

AFC Lightning Parent and Player Handout

AFC Lightning Player Responsibilities:

1. Commitment to AFC

Once you make a commitment to AFC, you thereby agree to abide by the policies set forth by the club and your respective team. The commitment is for one season only. The season begins in August and runs through the following June, the dates for State Cup, or, for Championship teams, depending on the degree of their success in regional and national competition. Any request for a midseason transfer will be disapproved by our coaching staff unless extenuating circumstances determine that it is in the best interest of all parties (player, team and club). After the end of the soccer season, your commitment to the club is over and you are free to leave the club if you feel it is in your best interest to do so. Remember, if your team qualifies for regional or national competition, you are expected to fulfill your commitment to the team through the end of the competition regardless of your intentions for the following season.

Please take into account that when you make your commitment to AFC, the coach and Director may need to inform other trialists that they did not make the team. Be sensitive to those others and consider your decision to fully commit carefully.

Once you have committed to AFC, AFC consequently commits to you. No player will be cut from the club during the season unless it is for disciplinary reasons (this may include on or off the field behavior of a player, parent or guardian), or for failure to meet your financial obligation. Decisions regarding suspensions and dismissals from the club will be made by the program Director in conjunction with the head coach of the team.

2. Commitment to the game of soccer

Pay attention to, take care of and never underestimate the importance of the daily details. Champions are made in the process of becoming otherwise known as PREPARATION. AFC Players recognize that training 2-3 times per week is simply not enough to reach one's full potential. AFC Lightning holds a firm belief in the human form and encourages their players to live their life according to the truism that "the more humans do something the better they get at it." Therefore, players committed to excellence must work on their

own to improve their comfort level on and ability with the ball. AFC players are responsible for the commitment to work on their own for **30 minutes to 1 hour a day** outside of their regular team training schedule. AFC Coaches in conjunction with the Program Directors will be able to provide guidance and direction to players in formulating appropriate home training programs.

“The road to execution is paved with repetition.”

Bill Parcells

3. Academics

Work hard in school. Address school work diligently. Homework, papers and exam preparations must be done responsibly. Time management is vital for AFC players. It is our belief that our players must learn to properly budget their time so that they are able to consistently participate in training and games. As scholar athletes, AFC players cannot afford to waste time that could otherwise be used to improve their academic standing. AFC coaches reserve the right to suspend players for poor academic standing in school or repeated time mismanagement resulting in missed training. Lack of study time or poor time management is not a valid excuse for missing training.

All AFC players are required to bring school books on tournament trips.

4. Training

- **Attendance-** Always attend training! Training is the environment which creates your team’s identity. *Inclement weather:* Always assume training is on unless coach informs the team manager otherwise. If fields are closed, players must have running shoes and indoor shoes ready. There is much that can still be accomplished if fields are closed (fitness, team building, indoor, and video to name a few).
- **Communication-** AFC players recognize that this is their game and accept all responsibilities that arise from taking such ownership. You are the ones playing the game, NOT your parents. Therefore YOU must initiate contact with YOUR coach if unable to attend training or if YOU are going to be late, NOT your parents. It is the responsibility of each player to know the contact information of their coach (especially cell phone numbers). Take ownership of your game!
- **Punctuality-** “Lightning Time”- 15 minutes prior to official start time dressed and ready.

Be on time. Tardiness is disruptive to training sessions.

Remain at training until dismissal by the coach unless special circumstances have been communicated ahead of time with the coach.

U11-U13 Players congregate and practice specific monthly Technical topic as determined by the Head Coach.

U14-U18 Players congregate and start proper 5v2.

- ***Injured players-***
 - a) Must attend training dressed appropriately (soccer gear)
 - b) Conduct an exercise or rehabilitation program.
 - c) Assist the Coach or team where asked.

- ***Equipment-*** Preparedness and Professionalism
 - a) Be Prepared! Carry ALL equipment to both training and games.
 - b) Equipment includes: Running shoes, cleats, training shirts and shorts, uniforms, water, shin guards and ball.
 - c) Equipment must be clean and in good/proper condition (i.e. properly inflated ball).
 - d) Cell phones must be turned off before training and games remaining that way until dismissal by the coach.
 - e) Professionalism- Appropriate AFC training gear is mandatory.
 - f) Shirts must be tucked in.
 - g) Collars must be down
 - h) No Shin guards, No play!
 - i) Hair must be worn or cut so that it is clear that it does not get in the way of performance. Hair must not impair vision. Hair must also be worn in a fashion that requires NO attention during training or games.
 - j) NO Bandanas or Head Bands.

