

NORTHWEST AVALANCHE LACROSSE STUDENT ATHLETE & PARENT HANDBOOK

Mission of Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse

Our mission is to provide a high quality, positive experience for athletes at all ability levels to participate in high school lacrosse through shared values of sportsmanship and teamwork, while honoring the spirit of the game.

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to establish rules, procedures, policies, and philosophy as it pertains to Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse's Activities Program.

Equal Opportunity Statement

Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse ("NAL") will make equal playing opportunities available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, ethnicity, language barrier, religious belief, physical or mental handicap or disability, economic or social condition, or actual or potential marital or parental status, or, in accordance with binding guidance of the Federal Office of Civil Rights regarding the scope of Title IX's sex discrimination prohibition, gender identity, sexual orientation, or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity.

Requirements to Participate:

All students participating in extracurricular activities must have the following prior to the first practice:

1. A required physical documented on the official Montana High School Association Physical Form
2. A Consent Form Permission to Participate/Assumption of Risk/Media Release
3. A Concussion Education and Compliance form signed by the student-athlete and parent
4. An up-to-date USA Lacrosse Number valid through June 1st

STUDENT Requirement

The student must be enrolled in a physical school and in physical attendance or actively participating in an equivocal school online or home school. It is the student's responsibility to make sure his or her current academic schedule and grades are satisfactory and to reproduce them if requested by NAL.

ACTIVITY FEES

All players who participate in Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse are required to pay a registration fee and ensure they are properly equipped for participation in the sport. Because of the nature of a club sport, additional travel expenses will be required throughout the season. If financial hardship keeps a player from eligibility, Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse offers scholarships for those athletes that need financial support.

ATTENDANCE

If a player has a recurring attendance problem, the Head Coach/Board will meet and discuss proper disciplinary action. If a student-athlete is going to miss practice, the student must communicate with the coach prior to the absence.

Activity Season

Formally begins 1-week prior to the first scheduled MHSLA contest. Indoor practices will be offered outside of the outdoor activity season and are strongly encouraged for player and team development. If a player is unable to attend, they should alert the Head Coach. An important part of indoor practice is grading players for upcoming team placements.

Team Tryout Information:

If a player is unable to make scheduled indoor practices, other accommodations need to be made with the coaching staff. Team selection will be posted a minimum of 1 week prior to the first MHSLA game weekend. Players will be assigned to one of three team categories regardless of graduating high school class: Varsity, JV Swing, or JV. Changes to the Varsity roster must be reported to the MHSLA per their posted annual guidelines.

Varsity MT High School Lacrosse:

Coaches will determine the number of players in tryouts that are able to compete and win at the varsity level along with team positional needs. Coaches will build the original Varsity roster with the expectation that these players can contribute to each game and improve the team. Original rostered players will only be the strongest players that are expected to enhance the team and are very unlikely to play JV level lacrosse in the current season. Players may move from Varsity to JV based on coaches' direction.

Swing Team, Jr. Varsity MT High School Lacrosse:

Optional player classification if coaching staff chooses to use this category. Players who will start the season on the JV team and may have the opportunity to fill-in on the Varsity roster as team needs arise determined by the coaching staff. This may also include Seniors who will have the option to support the Varsity team in the MT State Playoff weekend.

Jr. Varsity MT High School Lacrosse:

Competitive high school lacrosse with a focus on total player and program development to play at the Varsity level in future seasons.

Playing Time:

Playing time is earned and field decisions are made by the coaching staff with a *team-first mentality*, meaning that the collective success of the team is the primary objective. Players may be asked to fulfill various positional roles on the field to equip the team for improved overall success.

- Varsity is competitive lacrosse, and effort will be made to have each player contribute to each game. In competitive games, some players may not check into the game.

- JV is a developmental league. Each player should expect playing time in each regular season game as deemed by the JV coaching staff.

If the player or parent's primary objective or concern is playing time, request to be rostered on the JV team prior to the start of the season. If a JV team does not exist and during coach-player roster meetings a player learns their game time will be limited in competitive games and this is of concern, a full refund can be requested up to 1-week after this meeting solely for this reason.

