

2019-2020 Thomas Hart Academy Coaches Handbook: Expectations and Guidelines

Updated August 6, 2019

Thank you for volunteering to coach within Thomas Hart Academy youth athletic sports program. This handbook will help prepare you for the upcoming season. Our programs focus on participants learning new skills in both sports and life. We are committed to offering quality sports programs where all participants get the opportunity to have fun while learning and participating in sports. It is with your time and effort we are able to make such a commitment to our programs' participants. If you have any questions about programs, please feel free to contact THA Athletic Director, Selena Davis. Thank you again for committing yourself to the growth and development of not only our programs, but more importantly, our student-athletes. Make this season and each season thereafter a great experience for yourself, student-athletes and spectators. Have a great season!

Thomas Hart Academy Athletic Program Mission is to provide progressive and diverse sports programs that are inclusive, while promoting creative, social, mental and physical well-being of our student-athletes.

Thomas Hart Academy Youth Sports Philosophy is to provide a safe and fun environment for the youth of our Hornet community to learn the importance of teamwork, fair play and skill development. Our objectives include developing positive social skills, encouraging lifetime participation in sports and fostering school spirit.

Principles for Coaches and Parents

General Youth Coaching Principles:

Coaching is an extremely important responsibility. A good coach always places the best interest of the player before winning. The players and their parents have placed you in a position of leadership, and you have a responsibility to give them your best effort. This athletic experience will play a significant factor in determining whether the players continue participating in sports in the future. If you follow the list of coaching principles, the players and their parents will be better served.

Coaching Guidelines:

- A coach should be enthusiastic without being intimidating. He/she should be sensitive to the player's feelings and genuinely enjoy spending time with them. He/she should be dedicated to serving children and understand sports provide physical and emotional growth for its participants.
- A coach needs to realize he/she is a teacher, not a drill sergeant. He/she should help children learn and work to improve their skills. Personal gains are never a consideration. The job does not depend on winning. The best interest of the player transforms into the best interest of the game.
- The safety and welfare of the players can **never** be compromised. A coach will consider these factors above all others.

- A coach needs a tremendous amount of patience. Don't push players beyond their limits in regards to practice. Children have many daily pressures and the athletic experience should not be one of them. Playing sports is supposed to be fun.
- A coach should care more about the players as people than athletes.
- A coach should encourage his/her players to dream and set lofty goals. It is important to remain positive and refrain from making discouraging remarks. Negative comments are remembered far more often than positive affirmations.
- A coach needs to remember the rules of the game are designed to protect the players, as well as to set a standard of competition. He/she should not circumvent or take advantage of the rules by teaching deliberate misconduct. A coach who puts his/her opponent's team at risk should not be involved with children.
- A coach should be the first person to demonstrate good sportsmanship. He/she should take a low profile during the game and allow the kids to be the center of attention.
- Parents and players place a lot of trust and confidence in the coach. The coach has an important role in molding the athletic experience of the child.
- A coach can measure success by the respect he/she gets from his or her players, regardless of victory or defeat.

Coaching Your Own Child:

Coaching your own child represents one of the most delicate challenges. If you are coaching a team on which your child plays, beware of two potential problems.

1. Because he/she is your child, you may go overboard in giving them all the benefits. You certainly don't want to neglect your own child, but without you being aware of it they may receive more privileges than the other members of the team.
2. The second type of problem is that in order to avoid bias, you may bend over backwards and, in fact, neglect your child to prove to the others you are not giving them special treatment.

In order to avoid these problems, here are a few suggestions:

- Take time to introduce yourself to parents on the first day and set "team rules" so everybody hears them and knows what to expect.
- Keep up with all your players during your scheduled practice time.

- Use mistakes as positive opportunities to learn rather than negative outcomes to dwell on.
- Encourage your parents to attend practice and games.
- Make sure you are creating a fun and pleasant atmosphere for your players during practices and games.
- Provide reasonable playing time for ALL players.
- Motivate your players to work toward achievable goals.
- HAVE FUN!!

Always Remember: You are doing this for fun and to help the players.

Interacting with Parents:

The success of your team involves everyone's participation. The key to keeping parents involved and happy is good **communication**. Encourage parents to talk to you and ask questions and give input. If a parent offers their services or help, let them be part of the experience. They can offer help in many ways such as: refreshments, organizing socials or after game snacks. We encourage coaches to meet with their team parents early; explain to them what you hope to accomplish and reassure them it is your wish their child has an enjoyable experience. Call parents if you need help and have not heard from anyone. More often than not, people want to help, but think if they do not know the sport then there is nothing they can do. Thank parents publicly (i.e. after a game, at team party, etc.).

