

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL CLUB OF MOBILE



**2022-23  
MEMBER  
HANDBOOK**

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# POLICY #1: PLAYING TIME



Playing time is mandated by the club directors based on the established Long Term Development Model. Each age group/program connects with the intent to develop players physically, technically, tactically, and psychosocially:

Age Groups	Playing Time Guideline:	Purpose:
<b>U9 – U10</b> (7v7) Recommended Roster Size - 14	Approximately 50% throughout the season. Poor attitude and effort will impact playing time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key developmental period – players need to play in order to create enjoyment of the game, ignite passion for the game, and maximize development at this age.</li> <li>Focus on learning to train &amp; compete</li> </ul>
<b>U11 – 12</b> (9v9) Recommended Roster size - 16	Approximately 30-40% throughout the season. Poor attitude and effort will impact playing time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical maturity happening/nearing its end. Playing time minimum allows players to work through their physical adaptations;</li> </ul>
<b>U13 &amp; U14</b> (11v11) Recommended Roster size - 18	U13 & U14: Approximately 30 % minimum throughout the season; Poor attitude and effort will impact playing time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playing time now used as a motivational tool.</li> <li>Players begin learning value in performance; how to elevate personal performance</li> </ul>
<b>U15 – U18</b> (11v11) Recommended Roster size - 18	Merit based – quality of performance, attitude and effort all impact playing time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Players continue learning connection between performance and playing time</li> <li>Preparation for next level (college experience)</li> </ul>

\*ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SESSIONS IS A KEY COMPONENT OF DISPLAYING THE PROPER ATTITUDE AND EFFORT. WHILE SITUATIONS ARISE WHERE PLAYERS MAY NOT ATTEND TRAINING SESSIONS, IT IS CRITICAL TO DEVELOPMENT TO PRACTICE AND TRAIN. IF PLAYERS CONSISTENTLY MISS TRAINING SESSIONS AND ARE NOT MAKING THESE SESSIONS UP IT IS A POOR REFLECTION OF ATTITUDE AND EFFORT.

**Purpose: Developing passion for playing the game is one of the main objectives of the AFC Mobile programs for younger players. As players mature, we feel it is in the best interest of each player to utilize playing time in a manner consistent with higher levels of the game (college) to increase the competitiveness of our players. Therefore, as players progress through AFC Mobile programs, playing time may be based on a player's skill and mastery of the game rather than a time requirement based on an individual's attitude and effort.**

Parents/players with questions regarding their playing time (not that of a teammate) must follow the 24 hour rule stated in policy #3. Additionally, unless the coach chooses otherwise, the player must be present for the conversation. The player should be the main individual conversing with the coach, regardless of the player's age (parents should mostly be in the periphery of the conversation). AFC Mobile wants all players (to learn) to speak to an authority figure, like their coach, in a respectful and productive manner.

# POLICY #2: NO COACHING

## Coaching is not permitted by parents, guardians or spectators

Training and Games are time devoted to the player's improvement. Each AFC Mobile coach facilitates this development. The coach is the only individual permitted to communicate verbally and nonverbally in an instructional manner to players who are engaged in training and games. Comments pertaining to your child's effort are the only permissible comments from parents, guardians or spectators.

**Purpose: Comments that inform a player what to do distract players from the game, confuses them in a moment they need to be thinking clearly, and negatively affects their ability to develop as independent thinkers on the soccer field. AFC Mobile Coaches are responsible for (and trained in) instructing players during training and games. Thoughtful consideration should be given to the effects that negative comments have on a player (your child and/or another person's child) before, during, and after training and games. Players of all ages are learning how to play the game – they are not masters at it. Unnecessary pressure on players to perform at a particular level is unhealthy and counter-productive.**

Coaches should take the following action if a parent or parents are seen/heard coaching during games and training:

1. The coach will remind players that they are to listen only to the coach and not to remarks from the sideline made by parents and spectators. This will ensure that players are not distracted and will eliminate any confusion by the player
2. The coach may substitute the player whose parent(s) are coaching from the sidelines.



# POLICY #3: 24-HOUR RULE

**Communication with your coach(s) about issues related to a game is not allowed within the 24 hours following the respective game.**

It is inconvenient to attempt conversations immediately before, during, and after a training session. Most coaches have back-to-back training sessions and need to move to the next training session immediately. Please be considerate of this fact when attempting to speak with a coach.

