PARENT SPORTS PARTICIPATION GUIDE

How to support your young athlete through a season — practically, emotionally, and financially. Your involvement shapes their experience more than any scoreboard.

SUPPORTING YOUR ATHLETE

- [ ] Praise effort and attitude, not just outcomes — trophies fade, character doesn't.
- [ ] Encourage balance: school, sleep, friends, and downtime matter as much as practice.
- [ ] Let coaches coach. Support from the sidelines and address concerns privately and respectfully.
- [ ] Celebrate small wins: improved skills, good sportsmanship, academic progress.

STAYING ORGANIZED

- [ ] Keep one family calendar with every practice, game, tournament, and deadline.
- [ ] Budget the full season early: fees, uniforms, equipment, travel, camps, and incidental costs.
- [ ] Save key contacts: coach, team manager, league administrator, and a carpool parent.
- [ ] Plan transportation and backup rides for every week — not just game day.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- [ ] Schedule an annual sports physical before the season begins.
- [ ] Prioritize 8-10 hours of sleep and balanced meals, especially during tournament weeks.
- [ ] Learn your league's concussion protocol — when in doubt, sit them out.
- [ ] Pack water and healthy snacks for long tournament days.

COMMUNICATION

- [ ] Attend parent meetings and read team communications weekly.
- [ ] Address playing time or concerns with the coach one-on-one — never during or right after games.
- [ ] Know league policies on eligibility, conduct, and grievances.

WHEN COSTS BECOME A BARRIER

- [ ] Ask your league or school about payment plans and hardship funds.
- [ ] Look into used equipment exchanges and community sports swaps.
- [ ] Apply to Play Without Limits Athletics Foundation early — deadlines matter.
- [ ] Ask about carpooling and shared travel arrangements with teammates' families.