

ZIMMERMAN HIGH SCHOOL



GIRLS' SOCCER

INTRODUCTION

The information in this player/parent handbook is an ongoing work. The primary purpose is to try to clarify the role of the Zimmerman High School Girls' Soccer program in the lives of its constituents; players, parents, coaches and other supporters. While it is not inclusive of everything that may arise, it should give enough information to determine if team membership is right for a student-athlete and her family. This is a commitment that will need to be supported in order to be successfully upheld. Every eligible student-athlete desiring membership will discover a role on the team. 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 team 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 Girls' Soccer 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 a soccer team setting, positive outcomes will result. The values foster a team 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 a teams that achieve winning records, capture conference titles and qualify for the MSHSL State Tournament, 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 so doing, 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.

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 (page 21). 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 participation.

Our team has established a tradition of academic excellence and efforts will be made to continue the award winning results. Each practice begins 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.

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 during the fall season. 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 include 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.

Social media is a wonderful tool but it also presents real pitfalls for its users. Remember, EVERYTHING you do via 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 common. Players must complete seven full practices before expecting to participate in a game. The evaluation process can only take place when the coaching staff can instruct and see many repetitions of play. 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. 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 as a goalkeeper. 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.

Appropriate team placement and role discovery is vital to player development. We have a working relationship with Community Education to provide games specifically for our 7th and 8th grade members. These young players are also given opportunities, where appropriate, to experience higher level play, typically at the JV level. Occasionally, a young 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.

CHAIN of COMMAND

When questions arise, following the chain of command is absolutely 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. This is why our Captain "C" will rotate throughout the season.

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 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. The Varsity letter is an award to recognize substantial contribution 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 6 semesters --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, and occasionally national recognition through professional memberships held by coaches. Coaches may have memberships in various other

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 her best effort and

understand that sometimes things may not go a 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. 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 her experience, her chance for memories. Enjoy it with her.

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.

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.

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