**Purpose: Emotions can be volatile during and after games. This policy exists to give coaches and parents a time period to “cool off” and have a meaningful discussion**

Correct protocol to discuss issues with your child (and only your child) are as follows:

1. Contact the coach and DOC with respect to the 24-hour rule, via email or phone call to set up a meeting. Face-to-face meetings are the preferred method but phone calls will suffice.
2. Set up a time (and place) to meet in a public setting.
3. Discuss the issues at hand, remembering that the coach can only discuss your child.
4. The DOC will document, in a minutes format, the content of the meeting.
5. If the issue relates specifically to playing time, please see Policy #1.
6. It is preferable to have your child present at the time of the meeting if possible.
7. All conflicts should remain private. For example, do not “reply all” to emails to air frustrations or vent issues.



# POLICY #4: RESPECT THE REF

## **Communication to referees is not permitted.**

Parents are not allowed to communicate with referees. Referees hold a position of authority and need to be respected. Coaches are the only individuals allowed to communicate with referees and are tasked with doing so in a respectful manner.

**Purpose: Poor refereeing is unfortunately a part of the game at every level in every country in the world. AFC Mobile Players need to learn how to overcome the adversity of poor officiating just like every other adverse part of playing the game. Disagreeing with referee shows players that it is okay to disrespect authority in a loud, aggressive, and public manner, which is something AFC Mobile does not condone.**

Also, verbal and/or physical assault of a referee is a violation of Alabama Law and could result in prosecution.

# POLICY #5: PLAYING UP

Occasionally, players may be assigned to a team in an older age group than the player's current age. These players are assigned to these teams based on the Technical Director, DOC and Coaching Staff's collaboration and professional determination that this player will be a significant impact player on the older team, and that 'playing up' will aid in this player's further development. Other special circumstances may occur that result in players being assigned to an older age group team. The Directors make all final decisions regarding players playing up an age group.

**Purpose: A player's "soccer age" is the term used to describe a player's technical, tactical, psychosocial and athletic abilities in comparison to players of the same chronological age. Typically, a player's "soccer age" is +/- 2 years from their chronological age. In order to facilitate development at the most ideal rate, some players may need to be challenged at a greater level than that of their chronological age group.**

# POLICY #6: TRANSFERS

AFC Mobile reserves the right to move players within teams throughout the year as the Directors Staff deems necessary. Movement of players during the seasonal year is a decision warranting significant consideration of numerous factors, and is not taken lightly, but is always considered in light of producing the most effective developmental environment.

**Purpose:** Occasionally a player may need to move up or down a team to better facilitate their individual development.

# POLICY #7: PARENT- COACHES

It is a general rule that parents are not allowed to coach their own child's team in the competitive program. *Exceptions may be made at younger age groups based on staffing issues that best suit the organization.*

**Purpose:** Parent coaching can cause a conflict of interest within the respective team's environment.



# POLICY #8: OPEN TRAINING

Any child wishing to get additional training outside of their respective team may do so via this Open Training Policy by contacting their coach and the directors to find the most appropriate team or coach to train with. This training is in addition to the training scheduled by a player's respective team.

**Purpose: Purpose: According to a 2009 United States Soccer Federation study, American kids on average spend 2/3rd less time playing soccer than kids in traditionally strong soccer countries. Considering the 10,000 hour rule, which states that world class expertise is the product of an average of 10,000 hours of the right type of training (Deliberate or Deep Practice), it is easy to see where the USA falls short in producing World class soccer players. Therefore, AFC Mobile has an open training policy.**



# POLICY #9: EVALUATION

Evaluations are the process by which AFC Mobile Directors and Staff coaches decide upon the appropriate placement of an individual to accelerate their development. Development only happens when a player is forced to perform at the edge of their abilities where the competition is neither too easy nor too difficult. Placing a child on a team that is too high above their ability would put this child in position to experience failure too often and would be irresponsible of the club.

AFC Mobile holds both Formal Evaluations and informal trials and evaluations. Formal Evaluations occur on dates as indicated by U.S Club Soccer. Informal trials and evaluations occur throughout the year for special situations and circumstances such as a player who is unable to attend tryouts, is injured at the time of tryouts, or arrives in the Mobile area during the season.

