



## **Welcome to Altitude Football Club!**

### **Altitude Football Club Handbook**

The Altitude Football Club welcomes you to our club with this handbook. Let this handbook serve as a guide to current club programs and future club development. All members have access to the handbook to be used as a source of information. This handbook will give all members an insight to the many facets of Altitude FC. Included you will find our contact information, club standards, and operational details of the Club.

Altitude is dedicated to creating educational opportunities through soccer for players ages 3 - 18. The educational process covers three areas: the mind, the body, the spirit, and the will to use these areas positively. All of these areas are taught and trained in all Altitude Programs. Good habits are taught, expected, and encouraged both on and off the field.

Altitude uses training and competition as a positive force within the club. Competition is what separates this level of soccer activity from previous experiences. Playing time and team membership is not based solely on participation, but also on merit and the ability to contribute positively.

The Altitude Staff is dedicated to making decisions based on what is good for the game, and what is most beneficial to the individual player. We hope this guide will serve you in the same capacity as any quality reference book. Please note that the policies noted within are required items that all coaches, parents, staff, and volunteers must abide by. Procedures and other items are guidelines for our continued success and growth.

Enjoy the times you have with your children!

Altitude Football Club Staff and Board of Directors



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**Altitude Football Club**

**Board Contact Information – [board@altitudefc.org](mailto:board@altitudefc.org)**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>
President	David Stewart	2017
Treasurer	Matt Cassell	2017
Secretary	Jessica Jay	2018
Director at Large	Michelle Couch	2018
Director at Large	Scott Martinez	2017
Director at Large	Chris Schecter	2018
Director at Large	Jonathan Ramsey	2018
Director at Large	Gerry Dewill	2018
Director at Large	Elizabeth Ford	2018

**Altitude Soccer Staff Contact Information:**

Mark Burfeind  
Executive Director  
303.679.9222 (office)  
303.704.6700 (mobile)  
303.214.4270 (fax)  
[mark@altitudefc.org](mailto:mark@altitudefc.org)

**32135 Castle Court, Suite 103  
Evergreen, CO 80439**

**Altitude Website:**  
[www.altitudefc.org](http://www.altitudefc.org)

**Altitude Weather Hotline:**  
303-679-9222 option 1

**RainedOut**  
Rainedout.net  
Search – Altitude FC

**Soccer Fields of Colorado (Directions to fields)**  
<http://soccerfieldsofcolorado.com/fields/>



### **Altitude FC Mission Statement**

To offer all levels of soccer for young people from 3 to 18 years of age. To promote an active, healthy lifestyle and love for soccer. Altitude FC will develop complete soccer players with key core values which we believe provide our players the best opportunity to succeed at the next level whether that is competitive, high school, college, professional soccer or life outside of competitive sports.

### **Altitude FC Vision Statement**

Our Vision is to be recognized as one of the top soccer programs in Colorado advancing our players to their next level of soccer success, and compete to win state championships. To maximize the positive influence we have as a youth sports organization on the local and regional soccer community. To provide competitive opportunities for kids from all cultural and economic backgrounds through soccer. To be recognized for player development and competitive success. To instill healthy, positive and lasting core values in our players in order to better prepare them to compete successfully in a competitive world. To provide a variety of programs for all ages and abilities in a safe and fun environment

### **Altitude FC Core Values**

**Integrity / Respect / Honesty** - Being trustworthy and sincere in accordance with experience and facts. Lying, cheating, stealing, or the appearance of impropriety are unacceptable. We take responsibility for our actions. We demonstrate our integrity when we work through disagreements with honesty and respect for others, when we honor our commitments and when we accept responsibility for our actions. We are fair with our players, parents, opponents, referees and governing organizations.

**Transparency** – Altitude FC is committed to fair communication of the business of the club. We seek review and improvement of our methods, processes and actions from all our constituencies.

**Sportsmanship / Fair Play** – We adhere to all aspects of the FIFA Fair Play Code. We treat others with dignity. We take the high road in all our dealings. We must consider what is right and just in all our decisions. Our players are taught that fairness is the basis for sport and that the rules exist for the benefit of all competitors.

**Access / Inclusion** – We believe there is a place for every child who desires to play soccer in some facet of our club. We strive to provide as many opportunities to play soccer as possible. We do not close the door on any chance that a child might interact with a soccer ball, teammates, and fun.

**Encouragement / Positive Reinforcement / Self-Esteem** - Our players are coached with positive reinforcement and progress through our soccer program as increasingly confident young adults.

**Dedication / Commitment** - Our players are expected to give their best when in competition and to work hard, within their team concept, in order to improve themselves.

