

East Ridge Athletic Association (ERAA) Basketball Traveling Program Policies

This document contains the rules the East Ridge Athletic Association (ERAA) Basketball follows in administering its traveling program. If situations arise that are not outlined within this document, the ERAA Basketball Board will make decisions it believes are in the **best interest of the ERAA basketball community**.

Mission Statement:

ERAA Basketball is a volunteer, non-profit organization providing youth basketball programs for the East Ridge community as part of the overall East Ridge Athletic Association. Our basketball programs provide our youth an opportunity to compete in a safe environment that stresses development as teammates and individuals. We believe in creating and upholding a culture that embraces great sportsmanship, teamwork, integrity, responsibility, positivity, and a strong work ethic. We also believe basketball is a fun game, and we want to always keep that in mind while developing skills that will serve our youth well on and off the court. Winning will be secondary to learning the game and having fun.

Philosophy:

We believe that basketball is a fun game and that enjoying it is essential for a successful youth basketball program. While we are committed to developing our players, teams, and program, we will not lose sight of the need for enjoyment of the game of basketball.

Accepting roles and making individual sacrifices are important. It should be clearly understood that each player's skill level, athletic ability, and attitude will determine the type of role he/she may play.

All players will contribute to the team's success and will be treated with respect. In order for our teams to reach their potential, we must have players that are willing to work together. Friendships that develop from this basketball experience will endure long after the season ends.

Eligibility for Participation in ERAA Basketball

Players must reside in or attend school within the East Ridge High School attendance boundary in order to participate in ERAA Travel Basketball.

General Program Expectations:

Coaches Guidelines:

The following is a list of guidelines that all coaches are expected to follow.

- The best way to produce a quality team is by using a positive attitude, positive communication, and positive feedback to players. ERAA coaches will strive to avoid negative criticism of players, parents, and officials. Constructive criticism is always necessary for players to improve while negative feedback makes for negative players. Coaches are expected to follow the *ERAA Coaches' Code of Conduct* and pass a background check.

Coaches' Code of Conduct: "I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of any personal desire to win. I will remember to treat each player as an individual. I will do my very best to provide a safe playing situation for my players to succeed. I promise to review and practice the necessary first-aid principles needed to treat injuries to my players. I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players. I will ensure that I am knowledgeable in the rules of basketball, and I will teach these rules to my Players. I will follow the playing time policies established by ERAA Basketball."

ERAA Basketball practices are open to viewing by parents/guardians of the players, provided the parents/guardians observe in a respectful manner and do not interfere with the instruction being provided by the coaches. Exceptions to this policy will only be made with the approval of both (i) the Director of ERAA Basketball Director and (ii) the Traveling Coordinator (for travel teams) or the In-House Coordinator (for in-house teams).

- All ERAA coaches (head and assistant) are required to complete a concussion training program, in accordance with the laws of the state of Minnesota. ERAA Basketball will provide this training for the coaches.
- Players need and enjoy discipline in themselves and their teammates. Do not allow them to criticize each other, coaches, or officials. Do not allow profanity, arguments, or negative behaviors to happen. Expect your players to be the most disciplined team. Demand that they dress, walk, and talk with class both on and off the court. The most important thing a player will learn is how to compete and act with integrity. This lesson is far more important than wins or losses.
- A successful coach is one that is a responsible teacher, leader, and organizer. Please take the time to plan your team's strategy as well as how you approach each interaction with your players.

- A successful coach is one who focuses more on teaching than on winning. They also teach sportsmanship, self-control, self-discipline, game preparation, strategy, and respect for self and others. While winning is a goal, these other lessons are more important.
- A successful coach is a good communicator to both players and parents. The expectation is that coaches inform parents about the team's happenings. Every coach is expected to have a players/parents/coaches meeting before the start of the season, and during the season if necessary.
- A successful coach is a good role model. You, your players, and the parents of your players should all follow the sportsmanship guidelines.
- A successful coach makes each player feel special regardless of his or her role in the program. Please try to make each athlete feel as if his or her role is important to the team. Let each player know his/her role and how it fits into the overall team picture.

Parent Guidelines:

Welcome to ERAA! We hope your experience is filled with learning and enjoyment. The following is information you may find helpful as you and your child participate in our program.