- ***Language-*** No Profanity!!!
 - I. ***Positive Role Model-*** No matter what your age is, there will be someone at the complex that is younger than you that looks up to you and will emulate you. Remember that as a player at AFC you are now a role model for every boy or girl that is coming up under you in the club. In addition, it is AFC players that ultimately define the image of the club to the community through their actions (i.e. Fayette County youth Soccer League players and parents).
 - II. ***Self Control-*** Profanity is prohibited in Youth Soccer. Such language will warrant discipline from the referee sometimes resulting in expulsion. Therefore, AFC players are required to train accordingly. Players may not be able to control the referee but they can and will control their language. Simply put, these are training habits regarding controlling the controllable.

5. Behavior

Conduct yourselves in an exemplary manner both on and off the field. As an AFC player, you must accept and abide by the terms and conditions set forth by the team and the club. We insist that our players be polite, well-behaved and respectful. Behavior is so crucial to team success or failure that a willingness to abide by these agreed upon values is indeed a qualification for membership. When players refuse to abide by these expectations, they are in effect deciding not to be on the team. Players that are allowed to remain in spite of their behavior will undermine the team's morale and performance. AFC coaches will not permit this to happen!

AFC players are asked to show respect for every soccer complex they have the honor of playing at by picking up after themselves. ALWAYS LEAVE A CLEAN BENCH AREA! This goes for our own Complex as well. Take special pride in the upkeep of the Lightning facilities.

Remember that you are representing not only yourself and your team but also AFC, the Club. Therefore, represent the Club in the best way possible by being respectful to ALL coaches, players, parents, and referees. Verbal or physical abuse of teammates, coaches, parents, opposing players or officials will not be tolerated and will be dealt with swiftly and decisively. The AFC Lightning Coaching staff also reserves the right to suspend any player whose behavior is seen as a detriment to AFC's image and reputation of excellence in character.

6. Nutrition

Nutrition is a very important part of your responsibility as an AFC Lightning player. The little things make a big difference. What you put into your body plays a major role in what you are able to get out of your body. We encourage you to eat healthy, nutritious food at a time that does not interfere with training or game performance and rehydrate properly and consistently. Players must exhibit restraint and discipline in this area. An appropriate pre-match and post match meal is essential as is the proper intake of fluids. Information on proper nutrition and hydration is available at the AFC soccer office.

7. Fitness

AFC players are responsible for being at the highest fitness level possible in order to maximize their performance levels. We must be fit. Training will help, but two training days per week is not enough to attain the high fitness level of an elite soccer player. As a result, YOU ARE ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN FITNESS LEVEL! AFC Lightning Programs Directors can provide guidance and direction in creating personal soccer specific fitness programs for those interested. AFC players must also take the responsibility to rest before games seriously. As a member of a team you cannot let your teammates down by being tired or unfit to play.

Parent Responsibilities:

Parents are expected to:

1. Keep up to date with financial obligations to Club and Team. Please see *Financial Obligations*.
2. Get players to practice and games on time.
3. Provide players with appropriate equipment for training and games.
4. Be supportive of their children and the team.
5. Do not yell at any player, at Coaches, at referees, or at any parents from the opposing team.
6. Develop a good attitude towards the game so that their child will develop a lifelong relationship with the game.
7. Recognize the importance of nutrition for athletes and assist your child in developing a healthy and nutritious diet/lifestyle in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the club.
8. Recognize and accept the Club's philosophy regarding its emphasis on skill acquisition over the mindless kick and run just to get the result.
9. Provide Assistance (encouragement) in getting the child to train on his own at home. Monitor your child's commitment to completion of Technical Worksheets.
10. Provide Assistance with the team manager wherever needed.
11. Assist in team set up (tents, water, etc.) prior to and at the conclusion of the game.

