



Player & Parent Handbook



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MISSION STATEMENT

Thunder Struck basketball provides a positive and safe learning environment for young men and women throughout North Central Florida to learn the fundamentals of team sports, exposing them to the social and moral values needed to develop important character abilities, which help them become respectful, confident, and responsible individuals with a lifelong interest in one of the most beloved spectator sports worldwide.

COACHING/LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

Thunder Struck Basketball employs many coaching and counseling techniques that are designed to effectively accomplish our training goals. In general, these techniques fall into the following main methods:

- **Instruction** – Learning to play basketball, or any sport, requires the guidance of an experienced coach who can communicate with the players to help them develop their skills.
- **Repetition** – While practice never leads to perfection, it does lead to improvement.
- **Example** – Watching our advanced players and learning from the examples of our coaches helps players understand what the end result of their hard work should look like.
- **Teaching others** – When players master a move or technique, they will be allowed to teach other players. By teaching others, the student teacher enhances their own learning experience.



PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this Handbook is to familiarize both parents and players with Thunder Struck Basketball, and to create expectations for the Thunder Struck Basketball experience. For our program to be successful, the rules of this Handbook must be followed and will be enforced. We want to be known as one of the finest youth basketball programs available, and players' and parents' adherence to a Code of Conduct will help us reach this goal.

We hope this Handbook will answer many of the questions that you may have. If you have questions or concerns that are not addressed in this Handbook, please contact Matt Brush at 352-219-9923 or winners@thunderstruckathletics.org.

OUR GOALS

Thunder Struck Basketball has two main goals. The first is to provide quality instruction in all aspects of the game. This instruction will include both skill building but also the development of self-discipline, dedication, and confidence in each athlete, qualities that will assist them as they progress through life. The second goal is to prepare those players that have the desire, athletic ability and academic standing to play at the high school and collegiate level. We believe that a competitive athletic experience can enhance social development, contribute to mental and physical health and teach the values of teamwork and responsibility. We are proud of the opportunity that we offer, and we feel the players involved will receive a positive experience.

Our program is dedicated to providing all athletes with the opportunity to be successful. Playing basketball with Thunder Struck requires a strong commitment to the game, the team, and your teammates. It is important that everyone involved understands that each coach is willing to make this commitment in order for our athletes to become the best basketball players they can be.

Participation in the Thunder Struck Basketball program requires time, effort and financial resources, but we feel that it is well worth the investment. After your experience with us, we hope you and your athlete will agree.



SELECTION PROCESS

Thunder Struck Basketball evaluates prospective players at both formal tryouts as well as in other environments. Players are evaluated on attitude, teamwork, and how they execute basic basketball skills such as defense, ball handling, shooting, etc. We base our selections on how the athlete performs during an evaluation and what we perceive their potential to be. We select athletes based on the following criteria (in no particular order): athletic ability, work ethic, drive, coachability, competitive attitude, skill ability, and potential.

After your athlete has been placed on a team, Thunder Struck reserves the right to move them to a different team at any time during the season to continue to improve the level of play for all considered. This means that a player may be added to a team during the season, or that a player may be asked to move to another team to better match the player with the appropriate team.



PARENT/PLAYER/COACH RELATIONSHIP

Thunder Struck Basketball believes that great coaching is at the core of a great basketball program. All of our coaches have been selected because we believe they are qualified and bring unique talents to our program and our kids. One of the most important aspects of coaching youth sports is having good communications between players and their parents.

We understand that basketball can be an emotional sport and sometimes parents are prone to issue instructions to their player from the stands. If these instructions are contrary to those of the coach, this will only cause confusion for the player. **Please encourage your athlete to follow their coach's instructions and leave the coaching to the coach.** We believe that parents need to align themselves with the coach in teaching their player how to cope with the natural frustrations of being a member of a team. Sports provide an excellent opportunity to teach young athletes about the realities of competitive situations.

They must be taught how to be a cooperative team member, how to make use of both positive and negative feedback, how to cope with adversity, how to achieve mental toughness, and how to be a gracious winner or loser.

