

ZIMMERMAN HIGH SCHOOL



SOCCER

INTRODUCTION

The information in this player/parent handbook is an ongoing work. The primary purpose is to clarify the role of the Zimmerman High School Activities program in the lives of its constituents; players, parents, coaches and other supporters. While it is not all inclusive, it should give enough information to determine if participation and team membership is right for a student-athlete and their family. This is a commitment that will need to be supported in order to be successfully upheld. Every eligible student-athlete desiring membership will have an opportunity to earn a role on the team. The goal of the team is to win games, while the purpose is human growth and development of student athletes. In rare experiences, some have decided that the time and energy invested in team membership may be better invested in some other endeavor. Self discovery and understanding personal limits is a big part of lifelong learning and that should be viewed positively. The activities program is here to promote learning beyond the classroom. Our hope is that you will decide to join us and experience the best that you can become.

MISSION and PHILOSOPHY

The foundation of Thunder Activities is defined in the core values of ISD 728: We believe that...

- >All people have value
- >Valuing & respecting differences strengthens the individual and the community
- >People thrive when they feel connected, supported and affirmed
- >Everyone can learn
- >Hope inspires and empowers
- >Lifelong learning is essential for personal growth
- >Change is an opportunity for growth.

When these values are applied and practiced in an athletic team setting, positive outcomes will result. The values foster a mindset that will promote a championship mentality and allow the victories that come on and off the field to be embraced. While we strive to field teams that achieve winning records, capture conference titles and qualify for the MSHSL State Tournaments, focus on the balance of being a successful student-athlete must be maintained. Each member must commit to achieving the highest standards within their ability on the field, in the classroom and in the community.

The team exists to develop winners. Through the recognition of the role that extracurricular activities play in developing student-athletes socially, emotionally, physically, as well as academically, great attention will be given to nurturing attitudes and skills which support and exemplify the core values. In doing so, leadership qualities, healthy habits, ethical behaviors, positive self image, teamwork and goal setting will be learned. These traits will promote winning on and off the field, now and on into the future. Throughout the year, **organized team activities (OTAs)** will be planned to strengthen the bonds of team membership and to promote fun for the participants. Often the OTAs will not have any direct relation to soccer but they will support and promote the enjoyment of the experience as a team member as well as develop the core values of dignity, respect, equity, fairness and justice.

ELIGIBILITY

Determination of student-athlete eligibility is an administrative duty. The Minnesota State High School League has established basic standards which must be met to participate in sanctioned activities (MSHSL.org). ISD 728 has developed a more specific guide to academic eligibility which is published fully in the Student Handbook. In part, the policy states:

“In order to participate on a Zimmerman High School athletic team or in an activity, each participant must have satisfied all of the scholastic eligibility requirements prior to participating. Those general requirements are a GPA of 2.00 or higher and an accumulation of enough credits to be making satisfactory progress towards graduation prior to the beginning of the designated semester.”

Any student-athlete with a GPA below the district standard will be placed on academic watch by Administration. While on academic watch, participation will be limited. When they improve their academic standing to no longer be on academic watch, they may be considered for full participation.

GRADE 9	END OF SEMESTER I	END OF SEMESTER II
Eligible	5 credits	10 credits
Probation	4 credits	9 credits
Ineligible	3 credits or less	8 credits or less
GRADE 10	END OF SEMESTER I	END OF SEMESTER II
Eligible	14 credits	20 credits
Probation	13 credits	19 credits
Ineligible	12 credits	18 credits
GRADE 11	END OF SEMESTER I	END OF SEMESTER II
Eligible	26 credits	32 credits
Probation	25 credits	31 credits
Ineligible	24 credits	30 credits
GRADE 12	END OF SEMESTER I	END OF SEMESTER II
Eligible	37 credits	43 to graduate
Probation	36 credits	
Ineligible	35 credits	

Our teams have established a tradition of academic excellence and efforts will be made to continue the award winning results. Each practice may begin with a study session intended for academics. The time is designed to be used collaboratively to assure understanding of classroom assignments. It also allows student-athletes the possibility to meet with teachers for further explanation when needed. If there is no need for academic focus, the time may be spent reviewing film or investing in other activities to improve the team.