# POLICY #10: RESPECT THE CLUB

**AFC Mobile is a public-facing organizations with the goal of teaching our players the life values of hard work, determination, accountability and sportsmanship while promoting soccer in Mobile, the State of Alabama, the Gulf Coast, and the United States. Any behavior that reflects poorly upon the organization, or does not foster a positive and constructive environment within the organization, may result in temporary or indefinite suspension from club activities. This includes activity on external or internal social media by both players and parents.**



# AFC MOBILE COMPETITIVE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

## **Uniform Guidelines:**

All players must wear the AFC Mobile Training Kit for all practices unless instructed otherwise by their respective coach (Teams may do a favorite jersey day). Shin guards must be worn with socks pulled up over the shin guards.

All players must wear the approved AFC Mobile Game Uniform for all games. Coaches and/or managers will direct each team as to which uniform color to wear for each game. Players should always bring both full uniforms to each game in the event that a uniform switch is necessary.

## **Equipment Guidelines:**

Players must bring the following equipment to each training session and game:

1. Soccer shoes – turf, firm ground (cleats) or soft ground (screw in cleats)
2. Shin Guards
3. Water/Gatorade
4. Soccer Ball – properly inflated!
5. AFC Mobile Backpack (optional)

## **Punctuality to training and games:**

Players must attend all team-training sessions and must arrive to training on time, unless an agreement has been reached between the player and coach before hand. If a parent or player knows they will be late to a session or game, they must contact their coach in a timely manner to allow the coach to alter training plans as necessary.

Players must arrive to games at the time each coach requires (usually 30 minutes to 1 hour before the scheduled kickoff time). Tardiness to games may result in forfeiture of playing time.

## **Individual Player Responsibility:**

Players must take personal responsibility for their development as a soccer player. Players wanting to achieve significant and ambitious goals in soccer must accept that they are primarily responsible for the accomplishment of these goals. AFC Mobile serves as a facilitator in the process of achieving individual goals using our Long-Term Soccer Development Model and coaching expertise.

# AFC MOBILE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES

## **Lightning Policy & Procedures:**

The potential for lightning to strike is considerable given Mobile's coastal location. As such, AFC Mobile has the following procedures in place to deal with the threat of lightning:

1. Weather Watchers, those with the authority to remove participants from a field of play in the event inclement weather is spotted, are as follows: Certified Athletic Trainers, whose services are paid for by AFC Mobile, and all AFC Mobile Staff including but not limited to Staff Coaches and Directors.
2. If lightning is spotted or detected to be within 6 miles of a club activity's location, the Weather Watcher will signal to clear the fields. In the event that fields must be cleared, all players and spectators must seek shelter in a roofed building or their car. No one should remain outside in an area where shelter is available.
3. The Weather Watcher(s) will determine when it is safe to return to play and signal as such (30 minutes after the last detected lightning strike).

## **Bullying Policy and Procedures:**

AFC Mobile will not allow bullying or hazing of any kind to take place - by players or parents. Directors and Staff Coaches will handle any incidents of bullying, if they occur, in a timely manner.

Occasionally, incidents occur that coaches are unaware of. In the event that your child experiences an occurrence of bullying and brings it to your attention, bring this matter to the attention of the coach immediately. The coach will then address the issue by discussing the issue with the involved players and parents, if necessary.

The coach will notify the D.O.C. of all allegations. If the allegation is credible, the players involved will be warned that a second incident of bullying is grounds for suspension from the team or dismissal. Parents of all parties involved will be notified of the incidence and of any resolution by the coach.

## **Concussion Policy & Procedures**

Concussion awareness has recently become a more important aspect of Risk Management. If a player experiences any of the following symptoms after a head injury, the player may have a concussion:

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Confusion
- Balance Issues
- Vision Problems
- Sensitivity to light
- Nausea
- Sensitivity to noise

If an Athletic Trainer or coach notices any of the above symptoms in a player, this player will be required to sit out from competition until evaluated by a medical professional.

Alabama State Law now states that an athlete who is thought to have a concussion must be evaluated and released by a physician before returning to play.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

PLEASE PRINT, SIGN AND RETURN AT FIRST OFFICIAL  
PRACTICE



As a member (parent or player) in the AFC Mobile Program, I acknowledge:

That I have read, understand, and will follow the policies, procedures, and guidelines set forth in the AFC Mobile Member Handbook, Fall 2022 – Spring 2023.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Player Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_