

# **MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES**



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## MISSION

**Mission:** Austin Comets Athletics is a sports fraternity that provides mentorship for youth to develop their skills, health and moral character for the welfare or well-being of the general public.

**Why this club exists:** We wish to combat the issues of fatherlessness, which is one of the biggest problems in the U.S. that plagues our youth today. Because of the lack of affirmation from fathers, young boys seek out resources to meet their needs of safety. These negative resources include joining youth gangs, public obscenities to cause shock value, domestic violence and senseless killings. The results of these issues contribute to youth having a poor self-image, high school dropout rates, suicide, drug abuse and many mental health behavior disorders.

Boys are not being initiated into adulthood correctly. They're being taught promiscuity, drunkenness, impulsivity, rage, and violence by poor role models in the community and in the sports and music industry. Fatherless homes can be an example of a lack of commitment, inconsistency and instability. Youth use this model to deal with conflict and are not able to solve problems appropriately, but find quick and easy ways out.

We hope to be a model of success that changes the rearing of young men and develop their character so that they may have skills and tools progressing to adulthood. Through our activities we want to foster companionship and a strong father and son (son-ship) dynamic. Young men should be given a proper right to passage initiation and held in high regards to learning true manhood.

We believe in creating a great community of young men who understand the importance of protection, caring for others, welfare, health care, jobs/apprenticeships, social and financial support, family, companionship, ethical living, education and development of all people. We also hope that this club will take part in the viability of the community including partnering with the church, social services organization, schools and libraries. Youth will have the opportunity to be involved with entrepreneurship, food service, housing (real estate), clothing or fashion, health care, transportation, law and be of service to public parks.



## LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT (CHAIN OF COMMAND)

Acting authority within the program. Arrows show chains of command.

### **Athletics Director/Owner**

A **senior level and highest ranking voting member**, serves as the overall program leader. He is responsible for managing, screening, supervising, mentoring and training all Comets head coaches, support personnel and oversee all sports programming. He's the main figurehead and presides over leadership meetings of the program. Also the Athletics Director is the representative of the program in public relations and a liaison between other organizations and groups. He assists all members in understanding and interpretation of their program responsibilities and to promote program life among members.



### **General Manager - (Asst. Athletics Director)**

A **senior level voting member**, serves as the second-in-command to the Athletics Director and the main records (registration ) coordinator that is responsible for the intake of all members in the program. He keeps important records of member profiles, their progress and their standing in the program. He directly reports to the Athletics Director. If for some reason the Athletics Director is not able to fulfill his responsibilities or duties, the General Manager serves as the acting AD.



### **Comets Coaching staff and other department managers**

A **senior level voting member**, The Head Coach is a mentor who handles the day-to-day operations of scheduling /coaching games, recruiting players, facilitating practices, creating practice plans, and mentoring athletes. All head coaches are accountable to the Athletics Director. Assistant coaches, strength and conditioning coaches, athletic trainers help with different components of the program.





## **Team Captains**

A **senior level voting member**, These are Comets athletes who display leadership potential on and off the court/field. They have demonstrated the responsibility of holding team members accountable to program expectations. Team captains display a “C” on their team jersey. Report to the Coaching staff.



## **Athletes/Participants**

Official current members of our program who regularly participate in activities and are eligible to become officers.



## **Athletes-in-Training (Prospective Members)**

AT's are sponsored athletes who are in the process of becoming a member of the program. They are not allowed to participate in sports programs until full initiation is completed and commissioned to take on a sport.

## **SENIOR MEMBERS**

One of our major goals is to allow youth, particularly the captains, to lead their own clubhouse by holding all house offices (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary etc) and govern all affairs. Senior members are able to hold office, vote, manage areas (departments) of the program, wear special badges etc. Senior members are current members who have met the following criteria:

- 13 years of age or older
- Has been with the program for 2-3 years
- Completed promotion objectives in its entirety
- Sponsored by another Senior Member, Officer or Original for Eligibility

Parents/Guardians of members are automatically associates of the program but can become eligible for membership if they fit the criteria and complete the initiation probation process.

