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EPIC UNITED
& THE EPIC FAMILY
THOUGHTS ON...

TEAM PLACEMENT: WHAT SETS EPIC APART

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND WHY WE DO
WHAT WE DO AND WHY IT'S BETTER THAN
OTHER OPTIONS

The "Thoughts on" series is a series of papers designed to supply Epic family members (and potential Epic family members) with our thoughts on various topics. There are exceptions to many rules, so if Epic is "for" or "against" a topic, that does not mean that it's members cannot or must participate or that there is not an exception for a specific player. These are general guidelines and are a reflection of the opinions of the Epic Administration in most scenarios. Generally speaking Epic United refers to the entire Epic family (Epic, Altitude, and Diamond Elite)

I. Team Placement: The big myth for all clubs

- a. Most people think that the team you get placed on is the team that you will play on. Ironically, this is not exactly the case. I have never encountered any club anywhere that guarantees you will not be moved to a different team & has a playing time guarantee. Most clubs include in their paperwork that they reserve the right to move you to a different team at their discretion. This means that technically, all clubs are the same in this area: regardless of what you are told at tryouts, you have no team guarantee.

II. Different types of club tryouts

- a. Traditionally, there are 2 different options that most clubs use:
 - i. You made this specific team (remember it doesn't really mean that because they reserve the right to move you)
 - ii. You made the club and team placement will be decided later
- b. Most clubs do not guarantee a team size & most clubs do not guarantee playing time. They will say something that sounds good like, "players earn their playing time" which is code for 'you may not play at all.'
- c. Obstacles – the obstacles are that most tryouts occur on the same day, so parents want a quick answer; however, some players will miss the tryout due to school or other reasons. (players cannot tryout while they are in their high school season)

III. Problems with traditional methods

- a. For clubs who are "you made the team" I would ask the following questions:
 - i. What if my daughter had a really great tryout & once practices start we find out she's not consistently as she looked today (or the other way around)
 - ii. What if a better setter shows up tomorrow at a makeup tryout for my daughter's team. Will you replace the current setter with a better one or tell

the better one “no, we already have a setter?” – Then ask what if this occurs to my daughter.

- iii. If you’re open minded, you see the conundrum that clubs are put into.

Most ‘you’re on this team’ clubs will solve this problem by extending their team size and having a girl sit on the bench for the majority of the year. If a better player shows up or if a girl is not as good as her tryout showed, then a girl who was promised the team, now becomes the backup who rarely plays. The club just extends its team size to 11, 12, 13, 14. This is not acceptable to Epic United.

- b. The problem with clubs who simply say “you made the club.”

- i. Often clubs may have 3 or 4 teams at an age group and these teams sometimes vary widely in skill level. The club probably has an idea where the player will end up, but does not relay this information to the parent. Epic believes that this is intentionally withholding information and there is a better way.

- c. What parents want from tryouts does not exist

- i. Parents want clubs to tell them exactly what team they are on at tryouts as well as who is on it. Parents want the placement to be guaranteed, but want other players replaced if a better player shows up. They also want to be guaranteed that their child will play a lot but if other players don’t work hard or progress, they should not play or get moved off the team.

IV. The Epic Philosophy (not perfect but best of both worlds)

- a. Epic believes that the key to a great season is a well-constructed team and having players who fit on the team well and who’s success affects the team’s ability to be successful.

- i. We care about positions – too many of 1 position is a recipe for disaster

- ii. We care about skill level – players who are far ahead of the rest of their team in every aspect should be on a different team to maximize their improvement level
 - iii. We care about players who do not have a role on the team – Part of a player’s game must be strong enough to contribute in a positive way to the team’s success. Otherwise, she will lose confidence & aggressiveness knowing when her teammates play the ball the team will have more success.
 - iv. We care about team size, commitment level, and much more.
- b. For these reasons, Epic believes it is of the utmost importance to make sure teams are well constructed. We are loyal to the kids who have played with us, but that loyalty means that we have to work very hard to get them appropriately placed. We welcome new kids trying out for our club, but to welcome them we need to make sure they are well placed.

V. The Epic Process

- a. First step – Tryouts
 - i. There is an eastern & a western tryout for each age group. Players may but do not have to attend both. Players hoping for Epic teams often attend both.
 - ii. During the tryout, we will evaluate, skills, athleticism, and game play. EVERY player in the gym will be seen by multiple coaches
 - iii. From tryouts you will get told a TEAM TYPE or a CATEGORY. You will be told whatever we believe at the time. More than 99% of players end up playing in the team type and category or stronger than what they are told at this point.
 - iv. Makeup tryouts – There are usually 1 or 2 makeup tryouts. Players from these tryouts usually get told they did or did not make the club. Since they

are not with the other players, we have less insight into their placements.

Sometimes all spots are already given away. We strongly recommend that players attend to one of our two actual tryouts.

- b. Step 2: Accept or decline your spot in the club based on the information given
- c. Step 3: Team placement practices
 - i. In November, we have 3 practices for players to be evaluated by coaches. Only players who are playing for the club and within a certain group (ie Altitude 14 Travel & travel elite) will be practicing together. The coaches in the age group as well as an AGC will evaluate players as we set teams.
 - ii. After 3 practices are completed players will be set on a team
- d. Step 4: Soft placement
 - i. teams will practice together during this soft placement process. Less than 1% of players will move to a different team during this process and occurs only if team coaches decide after seeing practices that there is a better fit.
- e. Step 5 final teams.
 - i. By January the teams become final, but Epic still reserves the right to change players. Currently less than 0.1% of players have moved once this time begins.

VI. Example

- a. Suzie tries out for u14
- b. Suzie is told she made the club and suggested she would likely be on an Altitude 14 travel plus/travel elite team. Traditional u14 placements are:
 - i. Likely Epic
 - ii. Altitude (or DEVA) travel plus/travel elite
 - iii. Altitude (or DEVA) travel
 - iv. Altitude (or DEVA) travel lite

- v. Sorry you did not make a team
- c. Suzie accepts the offer and knows that travel plus/travel elite means that she will most likely play on Altitude 14 Red (~33% chance) or Altitude 14 Black (about 65% chance). She also knows her practice locations and a rough tournament schedule.
- d. After the three placement practices, Suzie gets placed on Altitude 14 Black. She also gets her exact practice and tournament schedule at this point.

VII. **Conclusion:**

- a. We are not perfect; however, our tryout is known for being the best, most organized, most thorough tryout for any club. I have never heard of a club taking so much care and attention in getting the team placement done correctly. Players and parents can be assured they will be placed on the most appropriate team and they know that it will be a team that can support their development as well as one that will allow them to contribute the team's successes.