When a player has a concern, parents have the responsibility of teaching their athlete the steps necessary to remedy the situation. Absent situations involving safety or player abuse, the following steps should be taken if a player has a concern with the coach:

Step One: The player should discuss the problem/concern with the coach and try to arrive at a solution to the problem.

Step Two: The parent should call the coach and schedule appointment for the player, parent and coach to meet at an appropriate time.

Under no circumstances is a parent to approach a coach with a complaint or an evaluation of coaching philosophy. The above procedure must be followed in dealing with any situation that may arise.

The parents and families of our THUNDER STRUCK players have been very supportive in the past, and we hope that support will continue to grow each year. We hope that parents support their athlete(s) by attending their games and giving positive



encouragement. We expect you to refrain from criticizing your child, their teammates, their coaches, or the officials.

Thunder Struck Basketball will **NOT ALLOW THE COACHES OR PLAYERS TO BE BERATED** by parents or fellow teammates. If you or your athletes refuse to follow the guidelines set forth, you will be asked to leave the program.

PLAYERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Thunder Struck Basketball is committed to all of its players exercising good sportsmanship at all times. Our program philosophy is that our athletes should represent their team in a positive and respectful manner. We also would not want spectators to embarrass our players and the team with inappropriate behavior. In addition to the above Code of Conduct, all spectators are expected to adhere to the following:

1. Players must maintain good academic standing. If the player's GPA falls below a 2.5 the player will be required to be tutored (provided by Thunder Struck or player's school if available). If a player's GPA falls below a 2.0 the player will not be able to participate in practice or games until their GPA is above 2.0.
2. Absolutely no foul language.
3. Parents should cheer for all players on their Thunder Struck team in a positive manner, not against our opponents in a negative manner.
4. Show respect to those around you.
5. Support your coaches.
6. Refrain from harassing referees and/or event staff.
7. As a member of a Thunder Struck team, we expect all players to display high standards of behavior and sportsmanship. All players are expected to follow these general rules and Code of Conduct. I WILL READ, UNDERSTAND AND FOLLOW LISTED RULES.
8. I will not transport, possess, or drink any alcohol nor take illegal drugs of any kind; (if I am found to be using illegal drugs and/or drinking alcohol, I will be terminated



immediately from the team).

9. I will treat the coaching staff respectfully at all times.
10. I will respect the game of basketball and give it my all during practice and games.
11. I will be respectful and courteous to my teammates.
12. I will be respectful in public and display good character as a representative of THUNDER STRUCK.
13. I will not participate in any horseplay, which may injure my teammates or me.
14. I will not exhibit conduct which is inappropriate as determined by comparison to normally accepted behavior.
15. If I have a problem with a teammate, I will talk to the coaching staff to attempt to solve the problem.
16. I will be committed to being a team player, always remembering “we” goes a lot further than “I”.
17. I promise when I step on the court I will always remember that “It’s Time to Go to Work”.
18. Players are required to arrive 10 minutes prior to practice, 30 minutes prior to a game or as otherwise directed by your coach.
19. Poor conduct such as: foul language, physical or verbal intimidation of any kind, fighting with other teams/players, vocal outbursts are not permitted.
20. A technical foul by a player or parent for poor sportsmanship will immediately cause the removal of that player from the game. Poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated.
21. Demonstrate sportsmanship. Play fair. Set an example. Rise above poor behavior. The way in which you conduct yourself has a long lasting effect on everybody around you. That’s what practicing good sportsmanship is all about.
22. Value the instruction of your coach. You may think your coach is the best, the



worst or somewhere in between. It makes no difference. If you're on the team, your job is to listen attentively to what your coach is saying. Coaches volunteer their time to work with your team. Don't waste that time.