Academic awards are designed to recognize exemplary achievement of student-athletes in the classroom. Most require Sophomore, Junior or Senior status as the younger grades have not attained a High School GPA. For younger student-athletes, this is an investment in developing good habits and setting priorities.

EXPECTATIONS

A student-athlete's primary function is to attain the highest level of learning possible while completing the rigorous study required to earn a High School diploma. By participating in extracurricular activities, the course of study is diversified to include many lessons that are not part of the standard workload. Success comes much easier when you practice "The Thunder Way"--Be Ready, Be Responsible, Be Respectful. More specifically, Thunder Soccer student-athletes are expected to:

- Balance team membership with the rigors of school
- Sacrifice individuality for the good of the team
- Give your best effort at everything you do
- Attend every OTA, practice or game possible
- Be early
- Arrange transportation as needed ahead of time
- Communicate proactively.

The team promotes a very unified structure. The OTAs are optional but open to all members. When needed, carpooling is available to make sure rides are available for non-drivers. Whether you are a starter, a reserve or a manager, you are vital to the continued development and success of the program. Everyone's role is to learn daily and make a teammate better. Through the experience, student athletes will have the opportunity to listen, learn, advocate and lead.

Social media is a wonderful tool but it also presents real pitfalls for its users. Remember, EVERYTHING you do on the internet is public. Speak to people face-to-face. Promote the core values in your actions. If you "post", "like", "tweet/retweet", "share", etc., you are taking a stand on an issue. Humor and sarcasm do not come through the internet very well. You will be held accountable for your activity and as a team member, you represent the entire program. Stop and think!

ROLES

Each season starts a new process of identifying roles. There is no promise or guarantee of team placement or position from season to season. Player evaluations are ongoing throughout the season and movement across levels is possible. Players must complete the evaluation process before being considered for membership on the Varsity roster. The evaluation process can only take place when the coaching staff can instruct and see many repetitions of play. Participation in full practice sessions will be necessary before expecting to participate in a game. A Varsity player from a previous season is not promised a Varsity position. Everyone "tries out" each season. Decisions are made with the

best interest of player development and overall team success in mind. In order for accurate evaluation, players are expected to attend every practice. It would be rare and unlikely for a player to earn Varsity status and not fully participate in the early season try out practices. Substantial time is invested in evaluations, physical preparation and development of systemic styles of play in the first several practices. Missing practice will delay a player's ability to be prepared to fully participate in games. The coaching staff will evaluate players who miss and determine when they are ready for competition.

If a player is not getting play time, they may be moved to another level where their playtime will be substantially greater. Illness and injury frequently play a role in player movement. Player "A" may not have the same level of foot skills as Player "B" but "A" has experience in several positions. If that is a need for a particular team, a move may take place.

It is a growth process for players to learn their role(s) and the coaching staff strives to help players understand how decisions are made and why they affect some players. At times, emotions and ego can cloud situations and open communication is necessary to grow through the changes. It is important for players to communicate with coaches. It is also important for parents to support the "chain of command" to encourage and allow that communication.

Appropriate team placement and role discovery is vital to player development. We work to provide opportunities appropriate for all players, specifically for our Middle School members. Occasionally, a player may be physically, emotionally and technically mature enough to earn a place on the Varsity roster. Again the needs of the player and the team must make sense.

PREVENTION & CARE of INJURY

Thunder activities have access to an on site Athletic Trainer. Any injury should be reported and the treatment protocol should be followed. Return to play decisions will be made with the trainers expertise. Beginning with the 2021 season, Athletic Training services will be provided by Physical Therapy Consultants, Inc. (PTC).

CHAIN of COMMAND

When questions arise, following the chain of command is essential in any organization. The following protocol will be used to resolve communication issues and to ensure concerns are resolved at the appropriate level. If resolution of the issue is not achieved at the first level of communication, the next level of the protocol is followed.

Level 1-Player to Coach

Level 2-Parent/Player to Coach

Level 3-Parent/Player/Coach to Activities Director

Level 4-Parent/Player/Coach/AD to Principal

Level 5-All Parties to Superintendent

Level 6-All Parties to School Board

CAPTAINS

Being a Captain requires earning the respect of your team and coaches. Ability to maintain clear thinking during adverse situations, the willingness to accept or volunteer for tasks and earning the respect of teammates are part of what makes a good Captain. This is what we promote for all of our student-athletes. Naming a small group excludes others from the opportunity to grow in leadership. Our Captain "C" may rotate throughout the season based on student athletes' demonstration of leadership ability. Everyone may always exemplify the characteristics of a leader. It is often valuable to learn to lead from following.