Dealing with disruptive parents is a dilemma. Please contact Athletic Director, Selena Davis immediately (843) 687-6033.

During your meeting with the team parents tell them the following:

- "Positive encouragement is good; negative comments are bad."
- "Cheering is good, but do not yell at your child or anyone else's child during the game. It can be distracting and what you tell them may be different from what the coaches are saying. If you would like to be an assistant coach, please call me, I would love your help."
- "Be careful not to say anything that might be taken the wrong way or hurt someone's feelings. Remember: this is for fun and these are children."
- "Be a good role model and a good sport."
- "Do not yell at the referees or say anything bad to or about the other team. Never 'boo' the other team or cheer when they make a mistake."

Good Sportsmanship

What is good sportsmanship?

Good sportsmanship occurs when teammates, opponents, coaches and officials treat each other with respect. Kids learn the basics of sportsmanship from the adults in their lives, especially parents and coaches. Kids who see adults behaving in a sportsmanlike way gradually come to understand the real winners in sports are those who know how to persevere and behave with dignity – whether they win or lose a game.

Parents and coaches can help kids understand good sportsmanship through small gestures and heroic efforts. It starts with something as simple as shaking hands with opponents before/after a game and includes acknowledging good plays made by others and accepting bad calls gracefully. Displaying good sportsmanship is not always easy; it can be tough to congratulate the opposing team after losing a close or important game, but the kids who learn how to do it will benefit in many ways.

A child who practices good sportsmanship is likely to carry the respect and appreciation of other people into every other aspect of life.

Some suggestions for building sportsmanship on your team:

- If you are your child's coach, don't expect more from them than the other children on your team. Don't be harder on him/her than anyone else on the team, but **don't play favorites either**.
- Keep your comments positive. Don't bad mouth other coaches, players or game officials. If you have a serious concern about a parents' behavior, discuss it privately with the child's parent or with your athletic director, Selena Davis.
- When you're talking to your team after a competition, it is important not to dwell on who won or lost; instead ask your team how they felt during the game. If a child mentions he or she didn't do well at a particular skill, offer to work on these skills with the child before the next game.
- Applaud good plays no matter who makes them.
- Set a good example with your courteous behavior toward the parents of kids on the other team. Congratulate them when their kids win.
- Remember it's the child, not you, who is playing.
- Keep your perspective, it's just a game. Even if your team loses every game of the season, it is unlikely to ruin the child's life or chances of success.
- **DON'T FORGET TO HAVE FUN!!**

Coach's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

It is mandatory that each volunteer coach submit information for a criminal background check.

1. I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of any personal desire to win and remember the game is for the youth, not adults.

Expected Behavior:

- Allow and encourage players to listen, learn and play hard within the rules.
- Fulfill the expected role of a youth coach to adopt a “children first” philosophy.
- Place emphasis on fun, participation and team.

2. I will remember to treat each player as an individual, remembering the large spread of emotional and physical development for the same.

Expected Behavior:

- Recognize the differences of each child and treating each player as an individual while demonstrating concern for their individual needs and well being.
- Encourage all players, regardless of skill level.
- Recognize some physical tasks, drills and demands are not appropriate for all youth.

3. I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Maintain a high level of awareness of potentially unsafe conditions.
- Correct or avoid unsafe practice or playing conditions.
- Use appropriate safety equipment necessary to protect all players.
- Report unsafe conditions to the athletic director, Selena Davis.

4. I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Establish practice plans that are interesting, varied, and productive which are aimed at improving all players' skills and individual abilities.
- Devote appropriate time to the improvement of each individual player.
- Conduct practices of reasonable length and intensity appropriate for the age and conditioning of the players.

5. I will lead, by example, in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship by supporting all players and officials.

Expected Behavior:

- Abide by and support the rules of the game as well as the spirit of the rules.
- Provide an environment conducive to fair and equitable competition.
- Use the influential position of a youth coach as an opportunity to promote, teach and expect sportsmanship and fair play.

- *Use appropriate language at all times. At no time is profanity acceptable.*

6. I will use appropriate coaching techniques for each of the skills I teach.

Expected Behavior:

- Study and learn the rules of the game for the appropriate age group.
- Review all coaching material provided to coaches.
- Attend all coaches' meetings/clinics

7. I will not use alcohol and tobacco products during league sponsored events.

Expected Behavior:

- Be alcohol and drug free during all league sponsored events.
- Refrain from the use of any type of tobacco products at all team activities or in the presence of players.
- Encourage parents to refrain from the public use of tobacco products or alcohol during team activities.