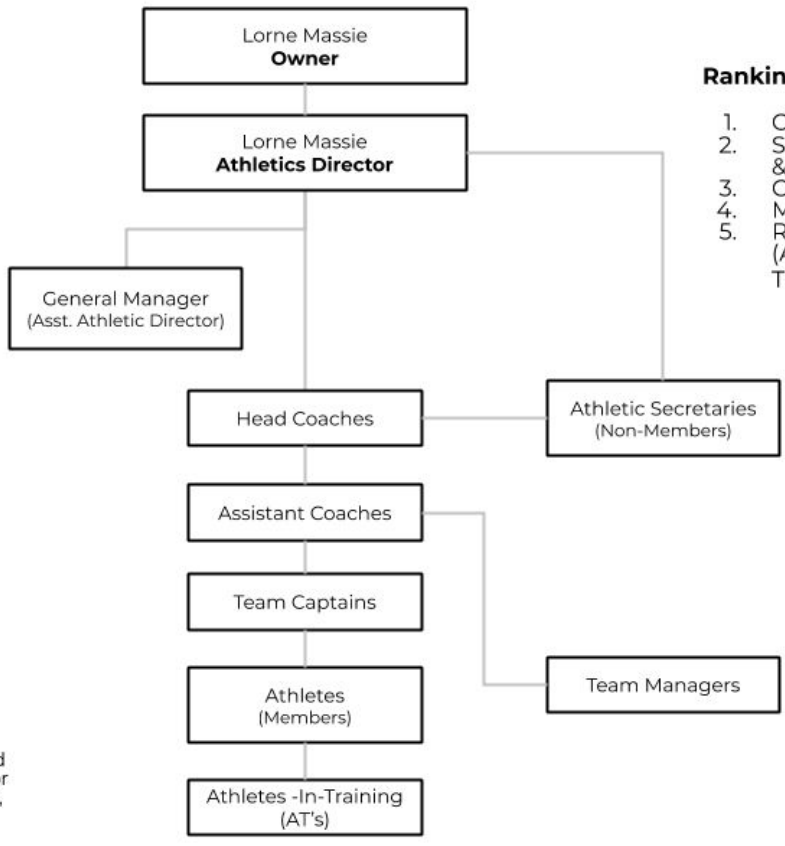


## **ORIGINALS**

Originals are the highest ranking level members of the program. The individuals that are selected for this are the founder and the first ever members of the inaugural first class. They hold authority over all matters, wear a different uniform, serve as an advisory council to decision makers.



### Austin Comets Organizational Chart



- Rankings**
1. Originals
  2. Senior Members & Officers
  3. Captains
  4. Members
  5. Rookies (Athletes-in-Training)

### Sports and Other Programs

Basketball, Football, Baseball & Softball, Soccer, Volleyball, Track and Field (Indoor and Outdoor), Tennis or Lacrosse, Esports, Mascot, Pep Band, Chaplin, Athletic Trainers.



## MEMBERSHIP

**A member of this club is defined as:** One who has gone through and fully completed the initiation probation process with a commissioned ceremony and is regularly paying dues to the club.

Membership is given to youth and children who are sponsored by a current or previous member of the club. Membership is for one year that must be renewed at the end of the annual term. Membership status, after the year, will be reviewed by senior members to consider a renewal. Members must agree to pay dues of **\$ a month or \$ annually** to support the program activities. Fees for sports programs are an additional cost.

Membership benefits include:

1. Participation in Austin Comets Athletics sports programs.
2. Discounts on program merchandise, competition entrance fees and sports program fees.
3. Work and participate in other MMI programs
4. Live in Clubhouse and participate in house meetings
5. Access to Camps, Clinics, Events, others things in the organization.
6. Wear Austin Comets identification (Badges, Letters, Gear etc.)
7. Participate on Austin Comets Committees
8. Eligibility to hold offices
9. Receive % of funds from fundraising that goes towards dues.

The criteria for being a member of this club is as followed:

1. Must be at least 8 years of age
2. Must be a resident and legal citizen of the U.S.
3. Must be nominated or sponsored by another youth/adult member
4. Must be teachable
5. Must be trustworthy
6. Must be of sound mind and body

**SPONSORING:** This is a process where a former or current member, senior member, original or the Athletics Director (Founder/Owner) gives a nomination for a prospective athlete to become a member of the program and must speak with the General Manager for approval to be put on the voting table. Prospective athletes must submit an application and go through an intake interview with the leadership team which includes the Athletics Director, General Manager and Senior Members. Approval of membership is given through the final decision of the Athletics Director.

**GRANDFATHER CLAUSE:** Former Austin Comets participants who were part of the program before the inception of the constitution (from 2010-2019) will be initiated into the new program without going through the new member initiation process.





## INITIATION PROBATION PROCESS (IPB)

All prospective athletes must complete the initiation probation process (IPB) in order to become a full member which allows for participation in Comets sports programs and to declare a concentration. After participants are selected for membership, orientation is given and the prospective members are considered “Athletes in Training” or “AT’s” and must go through an 3- step initiation process which includes:

- **Memorization**
  - “Athletes in Training” must memorize the motto/creed and core values of the club in its entirety. They must be able to recite all languages on the spot.
  
- **Trust-Building**
  - “Athletes in Training” are given physical and mental exercises to show a willingness to commit and be unselfish for the club. This is a stage of detox to get rid of old attitudes and mindsets.
  
- **Follow-Through Action**
  - “Athletes in Training” are given an action assignment to prove they are willing to follow-through with instruction from authority and be held accountable.

After completion of initiation over 30 days or less, the “Athlete in Training” has gone through the probation period and is ready for the completion ceremony to be commissioned for service in a sport. Sports are considered “Major” areas, where members can be assigned to a concentration. This ceremony is to celebrate a new member and will include special activities such as having the fathers, grandfathers, uncles or other alumni pin the brother badge on their family members and receive a blessing/prayer from a minister.