### **Purpose: Why We Exist**

1. Provide a positive, meaningful soccer experience to all players at Altitude FC, regardless of age or skill.

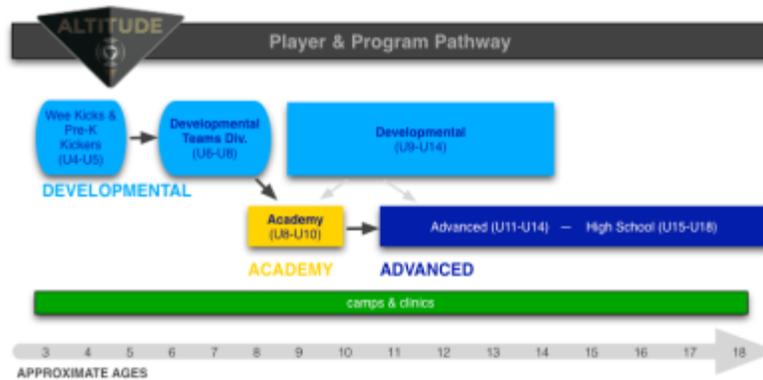


2. Provide every resource necessary to help players maximize their development.
3. Use the game of soccer to teach players the values of competition, teamwork, respect, leadership, and accountability.
4. Provide coaching education to ensure consistent, excellent, and inspired coaches.
5. Foster development of character, teamwork, discipline and sportsmanship.
6. Maximize individual player development.
7. Instill a life long passion for soccer.
8. Create valuable and lasting relationships.
9. Build a winning tradition.

### Altitude Programmatic Divisions

(visit the website at [www.altitudeFC.org](http://www.altitudeFC.org) for more information)

### Altitude FC Player Pathway U3 – U18



### DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM (U3 - U14)

This program is for our entry - level soccer players, developing skill, enjoyment of the game, and ensuring that fun is a priority.

- **WeeKicks Division (U3 - U4):** Our youngest players practice for 30 minutes followed by a game on Saturdays, learning basic technical skills, focusing on the enjoyment of the game.
- **Developmental Team Division (U5 – U8):** This division of both experienced and new players builds individual and team skills as players progress. Practice is once - twice per week with coaches on the player's assigned teams and games are all local against other Altitude teams. No score or standings in these small sided games (3v3) or (4v4) on small fields.
- **Mountain Team Division (U9 – U10):** These teams play all their games in Evergreen, on small sided, small field games. Practice will be two times per week with a coach.
- **Intermediate Division (U11 - U14):** These teams will practice twice per week and will be a part of the CSA intermediate division. Half of the games will be in Evergreen and half will be in the Denver Metro area.

### ACADEMY PROGRAM (U8 – U10)

This program is for our players preparing to go to the competitive programs when they reach the U11 level.



- Teams practice 2 - 3 times per week.
- Paid Staff coaches.
- Players may enter the program at any season and a full year commitment is expected.
- Players may move to Developmental Division at any time.
- 3 - 4 tournaments per year.
- Half games in Evergreen and half in Denver metro area.

#### **ADVANCED PROGRAM (COMPETITIVE U11---U18)**

Altitude Advanced Program (aka Competitive) is our offering for players, ages (U11---U18), who are developmentally ready for and *enthusiastic about* training and competing to reach their full soccer potential. Colorado Soccer Association (CSA) organizes inter - club leagues in four competition levels (Challenge, Classic, Premier, and Super League) for each age group and we assign our teams where they fit best. These leagues are a promotion/relegation system based on results throughout the entire year (per season for some divisions). Teams that do well will have an opportunity to move up a competitive level, while teams that struggle will have an opportunity to move down a level for a better developmental fit.

- U11 - U14 teams play two seasons, fall and spring.
- 2 -3 tournaments per year.
- High School programs for Boys and Girls run one season only – Girls play in the fall and Boys play in the spring.

#### **Philosophy: Player Education and Development**

Our primary goal at Altitude Football Club is to maximize our players to meet future challenges on the field and in society. It is Altitudes' desire to develop individual players to fit into the team concept; the result is individual success and team success. Altitude provides an atmosphere for players who simply love the game, and for players who wish to continue on to competitive, high school, college, and further. We offer a year round program with a predictable year - long calendar that incorporates club wide breaks. Players are expected to follow the calendar as it is designed appropriately per age. The calendar may be adjusted by coaches based on team schedules.

Altitude employs a full - time Executive Director, and multiple Directors of Coaching. These individuals collaborate in putting together the year - long calendar and comprehensive training program. This calendar and training program is designed to maximize all athletes; gender specifically and age appropriately; the result is individual success, quality team play, and club unity.

Team selections are uniform for each age group. Tryouts each spring for the following season will consist of a traditional tryout for U11 to U18; with teams being chosen based on playing ability and proper competitive levels of play.