Student-athletes need a strong support system as even more demand is placed on their time. They are expected to use leadership skills to guide the team and to influence their peers in the school setting in order to create a school community culture that is above the line. Student-athletes may represent the team at various functions, serve as liaison for the team and the officials during games. Often, some may be pre-taught technical drills in order to serve as demonstrators or small group leaders in training activities.

It is not within the role of student-athletes to discipline teammates. Disciplinary issues are confidential. It is expected that leadership skills will be used to prevent the need for negative consequences. Peer influence is a strong extrinsic motivator for most people.

AWARDS

Student-athletes have the opportunity to earn recognition in a number of areas. Many of the recognition opportunities come from the Coaches' memberships in professional organizations. The Varsity letter is an award to recognize substantial contributions to the Varsity team. It indicates that, among other accomplishments, the student-athlete:

Participated in 24 halves in a single season --or--

Maintained good team standing for 3 seasons --or--

Earned a roster position on a MSHSL State Tournament team --or--

Displayed exemplary participation in OTAs to promote soccer.

Each student-athlete is evaluated individually in terms of earning a letter. There are circumstances that may merit a letter award that are not covered herein. Violations of MSHSL or ISD728 eligibility policies may prevent a student-athlete from earning a letter award. Lettering decisions are made by the coaching staff and approved by the Administration.

Lettering is not the only possible recognition for student-athletes. Outstanding performance is recognized through a variety of post season awards: academic achievement, Granite Ridge Conference distinction, MSHSL honors, MSHSSCA and occasionally national recognition through professional memberships held by coaches.

PARENTS

Parents are a vital component to a successful program. Without parental support, student-athletes would have very little chance of success. The most important thing you can do is enjoy the experience of your student-athlete. Encourage their best effort and understand that sometimes things may not go the desired way. Model respect for game officials, rules, opponents and coaches. Refrain from negative comments as they can become the way the game is perceived by the student-athlete. Promote self advocacy for understanding and the ability to accept decisions when they are explained. Be a good listener for your student athlete while encouraging them to advocate their concerns/questions using the chain of command. Disappointment is part of life and moving beyond it quickly is a great skill. Demand performance in the classroom so eligibility does not become jeopardized. Cheer for the entire team and the opponents when appropriate.

Please be an active volunteer. Find a way to be part of the Zimmerman Soccer Club, our booster organization. Visit the website often, www.zimmermansoccerclub.org , to stay in the loop with events and where help is needed. The more people willing to invest a little time, the greater the program will be.

Do your best to foster a love for the game that you can share with your student-athlete. Even if you have never played the game, or think it is boring, learn to love it for what it offers. Learn to love it for what it can do for your student-athlete. This is their experience, their chance for memories. Enjoy it with them.

Parents are encouraged to sign up for many venues of communication in order to stay current with team information. This will help with organization and scheduling. The only official game schedules are only available from <https://www.graniteridgeconference.org> .

The conference uses a scheduling system known as Rschool and it is available through an app.

COACHES

A continual effort is made to assemble highly qualified coaches for school activities. There are standards in place to promote safety for participants from the MSHSL, ISD 728 and ZMHS. Expectations and requirements for ongoing training and education for coaches are in place and monitored. Coaches report to the Administrative team at the school, specifically Mr. Hilyar, Activities Director.

Jeff Downing -- Girls' Head Coach jeffrey.downing@isd728.org	Devin Chuba -- Boys' Head Coach devin.chuba@isd728.org
Nick Levos -- Girls' Assistant Coach nicholas.levos@isd728.org	TBD -- Boys' Assistant Coach
Abbie Canton -- Girls' Assistant Coach abigail.canton@isd728.org	TBD -- Boys' Assistant Coach

Use this link to acknowledge that you AND your athlete have read the handbook.

- <https://forms.gle/Sz6zGGrwbGCjA8yd8>