- The cost of participation goes beyond the registration fee that pays for gym time, tournaments, etc. Additional expenses may include traveling, hotel lodging, meals, and tournament gate entry fees. We encourage parents to attend and/or take part in as many games and practices as possible. It means a lot to your child to have you watch them play.
- We ask that parents be respectful of schedules for games, practices, and tournaments. Coaches will inform you as early as possible of any schedule changes but sometimes, especially in tournaments, coaches get information at the last minute.
- We ask parents to help in assisting your child's timely arrival and timely departure from games and practices. The coaches cannot leave until all players have been picked up. Parents, please inform your child's coach directly if they will not attend a game or practice.
- ERAA has established playing guidelines, at every age, gender, and level. Each athlete should be given fair playing time in accordance with the guidelines for their age group. In order to clarify this position for both the parents and coaches, the ERAA Board has established the playing guidelines found in the Team Expectation Section.
- Parents are expected to follow *ERAA Basketball Parents' Code of Conduct*.

Parents' Code of Conduct: "I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, and other youth sports events. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of any personal desire to win. I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy manner. I will support the coaches and officials working with my child to provide a positive, enjoyable experience for all. I will demand my child is free from drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. I will remind my child to have fun!"

- Encouragement: We feel it is very important to encourage effort, energy and coachability in the ERAA program. There are many ways to affect the game, and the players who improve the most throughout the season take coaching very well and affect the game in many ways outside of scoring points. Think about your pre/in/post game interactions with your child and how these interactions tie into the team concept.
- Behavior toward officials: Most of the officials are being paid very nominally and are on their feet for 5+ hours / day. As the popularity of youth sports expands the demand for officials will only grow and nationwide there is already a shortage. Throughout the season your team will end up seeing the same officials multiple times. We need to respect the work that they are doing and the calls that they make as the final judgement. Your behavior toward officiating affects how your son or daughter behaves as well and we need your help and participation in enforcing our "Players Code of Conduct.
- **Parents/Guardians are expected to participate in ERAA fundraising as a volunteer at our annual tournament. There is a requirement of one dibs shift per travel player, with a maximum of two total dibs shifts per family. A 'dibs shift' is often, but not always, a 4 hour long volunteer shift during our tournament. If no volunteer shift is worked on behalf of a player, that family will be charged \$200.**
- The goal of ERAA is to provide a competitive and fun experience for each player. Coaches will strive to lead a classy, hard-working, competitive team of players who love the game.

Player Guidelines:

Welcome to ERAA! This basketball season will be an exciting experience. ERAA is committed to being one of the top youth basketball programs in Minnesota, and we are glad to have you with us! Please read and follow each of the guidelines below. Understanding and following these guidelines will help you to have a successful and fun season.

- Each player is expected to prepare mentally and physically for each game and practice.

- During a game, players should either be playing in the game or on the team bench at all times. Conversations with non-players and parents should be avoided during the game. The job of all players, when not in the game, is to watch the game, cheer on your teammates, and learn from other players.
- All players are asked to show respect for others, including opposing players, coaches, parents, and officials. Make sure all comments are positive. Players are expected to follow the *ERAA Basketball Players' Code of Conduct*.

Players' Code of Conduct: "I will do my best at all practices and during all games. I will listen to my coaches closely as they have my best interests in mind. I will practice good sportsmanship by treating all players, coaches, officials, and parents with respect. I will do my best to help my parents get me to practices and games on time. I will keep my equipment and the equipment of the team in good condition by using it properly. I understand that improvement comes from practice. I will play to have fun!"

- Players are encouraged to ask questions of coaches whenever they do not understand a play, rule, or strategy. This inquisitive attitude will help players develop an understanding for the game. (Be sure to ask questions when appropriate during the game or after the game.)
- **Players are expected to be on time for all practices and games.** Teams warm up prior to the game. Therefore players must plan to be at the game facility early- typically 30 minutes before the scheduled game time. See the Player Attendance Policy.
- Players are encouraged to practice on their own. Have your parents or a sibling help you, or call a teammate to work out with you.
- Team commitment is very important. ***Basketball is a team game and no one player is more important than the rest.*** Each player has a role and must work to do their job to the best of his/her ability. Coaches' decisions are based on what's best for the whole team. On the court, always be a team player, and support your teammates by both word and action.
- A classy team is a hustling team. Players should give maximum focus and effort in every practice and game. Each player is expected to play to the best of his/her ability at all times.
- To maximize player safety, no jewelry can be worn when in uniform.
- No ERAA player is permitted to participate (roster) on two traveling squads concurrently in the same season. The only exception would be movement between teams within the ERAA program, which may happen in extenuating circumstances, such as a team being in need of substitute players due to injuries. Such player movement would require the approval of the Traveling Coordinator.

- Any player whose continued participation is deemed detrimental to the welfare of the association may be removed from the team upon a majority vote of the ERAA Board. When the board has an even number of members, the head coach of the player's team serves as a tie-breaking vote in the event of a tie.
- All players are required to line up and congratulate their opponents after the game.
- If you are in between games at a tournament and another ERAA team is playing, it is great to go watch and cheer on your fellow Raptors. Do not roam around or run through the host school hallways.