8. I will remember that children play, referees call, fans cheer and coaches TEACH.

Expected Behavior:

- Exercise your authority/influence to control behavior of fans and spectators.
- Treat parents and coaches of other teams with respect.
- Treat officials and league administrators with respect.

9. As the coach, I will respect and support the decisions of the contest officials.

Expected Behavior:

- I will back and support the decisions of league officials and assist in enforcing all league rules.
- If I have concerns or questions, I will direct them to the Athletic Director at an appropriate time. I will not criticize another coach, game or league official.
- I will cooperate and offer assistance whenever I can.

10. I am aware I have a tremendous influence on my players and I will not place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

Enforcement of Code of Ethics

THA Athletics is dedicated to raising the standard of service to youth in sports through the enforcement of this Code of Ethics in youth sports programs. Our Code of Ethics defines the expectations for individuals serving as coaches in youth sports. It also provides the tools to be used by THA, when necessary, to check behavior and to protect all children from the psychological, emotional, physical or social abuses that can be perpetrated against them by youth sport coaches. THA firmly believes the youth sports experience should be positive, safe and provide learning opportunities. For this to be possible, volunteer coaches must be trained and held accountable for their behavior when working with and around children. Every volunteer coach is required to adhere to the Coaches' Code of Ethics Pledge. **It is the duty of THA to ensure all volunteers successfully pass a criminal**

background check. It is also the duty of THA to respond to complaints against any volunteer coach in a youth recreation program. This is accomplished by documenting and investigating each formal complaint. The purpose is to hear the complaints and to determine what, if any, action should be taken towards correcting the coach's behavior. When THA receives a complaint about a coach or notification of a possible Code of Ethics violation, it will be reviewed within 48 hours. In the event a coach is found to have violated the Code of Ethics, a list of possible disciplinary actions has been compiled to accompany the Code of Conduct. THA reserves the right to reprimand violators of the Coaches Code of Ethics. This list is not all inclusive and is subject to change.

Possible actions include:

- Meeting with Athletic Director
- Warning to and/or apology from the coach
- Probation
- One game suspension
- Multiple game suspensions
- Release from coaching position

First Aid

Care for Common Minor Injuries

It is mandatory for all coaches to have a parent contact for each athlete.

Athletic Director: Selena Davis (843) 687-6033

It is the coach's job to maintain as safe an environment as possible. It is strongly recommended that coaches have certification in CPR and First Aid. (The Automated External Defibrillator is located at the front entry of the Gym.)

When an injury does occur:

1. Stay calm.
2. Administer basic first aid as soon as possible.
3. If injury is serious or the extent is unknown: CALL 911
4. Notify Parent
5. Fill out accident form completely.

Treating Floor Burns, Strains, Minor Bumps and Bruises

R – Rest, stop any activity causing pain.

I – Ice for 24-36 hours after the injury.

C – Compress with bandage if needed.

E – Elevate to avoid subsequent swelling.

Conditions Requiring Medical Attention:

- Significant swelling/dislocation of an extremity.

- Any obvious deformity.
- Severe pain.
- Inability to bear weight on a lower extremity.
- Lacerations with or without fractures.
- Significant swelling of a joint, i.e., elbow, knee.
- Loss of sensation in an extremity.

Conditions Mandating Only Experienced Medical Personnel Move the Athlete:

- Loss of consciousness.
- Neck or back injury with loss of sensation in arms or legs.
- Head injury with disorientation and/or visual changes.

Rehabilitation/Treatment for Chronic Injuries:

1. Blisters

- Keep pressure off of new blisters.
- Where the skin is torn, use extreme care.
- Advise parents to keep the area clean.

2. Abrasions and contusions (scrapes and bruises)

- Keep them clean and dry.
- Expose them to the air when possible.

3. Chronic knee pain, tendonitis, stress fractures, and ligament strains. Follow the doctor's directions, which will generally include:

- Rest for 5-7 days and ice for pain.
- Stretch related muscles to strengthen them.
- Move gently, stopping at the point of pain.
- Exercise to strengthen the afflicted area as it heals.

Suggested Coaching Resources can be found at <https://nfhslearn.com/>

Highly suggested courses (free of cost):

- Concussion in Sports
- Heat Illness Prevention
- Sudden Cardiac Arrest
- Engaging Effectively with Parents
- Positive Sport Parenting (Suggested for parents)
- Sportsmanship

If a volunteer coach has completed a course, please turn in a copy of the certificate which they will receive at the end of the course.