Player Varsity Letter Pin

Players who adhere to team rules and play in a minimum of two Varsity contests are eligible for a varsity letter pin. The athlete must complete the entire season through the MT State Tournament. Injured players who continue to contribute to the team can still earn a letter pin with regular practice attendance. Unique scenarios or situations are ultimately determined by the head coach.

Coaches Role & Responsibilities

Coaches will complete the USA Lacrosse Certification Bronze Level. Coaches are encouraged to progress to Silver, Gold, or Platinum certification levels in subsequent years. Coaches must alert the club Communications Director of any Varsity rostering changes in compliance with the MHSLA annual guidelines.

College Recruiting

Coaches are encouraged to promote their athletes for scholarships whenever possible. Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse encourages parents to become actively involved in this process where they can develop their students' resume, highlight film, and letters of interest. It is recommended to do this early in the junior year. Students must also be aware of NCAA and NAIA requirements.

Parent Meeting

Parents/guardians and players participating in an activity are required to attend an informational meeting at the beginning of the season. Key information will be shared for the success of your player in Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse.

Senior Night

Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse will host an annual game during the season. This game will celebrate seniors who participate in our program.

Conflict Resolution 5-step Communication Process

Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse has a 5-step process of communication to use in resolving conflicts. Communication in this order helps to ensure strong relationships and trust amongst all who are involved in resolving problems. The process is as follows:

1. The 24-hour rule applies to all conflict resolution steps.

2. The player requests to meet with the coach.
3. The player meets with the coach. (If a student is uncomfortable meeting with the coach by himself or herself, a varsity captain can assist in starting the dialogue with the coach. The captain's role in the communication process will end at this step.)
4. The player and parent meet with the coach.
5. The player, parent, and coach meet with board member (Coach's Liaison, Secretary, Vice President, President)

Ejection Rule

If a player, coach, or volunteer is ejected from an MHSLA competition for unsportsmanlike conduct, they will not participate for the remainder of the event or weekend and will be suspended for the next regularly scheduled or rescheduled game. A second violation will result in a four-game suspension. While participating for Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse, any ejection requires a letter of apology to the official, team, and board before the next weekly contest. If the ejection occurred at the end of the season, the letter must be written prior to the activity's awards night.

ACTIVITY CODE OF ETHICS

IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN LEAGUE ACTIVITIES, I PLEDGE TO:

- Honor the game by showing respect for all teammates, coaches, and referees.
- Honor the game by learning and upholding the rules of lacrosse.
- Honor the game by adhering to the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play.
- Honor the game by winning with grace, losing with dignity, and using respectful language to opposing coaches, players, and officials.

IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN LEAGUE ACTIVITIES, I PLEDGE NOT TO:

- Dishonor the game by use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.
- Dishonor the game by fighting or threatening an opposing player, coach, or game official.

Failure to abide by the code of ethics may result in your removal from the event, activity, and/or disciplinary action. The board of directors will investigate submitted formal reports, complaints, and citations. Dishonorable actions (final 2 listed above) will be subject to the following minimum consequences:

FIRST OFFENSE:

1. Immediate suspension from participation for five (5) calendar days from date of verification of infraction. Players are encouraged to self-report to expedite the return to play timeline.
2. To remain eligible, a player must have returned to practice with the team, and not have competed in two (2) game weekends and complete a formal team apology process deemed by the head coach.

SECOND OFFENSE:

1. Expulsion from the current season of practice & play. Only the Board can exclude a high school player from participation.

Criminal Offense:

Any criminal behavior reported to the club may result in a player's removal from club activity for an amount of time judged appropriate by the board of directors. A student who is declared ineligible under this policy retains his/her due process rights and is entitled to a hearing before the board of directors.