Team Expectations:

3rd- 6th Grades:

The 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grade program is designed to develop each player's skills by providing an opportunity to compete against players of similar abilities. The players will be separated into teams based on their current ability (A, B, or C). Coaches are expected to provide players at these levels with approximately equal playing time. Occasionally circumstances will arise that will lead to discrepancies in playing time for *an individual game*- typically player injury/illness and/or foul trouble. However, over time, every player on a team should receive substantial and approximately equal playing time. Exceptions to this playing time policy can be made when a player misses a significant number of team practices/games and/or exhibits a poor attitude.

7th - 8th Grades:

The 7th- 8th grade program is designed to develop each player's skills by providing an opportunity to compete against players of similar abilities. The players will be separated into teams based on their current ability (A, B, or C). Coaches of the 7th and 8th grade teams are not required to give all of the players approximately equal playing time. The 7th-8th grade teams are earned playing time teams. Earned playing time is determined by **effort, attitude, skills/results, and participation** in all practices and games.

Team Player & Team Coach Selections:

- It is understood that youth from 3rd through 8th grade are at a stage of rapid development and growth (mentally, physically, emotionally, and in basketball skills). We also understand that families move into and out of communities. Tryouts are therefore conducted every year to provide all players an opportunity to earn a spot on a travel team. The tryout process is designed to provide every player with adequate time to demonstrate his or her full abilities.
- The ERAA Basketball program will strive to maximize the number of players who are able to participate in the travel program at each age and gender level. However, it is still possible that some players participating in tryouts will not be placed on a travel team. The primary reasons for not being placed on a travel team are:
 - A player is not able to demonstrate a ‘travel-ready’ proficiency in the game of basketball. **‘Travel-ready’ proficiency will be determined by evaluators selected by the ERAA Basketball board, in consultation with the Traveling Coordinator.** If a player is not considered ‘travel-ready,’ we will recommend that player participate in our In-House program. We believe that the In-House program will provide such players a better opportunity to enjoy the game of basketball and to develop their basketball skills.
 - The number of potential players is not readily divided into 8-10 players per team, which is the target for ERAA teams.
 - ERAA is unable to accommodate additional travel teams due to facilities constraints.
- A Coach Selection Committee will be appointed by each gender’s Traveling Coordinator. These committees will interview coaching candidates. The selection committees will be made up of ERAA Basketball Board members and/or additional individuals appointed by the Traveling Coordinator.
- Each coaching candidate will submit an application and agree to a background check prior to his or her interview. The Coach Selection Committees will use information obtained from the application, the background check, and the interview to select coaches. Selection criteria will include experience, knowledge of the game, past involvement, and positive attitude.

Tryouts:

There is a standardized system used to select traveling teams. Players will be evaluated and ranked based upon their performance in a series of drills and scrimmages. ERAA Basketball will organize and conduct these drills and scrimmages. ERAA Basketball will select a group of evaluators who will, based upon performance in drills and scrimmages: (i) determine whether each player demonstrates ‘travel-ready’ proficiency; (2) rank the ‘travel-ready’ players. Evaluators could include members of the East Ridge High School coaching staffs, individuals from outside the program who are deemed to have sufficient

knowledge of the game, and individuals from the ERAA program. Note that individuals from within ERAA will not be allowed to evaluate players who are in the same grade level as one of their children or another close relative.

Each grade will have its own tryout time, with the exception of 4th grade and younger. All players at these younger grade levels will tryout at the same time. These grades all tryout together, as a 3rd grade team would be playing in a lot of 4th grade tournaments, and we need to see how these players perform against older competition. ERAA Basketball would decide, based upon the results of the tryouts, whether we would field a separate 3rd grade team or mix the 'travel-ready' 3rd grade players in with the 4th grade players (see policy on playing up outlined below). We would typically field a 3rd grade team provided there are enough 'travel-ready' 3rd grade players.

All potential players must participate in the tryout process to be selected for a position on a team. Approved exceptions (illness/injury/out of town) will ONLY be granted if notification is made to the Traveling Coordinator PRIOR to the scheduled tryout date(s). Such exceptions are granted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of each gender's Traveling Coordinator.

In order for an ill/injured/out of town player to make a traveling team, careful consideration about the player's ability, had he or she been able to participate, will be used. Information which will be used to determine an injured/ill player's ability will include, but not be limited to: discussions with last year's coaches, discussions with offseason clinicians, and discussions with this year's coaches. Individual tryout/workout sessions may also be used to evaluate a player who is not able to participate in the main tryout session. After the Traveling Coordinator has communicated with the above-mentioned individuals and/or conducted an individual workout, a final decision will be made about the player's ability.