It is the philosophy of Altitude to create a positive developmental environment for U5s through U10s that makes for a smooth and enjoyable transition from developmental to academy to competitive soccer at U11. At the U12 to U18 age groups, the majority of club members will have at least one year of development at the competitive level; therefore, integration into club activities is expected and anticipated. The Club believes the game is the best teacher. With a combination of structure and self realization, players are trained to be well rounded athletes and citizens when faced with situations on the field and in life. Players are trained by an excellent coaching staff, dedicated to personal education.



## Altitude Communication Protocol and Parental Expectation

### Communication Protocol

The Altitude Football Club is committed to providing clear guidelines to our members, coaches, volunteers, and staff regarding proper communication within the Club. It is important that everyone involved with the Club understand where to go with questions and concerns about Club matters. Accordingly, the Executive Director has established the following protocols:

#### 1. For Parents/Players:

**Team Coach** – first point of contact for questions or concerns regarding soccer - related issues such as games, practices, team rules, player discipline, and anything else that affects the technical, tactical, psychological, or physical mechanics of the team. Please remember to contact the coach at appropriate times and try to set an appointment if possible. Parents should not approach a coach before a game or a training session unless it is to discuss an injury to their specific player(s).

**Team Manager** (competitive teams only) – first point of contact for all issues not directly related to soccer, such as coach fees, paperwork, travel expenses, and anything else related to the administrative part of the team.

**Director of Coaching** – subsequent point of contact for matters which the player/parent feels were not handled appropriately by the team coach or team manager, or for matters which the player/parent do not feel comfortable discussing with the team coach or team manager.

**Executive Director** – subsequent point of contact for matters which the player/parent feels were not handled appropriately by the DOC, or for matters which the player/parent do not feel comfortable discussing with the DOC. Questions about registration, website input, or other administrative questions can be addressed to the ED as well.

#### 2. For Coaches:

**Director of Coaching** – first point of contact for paid and volunteer coaches with questions or concerns regarding soccer - related issues such as team formation, player development, field access, referees, and for any questions or concerns which have been brought to the coach by a player/parent which the coach needs help or advice addressing.

**Executive Director** – subsequent point of contact for paid and volunteer coaches who feel a matter was not handled appropriately by the DOC, or who do not feel comfortable discussing the matter with the DOC.

### Parental Expectations

#### 1. Game:

- a. Have children arrive at games by the designated amount of time asked by the coach.
- b. Attend games.
- c. Model positive behavior.
- d. Support coaches' and referees' decisions.
- e. Praise **all** players during the game.



- f. Pick up children on time if not attending.
- g. Do not discuss children other than your own with the coach.

## 2. Practice:

- a. Have children at practice 10 minutes early dressed and ready to play.
- b. Watch practice as often as possible.
- c. Ask your children what was taught at practice and what was the most fun part.
- d. Arrive to pick up your children from practice 5 minutes early.
- e. Do not interrupt a coach during practice to discuss other matters. This is the equivalent of interrupting a teacher during a lesson. Please set - up an appointment with the coach to stay after to discuss such matters.

## 3. Other Expectations:

- a. Parents are expected to help with team activities, club events, travel coordination, and club assigned activities.
- b. Good nutrition can make a huge difference in a player's performance.
- c. Watch soccer with your children.
- d. Increase your knowledge of the world's game.
- e. Be respectful to all other players, coaches, team staff, parents, and referees before, during and after the game.
- f. Encourage communication with the coach and manager.
- g. Maintain the integrity of the club and always be a model representative of Altitude.

### **Altitude Code of Conduct**

The ED has the full authority to sanction or penalize the behavior or action of any player, coach or volunteer for any situation.

#### **Players**

1. All Altitude Football Club players will represent themselves as a positive influence to teammates, coaches, managers, referees, and parents.
2. Sportsmanship and fair play will be paramount in determining who has an active role in game situations. Winning is an attitude we encourage, but we will not tolerate winning at all costs.
3. Each and every player, regardless of ability or personality, will play a minimum of 25% of each game unless there is disciplinary action being served (except State Cup, President's Cup, and any other qualifying tournaments, then the coach may not play all players the minimum amount).
4. Players will not use foul, abusive, or profane language towards anyone.
5. Use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs (while representing the club) will result in immediate suspension.
6. Referee calls will be final and dissent of calls will not be tolerated by club staff or coaches.
7. Any deviation from the club policy will be dealt with severely and may result in suspension.

#### **Coaches**

1. All coaches will promote a positive influence on all players as well as require all players to encourage, uplift and promote a positive attitude to each individual player.
2. Sportsmanship and fair play will be paramount in determining who has an active role in



game situations. Winning is an attitude we encourage, but we will not tolerate winning at all costs.

