

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
96TH FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE YOUTH PROGRAMS

YOUTH BASKETBALL

PARENT & PLAYER HANDBOOK

Eglin AFB Youth Sports & Fitness

Youth Programs Director
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(850) 882-8212

Every Child Plays. Every Child Develops. Every Child Matters.

WELCOME

Welcome to Eglin AFB Youth Basketball

Welcome to **Eglin AFB Youth Basketball!** We are excited to have your family join our program. Eglin AFB Youth Sports & Fitness is committed to providing a **safe, positive, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate sports experience** for every young athlete.

Our program is about more than wins and losses. Youth sports provide an opportunity for children to develop athletic skills while learning teamwork, sportsmanship, responsibility, confidence, and respect.

Our coaches, staff, officials, parents, and spectators all play an important role in creating an environment where young athletes can **learn, compete, grow, and have fun.**

Our Mission

Eglin AFB Youth Sports & Fitness provides safe, developmentally appropriate opportunities for youth to participate in organized sports and fitness activities while developing skills, confidence, teamwork, sportsmanship, and lifelong healthy habits.

Our Youth Sports Philosophy

Every Child Plays. Every Child Develops. Every Child Matters.

- **Development** - Teach age-appropriate fundamentals and help every athlete improve.
- **Participation** - Provide meaningful playing opportunities regardless of skill or experience.
- **Sportsmanship** - Respect teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and the game.
- **Teamwork** - Understand how individual effort contributes to team success.
- **Safety** - Place the health and well-being of athletes first.
- **Fun** - Make youth sports an experience children look forward to.

Our goal is simple: Create an experience that makes kids want to come back and play again next season.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Season at a Glance

Eglin AFB Youth Basketball provides a recreational, developmental basketball program for eligible youth. Specific dates, fees, schedules, and deadlines are communicated separately for each season.

Age Divisions

- **5-6 Years**
- **7-9 Years**
- **10-12 Years**

Registration

Registration is completed through Eglin AFB Youth Programs. Space may be limited based on available coaches, facilities, and team capacity.

Player Showcase / Skills Assessment

The Showcase is not a tryout. It allows Youth Sports staff and coaches to observe basic basketball skills and assist with creating teams that are as balanced as possible.

Practices & Games

Teams receive assigned practice schedules after rosters and coaching assignments are finalized. Games are generally held on weekends. Schedules may change due to facility availability, weather, holidays, special events, or operational needs.

Inter-Base Play

Eglin AFB Youth Basketball may partner with **Hurlburt Field Youth Sports** and other approved military youth sports programs. Families should be prepared for both home and away games when inter-base play is included.

Season Information

Registration dates, fees, orientation opportunities, Showcase information, practice schedules, game schedules, and important deadlines will be communicated separately for each season.

POSITIVE SIDELINES

Parent & Spectator Expectations

Parents and spectators directly influence the environment in which children play. Our expectation is simple: **encourage the athletes, respect the game, and help us create an environment where kids enjoy playing basketball.**

Parent & Spectator Code of Conduct

- Encourage all youth participants and recognize effort, improvement, teamwork, and sportsmanship.
- Treat players, coaches, officials, staff, volunteers, and spectators with respect and courtesy.
- Allow coaches to coach and officials to officiate without interference.
- Refrain from profanity, threatening language, inappropriate gestures, harassment, or disruptive behavior.
- Never ridicule or embarrass a player for making a mistake or losing a game.
- Model the sportsmanship and self-control expected from young athletes.
- Address concerns through the appropriate communication process rather than confronting others during a game.

Zero Tolerance for Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Eglin AFB Youth Sports reserves the right to remove any individual whose behavior creates an **unsafe, hostile, intimidating, or disruptive environment**. Consequences may include removal, suspension from future activities, or additional action by Youth Programs leadership.

Handling a Concern

1. Coach - Routine team or player concerns.
2. Sports Director - Unresolved concerns or concerns involving a coach.
3. Youth Programs Director - Matters requiring additional review.

Safety concerns, suspected child abuse, or other serious matters should be reported immediately and do not need to follow this chain.

Remember Who We Are Here For: The kids.

EGLIN YOUTH SPORTS ATHLETE

Player Expectations

Being part of Eglin AFB Youth Basketball means more than learning how to play basketball. Players represent their **team, their family, and Eglin Youth Programs** each time they participate.