23. Appreciate your teammates. Every player on your team has certain strengths and weaknesses. Be patient with your teammates as they improve their games — just as they will be patient with you improving your game. Basketball is a team sport. Success can only come when the entire team works and plays well together.
24. Never question an official or express your feelings at a call. Officials are part of the game. It your job as a player to overcome adversity whether it is the opposing team, the physical facilities or the officials. Never talk back or show up an official. Remember being an official is not an easy job and mistakes happen.
25. Take time to learn the rules. If you don't know the rules you don't know the game.

Enjoy the journey! Win or lose, enjoy every moment on the court both during the games and during practice. Basketball should be challenging, tiring, hard work and fun.

PARENTS CODE OF CONDUCT

As with our players, parents also represent Thunder Struck Basketball. We expect parents to act with a higher set of standards than we expect from our players.

Parents are the role models.

1. **Act as a leader.** Leaders are people whose actions inspire others. A leader treats their children's teammates, your peers, the coaches, opponents and officials in the same manner you would like to be treated. That means respect, dignity, and total sportsmanship at all times. If you set the example the players will follow the example you set.
2. **Do not draw attention from the players.** Youth basketball is for the kids. If you find yourself becoming too emotionally involved in what's happening on the court, take a step back and relax.
3. **Value your child's commitment.** Get your kids to practice and games on time. Make sure they have their uniform and sneakers. Help them eat and drink right before, during and after the game. The more your children see you acting responsibly, the more they will do the same.
4. **Act in a respectful manner.** Nothing is better for a young player than having their parents on hand to watch them play. And nothing is worse for a player than hearing a parent using foul language, booing, taunting, screaming or making comments at, or about, players, coaches, fans or officials (that includes your team as well as your opponent). Offer applause and cheers of encouragement for both teams following a good play or a great effort, otherwise keep quiet.
5. **Never question an official or express your feelings at a call vocally.** Officials are part of the game. Parents should demonstrate proper behavior to the players. It is not the parent's job (or the players) to officiate the game. Accept the call and move on. Remember being an official is not an easy job and mistakes happen and are part of the game.
6. **Total motivation through confidence.** Try and identify a positive from every game or practice to help build confidence. A young player's sense of achievement is the greatest motivator. Don't analyze your young player's performance following every



game. They know how they played and if you give them the opportunity and situation they will open up to you. If you do, chances are they will avoid talking to you at all after games or worse yet, not want you at the games at all. Let your children come to you for advice.

7. **Allow the game to be fun.** So help make it that way. Keep smiling. Encourage enjoyment and participation over results. If it's not fun, something's wrong.
8. **Good communication is key.** If you must, talk with the coach after the game. Or better yet, wait until the next day if you have an issue to discuss. Let the heat of the moment pass. Never make a scene in front of the team, as it's embarrassing for you, your children and the coach. And chances are nothing will get resolved.
9. **Enjoy the journey and put winning and losing into perspective.** Games have winners and losers. Keep reminding your child about this reality and the need to deal with both outcomes.



PLAYING TIME AND PRACTICES

We know that all players want to play and many concerns by players and parents involve the amount of playing time that is allocated to the player. The following sets our general philosophy on playing time.

- Playing time is not guaranteed, is not equal and must be earned.
- Playing time is based on the player's performance at practice. If you are not at practice, for whatever reason, it is difficult to earn playing time.

Your coach will determine who plays and how much. They will take into account many factors in coming to that decision but the decision is theirs.

- Parents are always welcome to watch practice: however, leave the coaching to the coaches.
- Be on time!

Practices will usually be two times per week. They will last normally for 1 ½ to 2 hours. You will be notified of practice times and locations by your coach or Team Manager. We will make every effort to not change practice times and locations: however, things happen!! Please be flexible and cooperative.

If a player must miss a practice, the player must call the coach or team manager as soon as possible. Athletes who miss practice are missing valuable information and potentially may have their playing time affected by consistent absences or tardiness.