If there is no information regarding an injured player, then the player will not be placed on a traveling squad, but will be encouraged to participate in the In-House program.

Players who participate in tryouts and are placed on a travel team are expected to honor their commitment to participate on that team. It is extremely disruptive to ERAA Basketball when players indicate their desire to participate on a travel team and subsequently back out of that commitment, as it can potentially leave a team with too few players. Given this disruption, no refunds will be given to players who leave the program following tryouts.

Upon completion of tryouts and the ranking of players, the following process/ guidelines will be used to finalize roster selection:

- ERAA will strive to have each traveling team comprise 8-10 players. The number on each team will depend on the total number of players who are rated as 'travel-ready' by the evaluators, and on the number of players considered ready to succeed at each competition level (A,B, or C). For example, if we have 30 players at a grade we will not automatically make 3 teams of 10 players.

- The ERAA Basketball Director and the appropriate gender Traveling Coordinator will oversee the team selection process. If either of these individuals has a child participating in a certain grade, that board member will recuse himself or herself from the team selection room until after the child is placed on a team. Exception: if the Basketball Director or Traveling Coordinator is the coach of the team, they are allowed to participate in the team selection process.
- The top 5 players as determined by the evaluators are automatically placed on the A team.
- The Coach Selection Committee will then name the coach of the A team. If a coaching candidate is affiliated with a player, that player needs to be ranked 1-12 in order for the coach to be considered as a candidate for coaching the A team. Typically “affiliated” means the son or daughter of the coaching candidate, but it could also be another relative or family friend. If the player affiliated with the head coach is ranked 6-12, that player will be added to the A team, along with the players ranked 1-5.
- The A team coach will select players to fill out the roster. The coach must make his/her selections from amongst players ranked in the top 12. The total number of players on the A team will generally be 8-10, and will be determined by the ERAA Traveling Coordinator in consultation with the Evaluators.
- Following selection of the A team, the next 5 highest rated players will be automatically placed on the B team. The B coach is then selected by the Coach Selection Committee. If the coach is affiliated with a player, that player needs to be ranked amongst the top 12 remaining players in order for the coach to be considered as a candidate for coaching the B team. The B coach then selects players to fill out the B team roster, using a process analogous to what is described above for the A team.
- The aforementioned player and coach selection process will continue until all A, B, and C rosters are filled. If there is no coach for a team at the time of team selection, the Traveling Coordinator will work with the Evaluators to select a team, using the rankings and positional considerations. Note that when ERAA Basketball fields multiple teams at a given level (e.g., 2 C teams), we reserve the right to divide up the players within the level as we see fit. Typically, we would field either: (i) a ‘high’ and a ‘low’ team, formed by following the team selection procedure outlined above, or; (ii) two approximately equal teams.
- **Policy for twins/ siblings in the same grade.** The ERAA Basketball board believes that siblings in the same grade should be treated in the same manner as siblings in different grades. Namely, each sibling is evaluated and treated as an individual. Siblings in the same grade will not automatically be placed on the same team. The ERAA Basketball board believes this policy is the fairest to all participants in the travel program.
- **Policy on ‘playing up’ to a higher grade.** 4th-7th grade athletes attempting to ‘play up’ to a higher grade need to obtain, via email, the approval of the ERAA Basketball Director and the

appropriate gender ERAA Basketball Traveling Coordinator at least 2 weeks prior to tryouts in order to be eligible to try out for the higher grade level.

- **Eligibility for ‘playing up’ on Boys 4th-8th grade and Girls 5th-8th grade teams.** Players may only ‘play up’ on a higher grade’s A team if the player is ranked amongst the top 3 players at the higher grade level, as determined by the Evaluators. Players ranked outside the top 3 would be placed at their current grade level. Players interested in playing up should attend both the tryout session for their own grade, and the session for the higher grade.
- **Eligibility for ‘playing up’ on Boys 3rd Grade Team.** Since there is not a 2nd grade boys travel team, this ‘playing up’ policy differs from the policy for the boys 4th-8th grade teams.

If we field Boys 3rd grade team. A 2nd grade or younger player who rates amongst the top 3 players will automatically be placed on the 3rd grade travel team. A 2nd grade or younger player who is rated as ‘travel-ready’, but not in the top 3, may play on the 3rd grade travel team provided that the younger player is NOT displacing a ‘travel-ready’ 3rd grader. For example, if there are 11 ‘travel-ready’ players, and the only 2nd grader is rated 8th, a 3rd grade player will not be cut to place a 2nd grader on the team.