Player Code of Conduct

- Treat teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, staff, and spectators with respect.
- Listen to coaches and make an honest effort to learn and improve.
- Encourage teammates and be a positive member of the team.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship whether winning or losing.
- Refrain from profanity, taunting, bullying, fighting, or intentionally dangerous behavior.
- Respect Youth Programs facilities and equipment.
- Follow instructions from coaches, officials, and Youth Programs staff.
- Shake off mistakes, keep playing, and have fun.

Attendance & Participation

Regular attendance helps players develop skills and allows coaches to prepare their teams. Families should communicate absences as early as possible. We understand that military families may occasionally have family obligations, school activities, illness, travel, or other circumstances that prevent attendance.

Playing Time

Every eligible player will receive meaningful playing time. Coaches are expected to manage participation fairly and according to Eglin Youth Sports basketball rules.

Uniforms & Equipment

Players should arrive prepared with appropriate athletic clothing, athletic shoes, the approved game uniform when applicable, and a water bottle. **Jewelry may not be worn during practices or games.**

Be a good teammate. Work hard. Learn something. Have fun.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADERS

Coaches & Volunteers

Eglin AFB Youth Sports coaches are more than basketball instructors. They are **youth development leaders and positive role models** who help create a safe, supportive, inclusive, and encouraging environment.

Coach & Volunteer Requirements

Before being authorized to coach, individuals must complete all Youth Programs screening, background check, training, certification, and documentation requirements applicable to their position. Only properly approved individuals may serve in an official coaching or supervisory capacity.

What Families Can Expect

- Positive, encouraging, age-appropriate instruction.
- Emphasis on development, teamwork, effort, and sportsmanship.
- Fair and respectful treatment of every athlete.
- Meaningful participation opportunities.
- Timely communication about practices, games, and team updates.
- Appropriate supervision and compliance with Youth Sports safety procedures.
- Safety and youth well-being placed above winning.

Supervision & Team Activities

Youth participants must be appropriately supervised during official activities. If an authorized coach cannot attend, the activity may need to be modified, postponed, or canceled unless another authorized coach is available.

Official practices, meetings, and team activities must occur at approved locations. Coaches may not independently organize official practices at private residences or unapproved locations.

Supporting Our Volunteer Coaches

Volunteer coaches dedicate significant personal time to our athletes and families. We ask parents to support them through respectful communication, patience, encouragement, and a willingness to help when appropriate.

Interested in coaching? Contact Eglin AFB Youth Sports & Fitness, Sports Director Houston Wynn, Building 2582.

SAFETY COMES FIRST

Safety, Injuries & Emergency Procedures

The health, safety, and well-being of every participant is the highest priority of Eglin AFB Youth Sports & Fitness. Participation in sports carries inherent risk, and our staff and coaches work to provide a safe, properly supervised, developmentally appropriate environment.

Injuries During Practices or Games

- Provide appropriate first aid within the scope of training.
- Remove an athlete from participation when appropriate.
- Contact the parent or guardian.
- Contact emergency medical services when necessary.
- Complete required Youth Programs accident or incident documentation.
- Require medical evaluation or clearance before return when appropriate.

Emergency Situations

In a serious or potentially life-threatening emergency, **911 will be contacted immediately.** The immediate safety and care of the child is the first priority.

Concussion Safety

A concussion is a brain injury that may occur after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or a hit to the body that causes rapid movement of the head and brain. A player does not need to lose consciousness to have a possible concussion.

RECOGNIZE → REMOVE → REPORT → CLEAR → RETURN

- **Recognize:** Watch for headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, balance problems, vision changes, unusual behavior, or simply 'I don't feel right.'
- **Remove:** If a concussion is suspected, remove the athlete immediately.
- **Report:** Notify the parent or guardian.
- **Clear:** The athlete does not return that day and should be evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- **Return:** Return only after appropriate medical clearance and Youth Sports requirements are satisfied.

When in doubt, sit them out.

Child Abuse Prevention & Reporting

Concerns regarding suspected child abuse or neglect should be reported immediately through appropriate channels.

DoD Child Abuse/Safety Violation Hotline: 877-790-1197
Eglin Family Advocacy: 850-883-8616
Florida Abuse Hotline: 800-962-2873

DEVELOPMENT BEFORE WINNING

General Basketball Rules

Eglin AFB Youth Basketball is a developmental recreational program. Rules are designed to provide a **safe, fair, positive, and age-appropriate basketball experience**. The program uses NAYS youth-development principles, Eglin local modifications, and NFHS basketball rules as a reference for situations not specifically modified by the program.

Rule Philosophy

Development Before Winning • Participation • Safety • Sportsmanship • Age-Appropriate Competition • Fun

Participation & Playing Time

No coach should intentionally keep a player on the bench solely because of skill level. Coaches will follow established substitution and minimum-playing-time requirements. Winning does not take priority over youth participation and development.