Parent's Code of Conduct:

Sideline Behavior

The parents' behavior on the sidelines is crucial to the child, the team, and the club as a whole, not only from a development and role model point of view, but also from the fact that the club and team coach are ultimately responsible for parents' actions. Parent Actions and behavior is a lasting reflection of the club.

The role of parents is purely to support and encourage. We ask parents to cheer for their child and the team as a whole during games, but coaching from the sidelines will not be tolerated. No matter how good your intentions are, we insist that there be no shouting instructions to players during games or practice. "Shoot", "pressure", "pass", "take it", "get it out of there", and "hurry" are all interpreted as instructions and are therefore prohibited from use by parents. AFC employs excellent and highly qualified coaches whom we entrust to coach our teams. Please allow them to do so without interference. AFC's primary concern is for the long term development of your son's or daughter's soccer skills under pressure and there will be times when they will be instructed to do things that you as parents do not understand. Player and team development will often

have a greater priority than winning. Please understand that as a parent during a game, you are not privy to what your child has been asked to do by the coaching staff during that particular game. Clearly it is very confusing for the player to be yelled at by his/her parents to do something that is different than what he or she has been told by the coaching staff. Both players and parents must realize this and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with a healthy team environment. Your positive support and encouragement are of course always welcome and desired.

It is crucial that players are not distracted during practice and games. Please stay off of the practice field during training as well as games. It is imperative that the players only hear one set of instructions at these times in order to avoid confusing or distressing them. All AFC Lightning coaches have the same philosophy regarding coaching soccer and how we want our players to learn the game. You, as a parent, have not been instructed in this philosophy. Therefore, in order to avoid giving mixed messages to the players please refrain from giving any instruction to them.

The Program Directors and/or the Head Coach will be the only voices heard in a coaching capacity at games or practice and the only people who will be allowed on the same side of the field as the team. All others will be on the opposite sideline.

There will be no screaming, shouting or complaining to officials at any time by parents. Parents must be sure not to ruin the atmosphere of the game for the players, officials and other spectators. It is for this reason that many players and officials quit. One of the priorities at AFC is to teach our players to be better all-round people as well as players. This means learning to be better sportsmen and women alike. A parent's good example in this area will go a long way toward teaching our players that we are serious in our efforts.

Financial Obligations

Parents are committed to keeping up with ALL aspects of fulfilling their financial obligations to the team. This includes registration fees, training fees, uniform fees, tournament fees, league fees, referee fees for friendlies, and coaching expenses for travel. Parents are responsible for making payments in a timely manner in accordance with the rest of the Team Members. Arrangements can be made to help with the potential burden of payments. All members are responsible for paying tournament fees once the tournaments have been selected by the Team Coach.

Communication with the Coach

Parents should always feel free to communicate and ask questions about their child's development. As a club, AFC is very aware of the numerous problems, conflicts and concerns that arise when dealing with children in a competitive, team environment. AFC Program Directors and Staff Coaches will always find time to be available to both players and parents to discuss such concerns. However, parents must use their best judgment in picking an appropriate time to talk to the coach about issues that require full attention and clear communication. An INAPPROPRIATE time would be before and after games or during training. It is at these moments when emotions tend to run high and coaches have many things on their mind. Obviously, coaches are very powerful role models for your

children. However, even with the best intentions on good days, coaches make mistakes for they are human. If something during a game or training concerns you then please take the time to ask the coach what would be a good time to sit down and discuss the issue in depth. This ‘cooling off’ period (usually 1-2 days) will allow for your coach to find an appropriate time to better address and attend to your concerns. This will only help to promote clarity and understanding in handling potentially tense situations.

Please feel free to communicate any adverse situations or circumstances that your child may be dealing with above and beyond the soccer fields. When coaches are able to understand where a player is coming from they are better equipped to find ways to reach them. Any such knowledge will remain a private issue and will only be used as a means to better understand the emotional and mental state of the child.

Please address any concerns or potential problems first with your team coach in private. If that does not meet to your satisfaction then a meeting with the Program Director may be the next necessary step towards finding resolution.