Hazing & Policy

Hazing of Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse players is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. "Hazing" includes but is not limited to any act that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a player or member for the purpose of initiation or as a condition or precondition of attaining membership in or affiliation with any sponsored activity or other such activities intended to degrade or humiliate. If hazing has occurred, athletes and/or parents are directed to confide with their coach/board member, and an investigation will be initiated. Consequences for the hazing of athletes could be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited. Any coach, volunteer, or athlete engages in sexual harassment whenever that individual makes unwelcome advances, requests sexual favors, or engages in other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that denies benefits or opportunities, interferes with the athlete's environment, or is intimidating, hostile or offensive.

Students who believe that they have been sexually harassed or intimidated should consult a coach or board member who will assist them in the complaint process. Coaches or board members who knowingly condone or fail to report to the board or assist an athlete or member to take action to remediate such behavior of sexual harassment or intimidation may themselves be subject to discipline. Consequences for sexual harassment could be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

Social Media Policy

Everything that is posted on any social media outlet should be considered information that is out of one's control once it is posted. It is understood that third parties including media, faculty, future employers, future schools, and coaches could easily access profiles and view all personal information. If postings or messages are inappropriate this could be detrimental at multiple levels. The use of social media by a player or

portrayal of a player or student in social media considered to be “unbecoming” may result in discipline including suspension or removal from the activity, group, leadership position or team.

Accident Reporting

All injuries are to be reported immediately to the coach. The coach will track injuries and communicate with coaches, athletes, and parents when necessary.

Assumption of Risk

The coach/volunteers/board members, any other member of Northwest Avalanche Lacrosse, will not be held liable or responsible in case of an accident incurred during practice, games, tournaments, etc. Each parent or guardian will be responsible to sign an “assumption of risk” statement indicating that the parents/guardians assume all risks for injuries resulting from such participation.

Ill Athletes

If a student-athlete is going to miss practice, the student must communicate with the coach/advisor prior to the absence through a phone call or email.

Injured Athletes

Injured athletes are expected to attend practice if they are cleared to do so and are not undergoing related treatment or rehabilitation.

Return to Activity/Play. If for any reason a student has been removed from activity/play due to illness, injury or surgery by a medical provider, the student may not return to activity/play without written consent from the provider. The written consent will be provided to the coach.

CONCUSSION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Concussions are defined as mild traumatic brain injuries. Concussions are usually associated with a blow to the head and can occur in athletics. As more research is done on head injuries, the athletic community is taking more precautions to prevent them and more vigilance to treat them. Reference www.cdc.gov/headsup for additional resources if a concussion is suspected and be an active participant in your player’s care and return to play protocol.

Concussion Evaluation:

An athlete with a suspected concussion must be removed from play immediately. If only coaches are present the athlete will NOT be returned to play that day. A medical practitioner should be notified immediately to evaluate the athlete. If the medical practitioner diagnoses the athlete with a concussion of any degree, the athlete will not return to play that day, or until the medical practitioner releases the athlete to play. If the medical practitioner feels the concussion is life threatening, the athlete will be transported either by ambulance or parent to the hospital emergency room. If the medical practitioner

does not immediately refer the athlete to a physician, then the parent is responsible to contact their medical provider for consultation.

In the absence of a certified medical practitioner, the supervising coach will be responsible to remove the athlete from play, contact a parent and refer to a medical provider if necessary. Once symptom free and released by their medical provider the athlete will begin a graduated progression before returning to sport.

6-Step Return to Play Progression; most up-to-date information on www.cdc.com/headsup

After a concussion, an athlete should only return to sports practices with the approval and under the supervision of their healthcare provider. Each step typically takes a minimum of 24 hours. It is important for an athlete's parent(s) and coach(es) to watch for concussion symptoms after each day's return to sports progression activity.

An athlete should only move to the next step if they do not have any new symptoms at the current step. If an athlete's symptoms come back or if he or she gets new symptoms, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing too hard. The athlete should stop these activities and the athlete's medical provider should be contacted. After more rest and no concussion symptoms, the athlete can start at the previous step.

Step 1: Back to regular activities (school)

Step 2: Light aerobic activity

Step 3: Moderate activity

Step 4: Heavy, non-contact activity

Step 5: Practice & full contact

Step 6: Competition