If we do NOT field Boys 3rd grade team. This situation would apply if we did not have enough ‘travel-ready’ 3rd grade players to form a team. A 3rd grade or younger player is eligible to play on a 4th grade travel team if the player is rated as ‘travel-ready’ provided that the younger player is NOT causing a ‘travel-ready’ 4th grader to be redirected to the in-house program. Note that the younger player is only eligible for the 4A team if he rates in the top 3. Younger players rated below #3 would be placed on the B or C team as per their ranking.

- **Eligibility for ‘playing up’ on Girls 4th grade team.** Since there is no 3rd grade travel team, this ‘playing up’ policy differs from the policy for the 5th-8th grade teams. A 3rd grade or younger player who rates amongst the top 3 players will automatically be placed on the 4th grade travel team. A 3rd grade or younger player who is rated as ‘travel-ready’ but not in the top 3 may play on the 4th grade travel team, provided that younger player is NOT causing a ‘travel-ready’ 4th grader to be redirected to the in-house program. For example, if there are 11 ‘travel-ready’ players, and the only 3rd grader is rated 8th, a 4th grade player will not be cut to place a 3rd grader on the team.

Upon the completion of tryouts and team selection, team rosters will be posted on the ERAA basketball web site as soon as possible. Typically rosters will appear on the website within 3-4 days of the completion of the tryouts.

- **48 hour rule.** We will not answer any questions regarding the placement of players on teams for 48 hours following the announcement of team rosters.

Player Attendance Policy:

Players are expected to attend and be on time to all practices and tournament games unless their Head Coach has excused them. Whether or not an absence is excused is at the discretion of the Head Coach for that team. We want the player to be dedicated to his/her team and teammates. We understand that there can be instances where a player has to miss a practice or a game. We also want the player to be responsible and notify his/her coaches of an upcoming situation in a timely manner so the coach can make the necessary adjustments.

All grade levels:

- **Coaches are to be notified in advance of any absences.**
- Attendance at practices is mandatory.
- Attendance at all games is mandatory.

Unexcused absences can include:

- Coach not notified in a timely manner.
- Absences not approved in advance by the Head Coach.
- Absences due to conflicts with other sports or non-school/church related activities.
- Not arriving to practices or games at the time specified by the Head Coach

Excused absences can include:

- Absence due to injury or illness of player.
- Absences due to serious illness or death of family member.
- Absences due to scheduled school or church activities. Absences due to special school assignments.

Consequences of unexcused absences:

The Head Coach will have discretion to enforce consequences for unexcused absences as he/she sees fit. Typical consequences would be:

- Missing 1 game or practice – Verbal warning from the coach.
- Missing 2 games or practices – Player does not play in the next game, but is required to attend the game and cheer on his/her teammates.

- Missing 3 or more games or practices – Coach is to notify the Traveling Coordinator. Consideration is made to remove the player from the team. The ERAA Basketball Board will make the final determination. If a player is removed, there will not be a refund of any fees.

Conflict Resolution:

The ERAA Basketball Board of Directors reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action and/or suspend any coach, parent, player, or fan that violates the ERAA Basketball Codes of Conduct. To resolve a conflict, proceed with the following steps:

Step 1: When a player or parent has a concern, discuss it with the coach. If a problem with a coach exists, contact the ERAA Director of Basketball or the appropriate gender Traveling Coordinator.

Step 2: If the problem persists, the player or parent should contact the ERAA Director of Basketball in writing. Email does constitute written notice.

Step 3: Once the Director of Basketball is involved, the Director will act as the mediator between the involved parties, which could include other Board members as necessary.

Step 4: The Director of Basketball will communicate with the rest of the Board for final resolution. The decision of the ERAA Basketball Board of Directors is final.

Concluding Remarks:

The ERAA Basketball Board will monitor the guidelines described herein, and parents are encouraged to report any noncompliance of these guidelines to the relevant gender Traveling Coordinator. It is recommended that the Traveling Coordinator be present at any parent/coach meeting during which issues of how the team is being managed will be discussed. Coaches and parents are facilitators in making this a productive and enjoyable experience.

While we tried to cover all the instances that may occur during the season, we realize that it is tough to outline what should happen for every conceivable situation. Therefore, if anything is not covered by these guidelines, the Traveling Coordinators and Director of Basketball will use their judgment to do what is best for ERAA Basketball.

Go Raptors!

-Adam Meuler
Director of ERAA Basketball

-Chris Gunderson
ERAA Boys' Traveling Coordinator

-(currently vacant)
ERAA Girls' Traveling Coordinator