Minimum Players

Basketball is normally played 5-on-5. The program's goal is to play rather than create unnecessary forfeits. Youth Sports staff and officials may adjust play when reasonably necessary to allow children to participate safely.

Officials & Sportsmanship

Officials have authority over play on the court. Judgment calls are not subject to protest. Profanity, fighting, taunting, threatening behavior, intentionally dangerous play, or disrespectful conduct may result in warnings, technical fouls, removal, or additional action.

Safety & Equipment

- No jewelry during practices or games.
- Appropriate athletic footwear and approved attire are required.
- No hanging from rims or nets.
- Injured players may be removed by a coach, official, or Youth Sports staff member.
- Only authorized coaches and players may occupy the team bench area.

Youth basketball is a place to teach the game - not simply enforce the game.

LEARN THE GAME

Ages 5-6 Division

The 5-6 Division is our introductory basketball division. Success is a player learning a new skill, gaining confidence, understanding teamwork, and wanting to come back.

Game Format	5-on-5 when roster allows
Game Length	Four 10-minute quarters
Basket Height	6 feet
Basketball	Junior size - 27.5 in.
Score	Not officially kept
Free Throws	Modified line
Defense	Half-court developmental defense
Full-Court Press	Not permitted
Double Teams	Not permitted
Coach on Court	One coach permitted
Overtime	None
Playing Time	Equal / meaningful participation

Teaching the Game

Coaches and officials should spend more time **teaching than penalizing**. Officials may explain violations and allow young players opportunities to learn from mistakes.

Defense

Defense is played in the half court. Players learn basic positioning and avoid aggressive trapping. When possession changes, defenders retreat to allow the offense to advance and organize.

Scorekeeping & Participation

No official score is displayed. The scoreboard may be used for time only. Coaches should give every player opportunities to handle, pass, and shoot the ball.

“I learned how to play basketball!”

Ages 7-9 Division

The 7-9 Division builds on fundamentals while introducing a more structured team environment. Competition becomes a larger part of the experience, but **player development remains more important than the final score.**

Game Format	5-on-5 when roster allows
Game Length	Four 10-minute quarters
Basket Height	9 feet
Basketball	Intermediate size - 28.5 in.
Free-Throw Line	Modified - 13 feet
Score	Official score kept
Defense	Person-to-person or zone
Full-Court Press	Not permitted
Double Teams	Restricted
Overtime	3 minutes
Playing Time	Equitable participation required

Defense

Teams may play person-to-person or zone defense. When possession changes, the defense retreats to half court before applying pressure. Full-court pressing is not permitted. Double-teaming outside the paint is restricted.

Scorekeeping

If a team leads by 20 or more points, the displayed score may be removed until the margin decreases to 10 points.

Playing Time

Every player must participate in a minimum of two uninterrupted quarters. No player should play the entire game unless roster size or another approved circumstance makes it necessary.

Timeouts & Overtime

Each team receives two 1-minute timeouts per half. A tied game may use a 3-minute overtime period, subject to operational and scheduling considerations.

“How do I help my team?”

DEVELOP, COMPETE & LEAD

Ages 10-12 Division

The 10-12 Division provides a more advanced basketball experience while maintaining Eglin's developmental philosophy. Competition is encouraged, but **sportsmanship, development, safety, and participation remain the priority.**

Game Format	5-on-5 when roster allows
Game Length	Four 10-minute quarters
Basket Height	Regulation - 10 feet
Basketball	29.5 in.
Free-Throw Line	Regulation
Score	Official score kept
Defense	Person-to-person or zone
Full-Court Press	Not permitted
Overtime	3 minutes
Playing Time	Equitable participation required

Offense & Defense

Teams may use person-to-person or zone defense and introduce appropriate advanced concepts such as spacing, passing and cutting, screening, help defense, rebounding, transition play, and decision-making. Defense retreats to half court before applying pressure.

Scorekeeping & Sportsmanship

The 20-point differential sportsmanship rule may be used. Coaches holding a significant lead are expected to use the situation to develop all players rather than increase the margin.

Playing Time

Every player must participate in a minimum of two uninterrupted quarters. This remains a recreational developmental league, not a select or travel program.

"I became a better player, a better teammate, and learned how to compete the right way."

STAY CONNECTED

Communication, Scheduling & Cancellations

Clear and timely communication is an important part of a successful season. Coaches serve as the primary point of contact for routine team information once teams are formed.