3. A coach will not allow any foul, abusive, or profane language on or around the practice field or before, during, or after a game.
4. Coaches will be responsible for actions and comments of spectators on their sidelines.
5. Referee calls will be final.
6. Any deviation from club policy will be dealt with severely and may result in suspension of coaching duties.

### **Altitude Player Team Rules**

#### **Practice**

1. Players are to wear Altitude Training Kit to all Club and Team training sessions.
2. Players are to be dressed for practice, ten (10) minutes prior to scheduled time. This includes shin-guards and proper soccer cleats.
3. All U9 - U12 players bring a size 4 ball. All U13---U18 players bring a size 5 ball. Every ball must be properly inflated PRIOR to practice. This is mandatory!
4. All players are responsible for their own water/sports drink.
5. Organize small - sided game as players arrive.
6. Contact head coach immediately if unable to attend a practice.

#### **Games**

1. Players are to wear Altitude Gear ONLY.
2. Players should arrive one hour prior to kickoff for locations that they have never been. Otherwise, players should arrive 45 minutes before the game unless the coach states differently.
3. Players late to games, without prior notice, will sacrifice starting a game based on the amount of time late.
4. Players are to begin warm - up individually.
5. Substitutes are expected to help the game from the sideline.
6. The coach will designate a player or captain to organize warm down.
7. Players are to bring their own ball and water/sports drink.

#### **Team Captains**

1. Captains will be chosen at the coaching staff discretion.

#### **Team Managers**

Team managers are very important to the facilitation of a team. All Teams, U11---U18 are required to have a team manager. This person or persons are parent volunteers who assist the coach in handling administrative duties that come with a competitive team. This may include:

- Regular updates and reminders of games and practices.
- Directions to games.
- Updating TeamSnap.
- Other administrative items that occur for a team.
- The manager is often the first line of communication about the needs, questions, concerns of parents.
- The team manager is also an official team staff person from the perspective of CYS, and referees are informed that AFTER approaching the coach or if a coach is ejected from the game the team manager is THEN responsible for the fans/parents behavior on the sideline.
- Collection of coaching and tournament fees as well as all travel organization and registration for



tournaments. Some teams prefer to delegate a specific "Tournament Manager" who handles the registration, payment, and details of the tournaments.

## Club Travel Standards

**Purpose:** Travel is important to developing players. These standards are designed to improve our teams' chances of success, and avoid risk management issues. Violators to the below described standards shall be disciplined by either the coach, the Director of Coaching, or in severe cases, the Executive Director.

## Head Coaches/Assistant Coaches

### 1. Reimbursement

- a) The team will pay the coaches travel fees for tournaments that are more than 80 miles round trip from the Altitude office. However, if the tournament is within 80 miles RT from the Altitude office but the total mileage driven by a coach exceeds 100 miles for the entire tournament, the Club does ask the team to pay the coach's mileage and per diem.
- b) Travel reimbursements MAY include flights, trains, rental cars, hotels, per diem and mileage for personal vehicle use.
  - a. Hotel expenses are pre paid by the team and should be arranged by the team manager.
  - b. Per Diem for food is \$30.00 per day, paid by the team.
  - c. Mileage will be paid by the team at the standard rate set by the IRS.  
[http://www.irs.gov/uac/2013--- Standard---Mileage---Rates---Up---1---Cent---per---Mile---for---Business---Medical---and---Moving](http://www.irs.gov/uac/2013---Standard---Mileage---Rates---Up---1---Cent---per---Mile---for---Business---Medical---and---Moving)
- c) Mileage reimbursements for coach's travel during the regular season are the responsibility of the club.

### 2. Procedures

- a) A Head coach shall have an individual room.
- b) No Head coach or Assistant coach shall room with the opposite gender unless married to each other.
- c) No coach is allowed in a room with players without a parent supervisor.
- d) Coaches shall abide by the Coaches' Code of Conduct.
- e) Head coaches shall be available to their team managers at all times during the travel time. If a coach leaves the hotel, adequate communication regarding return time and how to reach the coach should be given to the manager or chaperone.

### 3. Itinerary

- a. A Head coach shall be responsible for developing an itinerary for all travel. The itinerary shall cover all activities from the beginning point to the end point of travel including curfew times for all days of travel, no matter if there are games on the following day or not.