TOURNAMENT TEAM RULES

1. First and foremost, it is important to remember that each player and parent is representing Thunder Struck Basketball when we play in local tournaments and travel to out-of-area events. Traveling with the team is an honor and must be respected.
2. I am responsible for my uniforms when attending tournaments. When traveling please make sure that your basketball bag with your uniform(s), ball and shoes and any other items (i.e. contacts, braces, knee pads, etc) required for you to play is packed, ready to go and in your possession when you get into your mode of transportation. This means that if you are traveling by personal automobile you verify that your equipment is in the car. This also means that if you are traveling on an airplane your basketball bag is your carry on item. It is a good idea to include extra socks and personal items in your bag.
3. Players are expected to wear appropriate clothing at all times.
4. Room numbers, room phone numbers are not to be given out to anyone other than your parents or teammates.
5. No persons other than Thunder Struck players, coaches, or family members are permitted inside a player's hotel room.
6. No player is allowed off hotel property without parent/coach/chaperone permission.
7. When traveling to tournaments we will attempt to travel together.
8. When we are traveling we will eat together, stay at the same hotel, and spend time together as a team. Exceptions must be approved by the coach.
9. Thunder Struck Basketball is dedicated to developing all of our players, not only on the court but we also try and provide new and unique experiences. However, when traveling for tournaments please remember that our reason for being in a particular location is to play basketball. When possible we will try to schedule free time to allow the athletes to have fun.



FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

Participating with THUNDER STRUCK takes a commitment from both the parents and the players. As a team, we will try to conduct fundraising activities to keep cost to a minimum.

The organization understands that this is a difficult time for many families due to the economic climate. If your family is in a hardship situation, please contact Matt Brush to discuss your options. **NO CHILD WILL BE LEFT BEHIND DUE TO FINANCIALCONSTRAINTS.**

Team fees will cover the cost of coaches, gym rental fees, tournaments and leagues that your athlete will participate in throughout the season.



TEAM AGREEMENT/PLAYER CONTRACT

PLEASE INITIAL AT EACH CORRECT SPOT. BY INITIALING YOU ARE AGREEING THAT YOU COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO EACH STATEMENT AND CONTRACT AGREEMENT THAT PROCEEDS YOUR INITIAL.

****PLEASE READ EVERYTHING YOU ARE SIGNING SO THAT THERE IS NO CONFUSION****

Initial: _____ I understand that there is a one-time Team Fee per season. This is separate from the training fee and goes to pay for leagues, tournaments and our coach. There is no refund on this one time seasonal Team Fee.

Initial: _____ I understand that we need to pay team fee, and turn in the waiver/ medical release, liability form, insurance information, parent/player contract, and financial responsibility form.

Initial: _____ I understand that if I do not meet the obligations defined in the paragraph above my athlete will not be able to participate in team practice or any Thunder Struck events.

Initial: _____ I understand that all leagues and tournaments held outside of the Thunder Struck program are out of Thunder Struck control. Such as game times, gym locations, and cancellation of the league and tournament. Game times, gym locations and cancellations will be communicated to all parents as soon as possible.

Initial: _____ I understand that communications with the team will be done through E-Mail/web site. It is the parent's responsibility to check E-Mail/web site on a regular basis.

Initial: _____ I understand that the best form of communication is E-Mail your coach.

Initial: _____ I understand that Thunder Struck has full discretion on moving players up or down from one team to the other.



Initial:_____I understand that a coach can relocate or replace a player if a player does not meet coaches or directors expectations in attendance, commitment and/ or production.

Initial:_____I understand that playing time is not guaranteed and must be earned with commitment and production.

Initial:_____I acknowledge that I have received, read and discussed with my athlete the information in the Player/Parent handbook. I understand all of the policies as outlined in the handbook and agree to abide by the rules of the organization.

I acknowledge that I have received, read and discussed with my child the information in the Player/Parent handbook. I understand all of the policies as outlined in the handbook and agree to abide by the rules of the organization. A player may not begin his/her season with a THUNDER STRUCK Basketball Team until all required forms are signed and submitted to the Team manager. The forms include: Handbook Acceptance, Waiver and Medical Release, Insurance information, code of conduct, and financial Responsibility.