Team Communication

- Practice schedules and changes.
- Game schedules and reminders.
- Cancellations and arrival expectations.
- Uniform or equipment reminders.
- Other information provided by Youth Sports staff.

Official Schedules

All official practice and game schedules are established or approved by Eglin AFB Youth Sports & Fitness. Coaches may not independently change official locations or add official practices at unapproved locations.

Weather & Facility Cancellations

Activities may be delayed, relocated, modified, or canceled because of severe weather, lightning, unsafe travel conditions, facility issues, installation conditions, emergencies, or other safety concerns.

Canceled Activities

A canceled practice or game does not automatically guarantee a make-up. Facility availability, staffing, officials, inter-base coordination, remaining season dates, and operational considerations will determine whether an activity can be rescheduled.

Keeping Information Current

Parents and guardians are responsible for maintaining accurate phone numbers, email addresses, emergency contacts, authorized pickup information, and other required registration information.

Have a Question?

Routine team matter: Coach
Program or unresolved concern: Sports Director - Houston Wynn
Additional leadership review: Youth Programs Director - Tara Sheppard

Coaches communicate. Parents stay informed. Youth Sports supports both.

QUICK REFERENCE

Frequently Asked Questions

How are teams formed?

Youth Sports forms teams with the goal of fair and reasonably balanced rosters. Showcase observations may be used when conducted.

Can I request a coach or teammate?

Requests may be communicated, but coach, teammate, and team placement requests are not guaranteed.

Is the Showcase a tryout?

No. It is used to observe current skill levels and assist with balanced team formation.

What if my child has never played?

That's okay. The program is developmental and designed for varying experience levels.

What if my child misses practice?

Notify the coach as early as possible. Consistent attendance is encouraged.

Is playing time guaranteed?

Every eligible player receives playing time according to the participation requirements for the division.

Can my child play in another age division?

Requests may be reviewed by the Sports Director; approval is not guaranteed.

What if an activity is canceled?

Families will be notified through established channels. Make-up activities are not guaranteed.

Can parents coach from the stands?

Please cheer from the stands and allow coaches to coach.

What if I disagree with an official?

Do not confront the official. Concerns should follow the Youth Sports communication process.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Program Contacts & Resources

Eglin AFB Youth Sports & Fitness
Building 2582 • Hatchee Road
Eglin Air Force Base, Florida
(850) 882-8212

Youth Programs Director
Tara Sheppard

Youth Sports & Fitness Director / Sports Director
Houston Wynn

Emergency & Safety Resources

Emergency: 911
DoD Child Abuse/Safety Violation Hotline: 877-790-1197
Eglin Family Advocacy: 850-883-8616
Florida Abuse Hotline: 800-962-2873

Concussion Resource

CDC HEADS UP provides current guidance for recognizing and responding to suspected concussion and returning athletes safely to sports. Athletes with suspected concussion should be removed immediately, kept out the same day, and return only with healthcare-provider approval.

Every Child Plays.
Every Child Develops.
Every Child Matters.

OUR SHARED COMMITMENT

Parent & Player Acknowledgment

Participation in Eglin AFB Youth Basketball is a partnership between players, parents, coaches, officials, volunteers, and Youth Programs staff.

Parent/Guardian Commitment

- Support the developmental mission and encourage my child regardless of the outcome.
- Treat players, coaches, officials, staff, volunteers, and spectators with respect.
- Allow coaches to coach and officials to officiate.
- Communicate respectfully and follow the established process for concerns.
- Keep contact and emergency information current.
- Notify the coach of injuries or information affecting safe participation.

Player Commitment

I will respect others, listen to my coaches, support my teammates, demonstrate good sportsmanship, follow the rules, tell an adult if I am hurt, give my best effort, learn from mistakes, and have fun.

Safety & Handbook Acknowledgment

By signing, we acknowledge access to this handbook and understand that participation requires compliance with Youth Programs policies, conduct expectations, safety requirements, and applicable basketball rules.

Player Name: _____

Age Division: ☐ 5-6 ☐ 7-9 ☐ 10-12

Player Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Photo & Media Release

Eglin AFB Youth Programs may photograph or record participants during Youth Sports activities for authorized program, installation, Department of the Air Force, informational, or promotional purposes.

☐ **YES, I AUTHORIZE** approved photography/recording and use.
☐ **NO, I DO NOT AUTHORIZE** photography/recording for promotional or marketing purposes.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Choosing not to authorize promotional photography or recording will not affect eligibility or participation.

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Building Better Teammates.
Building Better People.

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