### 4. Payment Procedures:

- a. Travel expenses incurred prior to the travel MAY be paid by the team/team manager. This may be done in consultation with OTHER team



- managers when the coach has multiple teams at a tournament.
- a. Any coach prepaid expenses must be pre approved by the Team Manager paying the expense.
  - b. Travel expenses incurred during the travel period MAY be covered by the team or by the coach.
    - a. Any coach prepaid expenses must be pre approved by the Team Manager paying the expense.
  - c. After the travel any remaining expenses (hotel if paid by the coach, summary of mileage, and Per Diem etc.) will be documented by the coach, documented on the Altitude Expense Reimbursement form (with receipts if necessary), and delivered to the team manager for payment and paid by the team manager(s) within seven days of the tournament. In the case of a coach having multiple teams the coach or the manager(s) may divide the total expenses up to be paid.
  - d. Form of payment: Altitude Football Club recommends paying with a check directly to the coach.
  - e. The team manager is required to sign the expense reimbursement form (with all items listed—pre - travel and post) and what was paid to the coach, when and how. The Coach will deliver that to Altitude Football Club so that should any dispute arise in the future, the club can make a decision about any final resolution. The documentation should be delivered to the Executive Director or appropriate staff at Altitude within 30 days of the travel.
  - f. If the coach is coaching multiple teams in a tournament the two (or more) team managers will coordinate payments pre - travel and post - travel as well as jointly note and sign the amounts that were paid to the coach.
  - g. The club reserves the right to adjust or modify any payments, rule on any disputes, or modify this policy at any time.

## **Team Managers**

### **Procedures**

1. Team Travel: The team manager will organize all travel arrangements for the individual team, including making arrangements for the team coach.
2. A minimum of one chaperone will be provided for every eight players. This applies to players who are not staying in a room with at least one of their parents.
3. Team managers are to ensure that bed checks are done at the designated curfew time. All players should be in their own rooms at this time. Coordinate these checks with the coach to ensure they are being done each night. A walk thru outside each room shall also be done approximately 30 minutes after curfew.

## **Players**

### **Financial Commitment**

1. Players are responsible for all fees accrued before, during, and after travel as determined by the team manager, for the team they are traveling with. If a player is playing for a team (permanent team or guest playing), then they are to be considered part of that team during all associated travel. Included are: Coaches reimbursement, tournament fees, hotel fees, transportation fees, restaurant food, and miscellaneous.

### **Procedures**

1. Players are to stay in the same hotel as the Head coach unless it is pre - approved by the head coach well in advance of travel. An exception can be made by the head



coach if there are siblings and parents attending a tournament and they are staying in different hotels. All exceptions must be approved by the head coach. It is expected that there will not be exceptions for U16 and older teams.

2. Players without parents traveling, U11 - U14, will be placed up to three to a room with a chaperone of the same gender as approved by the team manager. For U14 and below, a chaperone staying in the room of the opposite gender may only be utilized if there are not other reasonable options and if a signed consent letter is provided from the parents of each player involved agreeing to have an opposite gender chaperone. Maximum total per room is four (three players plus one chaperone of the same gender). Players must stay with their families in the team hotel.
3. Players U15 and older may be placed four to a room maximum, unless the hotel room can comfortably accommodate a fifth person. A chaperone will be assigned to each room (but not stay in the room). It is left to the Head coaches' discretion and the team manager's discretion working together to determine room assignments. A minimum of one chaperone (not including the coach) must be provided for every 8 players maximum. Players must stay with their families in the team hotel.
4. Any vandalism while traveling will be the financial responsibility of the individual or individuals involved. See Player Code of Conduct.
5. **Under no circumstances** will a male be in a females' room or a female in a males' room unless they are related (brother and sister) and they are in the same room that their parents are staying in. If a player is staying in a room with a parent or chaperone, then a non - related player of the opposite gender may be in the hotel room provided a parent or chaperone is in the room at all times.
6. **Club curfew will be no later than 10:00pm for all U14 and under teams and no later than 11:00pm for all U15 and older teams.** All players must be in their own rooms at curfew. Players may not stay in a room other than their own after curfew. **It is expected that the coach will specify in the itinerary the curfew for each age night of travel and that often times, the itinerary will designate an earlier curfew than the times designated above.** A coach may extend curfew to midnight for U16 and above teams only if the team does not have a game the following day and only after the coach has discussed the situation with the team's chaperones and all parties agree on the revised curfew time. Under no circumstances shall a coach, team manager, or chaperone set a curfew that is later than the times set above.

## Team Participation Minimum Standards

### Training

#### All Teams

1. Begin training with small-sided game as players arrive
2. Cool down
3. Wear Altitude training kits

#### U11---U18 Elite Teams

1. Training 3x per week
2. Train no more than nine to ten months a year

#### U11---U18 Recreational Teams

1. Training 2x per week with an optional 3<sup>rd</sup> session (encouraged).
2. Train no more than nine to ten months a year.