Parent Behavior Guidelines:

1. Focus on your child’s effort and performance rather than the outcome of a competition. Teach your child that success means achieving his or her personal goals rather than winning a contest.
2. Support your child in his or her quest to reach goals set forth by him or her with the support and guidance of the AFC Coaching staff.
3. Make sure your child knows that whether they win or lose, whether they play a lot or a little, you love them unconditionally. Give just as much positive reinforcement for a loss as you do for a win. Reinforce the idea that the mistakes and obstacles that the loss presented are merely challenges that can be conquered.
4. Show respect for your child’s Coaching Staff at all times. If you are not happy with the coaching style or manner, then find an appropriate time to discuss your concerns with the coach. Remember, always be careful to not let your personal feelings of the coach’s style and/or ability influence your child’s view of his or her coach. This will serve to create an unhealthy learning environment rooted in conflict and confusion.
5. Do Not Coach from the sideline.
6. Show support for your child’s team by attending games and cheering for ALL team members. Positive attitudes are contagious. Do Not make critical comments in front of players, the opposing players, opposing parents, coaches or officials!
7. “It is better to be silent and thought a fool, than to speak and remove any doubt!” Simply put, Do Not Argue with the officials whether or not you have successfully

passed your certified referee course and Do Not Argue with the opposing team's parents regardless of their comments or actions. RISE ABOVE IT!

8. Accept any limitations in your child's physical abilities. Numerous studies suggest that children with less than average skills (relevant to a team's level) would rather play on a losing team than a winning one if it means they can play more often.
9. Be careful not to relive your sport experiences exclusively through your child. Let them play soccer for themselves, not for you.
10. Keep the sport of soccer in perspective. All triumphs and heartaches ultimately provide learning experiences and lessons that help pave the road to personal growth and ultimately adulthood.

Disciplinary Action:

Our attempt in this agreement is to present in clear detail the expectations of you as a member of AFC Lightning. If you are ever uncertain about any of the rules and regulations, please ask your team coach or the Program Director. Knowing and understanding these responsibilities and policies will help ensure that your participation in the club will be positive for you, your team and your coach. We have high expectations of our coaches, the club, your parents and YOU.

These expectations and responsibilities are in effect the rules, policies and regulations for AFC Lightning. In order for you and every player within the club to get maximum benefit, we require you and every player to abide by all rules, policies and regulations herein. Remember that we believe behavior is so crucial to team success or failure that a willingness to abide by agreed upon values is indeed a qualification for membership. When players refuse to abide by these expectations, they are in effect deciding not to be on the team. Players that are allowed to remain in spite of their behavior will undermine the team's morale and performance as well as the club's image and reputation of excellence in character. AFC coaches will not permit this to happen! If disciplinary action is necessary, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Head Team Coach will discuss the problem directly and privately with the player with the understanding that the problem will be corrected immediately. The Head Coach will also inform the Program Director (and/or DOC) of the situation.
2. The Head Team Coach will communicate with the player's parents to discuss the problem and lack of response on the part of the player. At this point in time, the parents will have the opportunity to be involved with the process of correcting the problem. This will be done in private and without the knowledge of other parents and players.
3. If the problem continues, the Program Director (and/or DOC) may temporarily suspend the player. If the situation warrants, the Program Director (and/or DOC)

may recommend to the executive committee (Technical Director, Executive Director and Coaching Director) the permanent dismissal (expulsion) from the club. The parents will be notified by the Committee of the decision.

4. The parents of any player recommended for removal from the club may request the opportunity to meet with the Executive Committee and/or Program Director.

Serious infractions that may warrant immediate suspension or dismissal from the club include but are not limited to the following:

1. Violence, abuse, theft, and dishonesty.
 2. Drug, alcohol and tobacco use.
 3. Behavior that brings serious disrepute to AFC Lightning and the game of soccer.
- Note: Parental behavior and/or disregard of club rules or regulations can also lead to suspension or dismissal from the club of the parent and/or player. Please see Parent Responsibilities, Expectations, Behavior Guidelines and Code of Conduct.*

I have read the above Parent and Player Responsibilities, Code of Conduct and Behavioral Guidelines set forth by AFC Lightning and its Coaching Staff. I hereby agree to adhere to these guidelines to the best of my ability as a member of the AFC Lightning Club.

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date : _____

Player Signature: _____

Date: _____