS Coaches' Handbook.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Following is a modified version of the Complaint Procedure that appears in APS Policy KE. The athletic department believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the coaching staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve a problem prior to involvement by the athletic director, assistant principal liaison to athletics, or the principal. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Head Coach
2. Athletic Director
3. Principal
4. Superintendent
5. School Committee (for issues within its authority)*

The Athletic Department and Andover High School retain the discretion to interpret and apply the principles set forth in this handbook as they deem appropriate. Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or School Committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired. The School Committee expects the coaching staff to receive complaints courteously and to make an appropriate and timely reply to the complainant.

* Personnel decisions—including hiring, termination, non-renewal and discipline of coaches—do not fall within the authority of the School Committee.

FORM # (AHS)

SIGNATURE PAGE FOR COACHES' HANDBOOK

Name: _____

Sport(s): _____

1. I have **received a copy** (either in print or online) of the *Coaches' Handbook* for Andover High School.

Please check your response: **Yes**____ **No**____

2. I have **read the entire contents** of the *Coaches' Handbook* for Andover High School.

Please check your response: **Yes**____ **No**____

3. I **agree to abide by the provisions** of the *Coaches' Handbook* for Andover High School.

Please check your response: **Yes**____ **No**____

4. I **understand that violation of these provisions** may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension or termination of employment.

Please check your response: **Yes**____ **No**____

Signature of Coach: _____

Date: _____

**Please detach and return this page
to the AHS Athletic Director.**