## Games

1. Arrive at field 45 minutes before kickoff.
2. Use Altitude warm - up before game.
3. Cool down.

## Coach Participation Minimum Standards

1. Participate at all trainings and games.
2. Annually complete a background check.
3. Annually pass the concussion protocol test (in GotSoccer).
4. Continue to develop coaching skills through training, education and certification.
5. 2 player evaluations per season.
6. Weekly game evaluations.

## Developmental (U6---U10) Team Formation Policy

### U5---U9 Players

**Coach and/or Player Requests**— a player will be placed on a team that they request. This usually occurs by the child requesting to play for a certain coach and/or with certain friends.

**School/Neighborhood**— if no specific request regarding a coach or team is made, every attempt will be made to place a player with a team that is predominantly comprised of players from the same school and/or neighborhood.

**Time/Date of Registration**— in the event of multiple requests that cannot all be satisfied, time/date of registration received will be a final determinant.

The above criteria are used to create teams, under the assumption that registrants have been received before the registration deadline. Registrations received after the registration deadline, are subject to an additional registration fee; children are placed on teams on an as---needed basis, with no guarantee of team placement.

Players rising from U6 to U7 and U7 to U8 will have the right to remain on the same team should they choose, provided their registration is received before the registration deadline. Should their registration be late, their ability to re - join the same team will be considered on a space - available basis (after on - time registrations) and may be jeopardized.

It is assumed that children of coaches will automatically be placed on that coach's team.

### U9 and U10 Players

The game of soccer changes from the U8 age group to U9. The field size changes and play is 6v6 or 8v8 instead of 4v4. As a result, teams typically have 11 - 3 players rather than 7---9, which results in fewer Altitude teams.

As a result of the number of teams being reduced, the right of return for players is no longer valid from U8 to U9. Teams are formed at the U9 level in the following manner:

For registrations received before the registration deadline:

**Coach and/or Player Requests**— a player will be placed on a team that they request. These requests are honored in the order they are received.



School/Neighborhood – if no specific request regarding coach or team was made, every attempt will be made to place a player with a team that is predominantly comprised of players from the same school and/or neighborhood.

Time/Date of Registration – in the event of multiple requests that cannot all be satisfied, time/date of registration received will be a final determinant.

Players rising from U9 to U10 will have the right to remain with their previous year's team, provided they submit their registration on time. Should their registration be late, the ability to re-join the same team will be considered on a space - available basis (after on - time registrations) and may be jeopardized.

It is assumed that children of coaches will automatically be placed on that coach's team. If a girl wishes to play on a boy's team, the parent(s) must submit a request to the Director of Coaching (DOC) prior to team formation. These requests will then be evaluated on a case by - case basis by the DOC.

### **Fees – Financial Assistance**

#### **Fees**

By a child accepting a team assignment, the parent agrees to pay the identified fees under a binding financial agreement with Altitude Football Club. Fees are to be paid in full by the last date of the specified payment plan option detailed on the website.

Altitude Football Club considers a player in good standing if they have paid their fees in full or are currently paying in accordance with the specified payment plan, or an individually agreed upon payment plan in agreement with the Executive Director.

Players not in good standing will be subject to CYS rules including, but not limited to, a hold being placed on the player card until funds are paid in full.

#### **Refund Policy**

A player with a single injury that spans over a three - month period may be eligible for up to an 80% refund of the prorated fees for the length of time missed with a doctors' note. A refund will also be considered by the Executive Director if there have been significant changes in a family's financial or other domestic situation that creates a hardship. All refund requests should be submitted by completing the Altitude Refund document in writing to the Executive Director for review (<http://altitudefc.net/afc/register/refund-privacy-terms/>).

#### **Financial Assistance**

It is Altitude goal to develop each player regardless of income level. Altitude Football Club offers financial assistance to families that qualify. Financial aid documents need to be completely filled out and returned to the Executive Director. Altitude offers scholarships to families on a case by case basis and also offers installment plans to families who cannot pay the registration cost in full all at once.

#### **The Kathy Heyvaert Scholarship Fund**

The Kathy Heyvaert Scholarship Fund was established in memorial of a former Altitude Family member who passed away due to illness. The Fund is used to help Evergreen families who need financial assistance with their Altitude registration dues. Families can download an application from our website and submit it for approval by the Executive Director and board of directors. The fund is replenished annually through donations from Altitude' members. If you would like to donate, contact the Altitude Office (see the website).