Player Name	Player Signature	Date
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Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
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We like to post photos of teams and practices on our website, by signing below you give Thunder Struck the right to post photos of your athlete.

Parent/Guardian Name	Date
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PERMISSION FORM LIABILITY WAIVER & RELEASE

I understand that participation in Thunder Struck Basketball involves risk and dangers of serious and permanent bodily injury and death. I hereby release, hold harmless, discharge and agree not to sue Thunder Struck Basketball, all their affiliates and DBAs, all directors, officers, employees, coaches, officials, volunteers, agents, sponsors, advertisers, owners/leasers of premises for and from all liability from my participation in and with these and any other related travel, lodging, social and recreational activities. I also understand Thunder Struck Basketball retains the right to use for publicity and advertising, photographs and video taken of the participants.

I have given my child permission to participate in the Thunder Struck Basketball events, and I certify that she/he is in good health, has been cleared by a physician and can take part in all physical activities not limited to but including training, practices and games. I am aware of all laws, rules and safety procedures regarding head concussions. If an injury occurs, I authorize the staff members to take any action and use the emergency service available at the nearest hospital if necessary. I understand my personal insurance will be used in this case. In case of an emergency, I authorize the personnel to take action. I have read and understand and agree with all the parent, players and team packets and will follow all rules and code of conduct.

Player Name

Date

Signature

Date



MEDICAL & DENTAL TREATMENT AUTHORIZATION

I, the undersigned, the parent and/or legal guardian of,

_____ (Player) hereby grant permission for Thunder Struck Basketball, its officers, employees, coaches, and trainers, to authorize medical or dental treatment for the Player by any available and qualified physician/dentist or other trained medical personnel. In addition, this permission extends to and includes authorization for emergency treatments, procedures, and surgeries for the Player. Furthermore, on-going medical treatment is authorized until such time as the undersigned shall dismiss these physicians/medical personnel in writing and have engaged another qualified physician. This permission and authorization includes admission to a hospital or medical facility if the attending physician deems it necessary.

Player Name (printed)

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature (If player is a minor)

Date



PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

Player Name Preferred Jersey # Height

Date of Birth School Grad Year

School that you will attend or are currently attending

AAU # Expiration

Parents/Guardian

Address

Email

Home Phone Cell Phone Work Phone

Insurance Carrier Policy #

Primary Policy Holder ID #

In Case of emergency contact (Other than parent or guardian)

Relationship Emergency Contact Home #

Emergency Contact Work Emergency Contact Cell

If your insurance carrier requires a phone call prior to treatment or hospital admission, please provide that phone number and/or point of contact:

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE PLAYERS BIRTH CERTIFICATE

CONCUSSIONS

A concussion is a brain injury, and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of a concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Headaches
- “Pressure in head”
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns

- Amnesia
- “Don’t feel right”
- Fatigue or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Irritability
- More emotional
- Confusion
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
- Repeating the same question/comment

Signs observed by teammates, parents/guardians, and coaches include:

- Appears dazed
- Vacant facial expression
- Confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily or displays lack of coordination
- Answers questions slowly, slurred speech
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit
- Can’t recall events after hit
- Seizures or convulsions



What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often underreport symptoms of injuries, and concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents/guardians, and students is the key for student athletes' safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion:

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours.

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. It is better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out. Additional current information regarding concussion management is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>.

By signing below, I indicate that I have reviewed the information regarding concussions outlined in this document.

Athlete Name Printed and Date

Athlete Signature

Parent/Guardian Name Printed and Date

Parent/Guardian Signature



HANDBOOK ACCEPTANCE FORM

I acknowledge that I have received, read and discussed with my child the information in the Player/Parent handbook. I understand all of the policies as outlined in the handbook and agree to abide by the rules of the organization. A player may not begin his/her season with THUNDER STRUCK Basketball until all required forms are signed and submitted to the coach. The forms include: Handbook Acceptance, Waiver and Medical Release, Insurance information, code of conduct, and financial Responsibility.

Player Name

Player Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date