## Risk Management

Risk management is a crucial component of any organization, especially those that deal with a community's most valuable resource, its children. Therefore, at Altitude, we want to put a focus on the many aspects of risk management including warning signs for pedophiles, goal placement safety, environmental conditions, tournament safety tips, legal issues, and injuries. All coaches, volunteers, and board members are required to complete a Volunteer Disclosure Form and a background check. These documents are kept on file confidentially at the office and all coaches, volunteers, and board members must complete a background check every two years. Although Altitude is required by Colorado Youth Soccer to have a Risk Management Coordinator, it is everyone's responsibility to promote risk management. Risk management is an ongoing process and a job that is never done. In today's fast paced world there are new and challenging risks that are constantly being presented. We want to make you aware of *some* of these concerns. As coaches, it is our first and foremost important duty to promote the health and safety of our players. The Altitude staff has developed a Risk Management Guide for Coaches, and is currently working on creating a risk management plan for the entire club. The Altitude Football Club Risk Management Guide for Coaches is viewed as being a separate entity than this handbook and must be reviewed by each coach and volunteer that works with children in our club.

### I. Concussion Policy

- a) Altitude Football Club requires all coaches to take the training, "Heads Up" from the Centers for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html> and recommends parents and players do the same.
- b) Completion certificate for coaches must be turned into Altitude Office prior to working as a coach (either volunteer or paid).
- c) Altitude Football Club requires a doctor's clearance before that player is allowed to play or practice in any situation where a concussion is suspected.
- d) Altitude encourages the use of the following progression to return to play as adopted by the "Concussion in Sports Group" at the CDC:

*"It is important to inform the athlete's coach, PE teacher, and/or athletic trainer that the athlete should not return to play until they are symptom--free and their cognitive function has returned to normal, both at rest and with exertion.*

*"Return to play should occur gradually. Individuals should be monitored for symptoms and cognitive function carefully during each stage of increased exertion. Patients should only progress to the next level of exertion if they are asymptomatic at the current level. In competitive sports, a specific return to play protocol outlining gradual increase in activity has been established by the Concussion in Sport Group:1*

- Rest
- Aerobic exercise (e.g., stationary bicycle)
- Sport---specific training (e.g., running, skating)
- Non---contact drills (includes cutting and other lateral movements)



- *Full contact controlled training*
- *Full contact game play*

## **II. Altitude Bullying Policy**

Altitude will not allow bullying of any kind to take place in our Club. However, incidents of bullying are rare and most can be handled appropriately by the team coach. Accordingly, any incidence of bullying should be brought immediately to the attention of the team coach. The team coach will follow - up on the matter immediately by discussing the issue with the involved players, and parents if necessary. The team coach will notify the DOC and/or the ED of all allegations. If the allegation is credible, the players involved must be warned that a second incidence of bullying is grounds for suspension from the team or dismissal. However, in no case will dismissal be allowed without prior notification of the DOC/ED. Further, parents of all involved players will be notified of any allegations of bullying, and of any resolution by the team coach.

## **General Protocols**

### **I. LIGHTNING PROTOCOL LIGHTNING-SAFETY**

#### **LIGHTNING SAFETY POLICY**

The potential for lightning to strike an individual is increased in open areas such as a soccer field. Altitude Football Club has the following lightning policy.

Any soccer coach, Director of Coaching at Altitude or Executive Director at Altitude has the authority to remove participating soccer players from any athletic field or venue when lightning is in the area. Since Colorado weather changes so quickly, it may be impractical to monitor local forecasts. In addition, EPRD does not have lightning detection technology at the field locations. As such, all coaches are responsible to watch the weather at the athletic field or venue.

In order to determine when to stop play, Altitude Football Club will use the “Flash – To - Bang” calculation methodology as recommended by the National Athletic Trainers Association. When lightning is calculated to be within three miles of an open field, all participants should move to a safe place away from the field. The coach, Director of Coaching or Executive Director will use reasonable judgment to determine the safe place.

The observer begins counting or timing when a flash of lightning is sighted. Counting or timing is stopped when the associated thunder is heard. Divide the number by five to determine the distance to the lightning flash. For example, a “flash to bang” of twenty seconds would be equal to four miles. If the observer notices that there is no thunder associated with a lightning storm, the observer should use reasonable judgment to determine whether the lightning is within three miles of an open, thus play is unsafe due to lightning danger.

When the coach or other designated person determines that play is unsafe due to lightning, the following emergency plan takes effect. Since field locations, sizes and equipment are not uniform, the



coach or designated individual is responsible for communicating to all soccer players and coaches at the field location that play is unsafe due to lightning. The signal for stoppage of play is this communication. All players and coaches should move to a safe place away from the field using reasonable judgment. Players and coaches are not allowed back on the field for a minimum of fifteen minutes from the time it is determined that the lightning is more than three miles from the open field.

## II. INJURY PROTOCOL

### U.S. Soccer's General Injury Protocol



The general guidelines listed below should not be used as a substitute for seeking trained medical personnel. In all situations, trained personnel should be the first contact. What follows are just general guidelines and are not intended to be used as an alternative to trained medical personnel.

Coaching sports can be rewarding and stressful as it is without having to worry about injuries to your players. However, there may be situations when appropriate medical personnel are not available and the care of the athlete is in your hands. Here are some general guidelines regarding injuries that often occur on the soccer field.

1. Coaches should at the very minimum be certified in CPR and First Aid. Knowing these basics will allow you to think clearly should an emergency arise.
2. Remember R.I.C.E.: Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation. Most common injuries encountered in soccer will follow this general principle. DO NOT use heat while swelling is present to the extremity. Apply ice to the injured area for 15 - 20 minutes. Adding heat will increase the swelling, while ice will help decrease it.
3. Let common sense prevail. If there is a deformity, DO NOT move the athlete. Call 911 and let trained personnel handle the situation.
4. Communicate with parents and inform them of the situation if they are not on-site at the time of the injury.
5. Be conservative. If you have doubts as to an athlete's ability to play, do not let them play.

#### Ankle Injuries

- Most ankle injuries involve ligaments and tendons (i.e. sprains). In instances like this, follow the R.I.C.E. principle. These injuries often turn into recurring injuries if the athlete returns to activity too soon. If the athlete experiences pain during activity, he/she should be removed from competition. If the pain level increases in the following days, the athlete should see a physician.
- If a deformity is present, do not attempt to put the limb in place or move the limb. Immediately call 911 or EMS personnel.

#### Deep Thigh Bruise

Usually caused by direct contact to the thigh, a deep thigh bruise is very painful and can lead to potential problems.

- Ice immediately with the knee in a bent position. This will help maintain flexibility to the thigh muscle.
- Instruct the athlete to keep stretching the thigh. This will prevent swelling/blood from "settling" in the muscle and limit movement.

#### Knee Injuries

The knee is the most vulnerable joint in the body and should be dealt with caution. Injuries can occur to the ligaments, tendons, kneecap, cartilage (meniscus) and bones (growth plates). Here are some indications of significant injury to the knee:



- Hearing or feeling a "pop" or a "snap" in the knee.
- Feeling that the knee "gave out"
- Sharp pain
- Obvious deformity
- Limited movement
- Swelling
- Apply ice immediately and immobilize the knee. When immobilizing the knee, be sure to splint the ankle. As a general rule to follow, the joint above and below the injured joint should be splinted.
- In all instances involving a knee injury, the athlete must follow - up with a physician.

### **Head Injuries**

There are currently many different theories regarding head injuries and concussions and how to treat them. The following guidelines are essential to insuring safe return to play for your athlete:

- When in doubt, keep the athlete out. Any player who appears to have suffered a concussion should be removed from participation and evaluated by a physician as soon as is practical. Players exhibiting prolonged loss of consciousness or marked amnesia should be evaluated immediately in an emergency room. Players should not be allowed to return to play if they exhibit the symptoms (headache, nausea, blurred vision, dizziness, ringing in the ears, unsteadiness, confusion) of concussions.
- If an athlete loses consciousness, call 911 and activate EMS. Before this athlete can return to competition or practice, he must be cleared by a physician.
- Athletes, in the eagerness to play, may fudge the truth when telling the coach how they feel. As part of the overall evaluation, have the athlete perform sport - specific movements on the sideline and watch for unsteadiness, lethargy, uncoordinated movements. They may lie, but their bodies won't.

### **Neck Injuries**

Any athlete that sustained a hit and complains of neck pain, or numbness and tingling to extremities, **MUST NOT BE MOVED**. Immediately call 911. If the athlete is not breathing, your priority is to get the athlete breathing, which means you - or another trained person on site must begin CPR. However, neck injuries pose a unique problem when CPR is initiated. We encourage all coaches and staff to contact their local EMS provider and learn how and when to use 'log rolling' when in this situation.

Soccer, like most sports, contains the risk of injury, but the use of shin guards and on field awareness can lessen that risk. In the case of an injury, stay calm and seek medical help. The general guidelines listed above should not be used as a substitute for seeking trained personnel. Remember that a player's health is the first priority in situations where an injury appears to have occurred, and trained medical personnel are best able to deal with such situations.

*As a coach, the most important thing one can do to protect his/her players is to undergo CPR and First Aid training. In all situations where an injury occurs on the field, coaches should seek the help of trained medical personnel whenever possible. Having a cellular phone accessible on the sidelines is advised, as it is often the fastest and easiest way to call 911.*

*Information compiled by U.S. Soccer's Hughie O'Malley and Athletico trainers Lynn Grosman and Rich Monis. For more information please contact O'Malley at [homalley@ussoccer.org](mailto:homalley@ussoccer.org) or 312 528 1225*