## VOTING

Voting is the method in which our officers and senior members make collective decisions on matters of the program including new membership nomination/sponsorship, operations, new policies and election of new officers. Meetings take place once a month in the evening. Only senior members (members who have been with the club for 3 years) and officers are allowed to take part in the voting but all members are welcome to attend the meeting.

In regards to officers, each position serves a term of one year and starts holding office after the annual officers meeting. Also at the annual officers meeting, the leadership of the Austin Comets Athletics meet to reward volunteers, donors, partners, program staff and other personnel with certificates and awards for their service.

## MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION (ADVANCEMENT)

Only members can move up the ranks in structure to be a senior member or hold an office for more authority and responsibility. Promotion is based on age, public or private sports & academic achievements, knowledge of mission/law/creed, experience, terms served and/or completion of projects or missions. When a member is eligible for advancement, he must be sponsored by a Senior Member or officer and approved by unanimous vote of the officers, including the final approval from the Athletics Director. After approval of promotion, the members are presented with new colors and position badge/sticker.

Once a member has completed 3 years of service, they are given a special pin with rankings, level of membership, major for with the Comets logo and stones for every year after to be placed on a program hat or jersey..

Associates (Prospective Member) -> **AT's (Rookies)** -> **Members** -> **Captains**  
-> **Seniors & Officers** -> **Originals**



## MOTTO & PRINCIPLES

**Code of Behavior:** As a member of this program there is a code one must follow in order to hold up expectations and standards. This code is founded on our central motto:

**Proverbs 27:17- “As Iron Sharpens Iron, so One Person Sharpens Another.”**

### 10 Rules of Conduct

1. We Believe in **NONVIOLENCE** Except in the Defense of Human Rights.
2. We will **DETER FROM COVETING**, Jealousy or Envy.
3. We will **HATE THE LOVE OF MONEY** which is the Root of All Kinds of Evil.
4. We will Love and **RESPECT** Others and are Selfless at All Cost.
5. We will walk in **HUMILITY** and be Teachable at All Times.
6. We will Always **HONOR AUTHORITY** and Rebuke Lawlessness.
7. We will have **INTEGRITY** by being Men of our Words
8. We Believe in **ORDER AND STRUCTURE**
9. We Share in an **OPEN DEMOCRACY**
10. We will be Intelligent in Language and **SPEAKING TRUTH** Always

**Comets Law/Oath:** A Comet's Member shall follow the code of behavior which includes the motto and the 10 rules of conduct and be a Good and Responsible Citizen with the utmost moral character and physically, mentally, and emotionally fit.



## **EXPECTATION AND REQUIREMENTS**

All members of Austin Comets Athletics must meet certain expectations and requirements of a member. These expectations are detailed below. Those who meet these expectations are members in good standing and are granted the privileges listed below. The rights of a member may not be removed unless he is no longer in good standing or is suspended or expelled. All members will be reviewed annually to determine if they have met the expectations.

These expectations draw from all of these sources and are designed to ensure that every member is living up to what they promised. The expectations mentioned in this handbook are the benchmark.

### **Expectations of a Member**

**As a member of Austin Comets Athletics, you are required to meet each of these expectations quarterly and annually:**

1. Must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or B average (for students only)
2. Remain up-to-date on dues or current on approved payment plan.
3. Must cheer on and help to support all sports programs in Austin Comets Athletics.
4. Must be active in competing in either Intramural or Travel teams.
5. Must attend 85% of practices/meetings each year.
6. Must attend 75% of all events each year.
7. Follow all directions of ranking members: Senior members and/or officers.
8. Commit to ongoing fundraising for the program

### **Rights**

- To be treated equally with all other members, and with dignity, to be called a member.
- To wear Austin Comets identification (badge, pins, etc.)
- To be held to the same standards and expectations as all members
- To be given due process for all alleged infractions
- To be properly instructed and understand the concepts and teachings of the Austin Comets Athletics.



## **DISCIPLINE**

The Senior Members and Officers are the major authority responsible with issuing discipline according to the nature of the act or rule broken. The Athletics Director has the final decision on all routes towards discipline.

Theft/stealing, fighting/assault & Battery, disorderly conduct or possession of an illegal firearm and other prohibited activities, whether in or out of the program, will not be tolerated. Any member found in violation of this will either be suspended or removed from the program. A member can be dismissed from activities for behavior detrimental to the program. Should this happen three times or more, the Athletics Director will be contacted and the member could be suspended or removed from the program. Should the severity of the infraction require discipline, behavioral issues could result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Some troubled members will be placed on probationary status (30 days) to help in the process of following program rules. If there is any violation of expectations during the probation period, the member will be dismissed from the program. Suspensions are given out by the Senior Members, Officers or the Athletics Director to members who violate program rules.

If disputes occur between two parties there must be a request for a "sit-down" with the two parties and the top authority figure. The top authority figure will act as an unbiased judge and hear both arguments and make a decision accordingly. These disputes can be over anything ranging from violation of rules to fundraising territory.

Consequences are called "Doing Work." Members can be disciplined by being assigned to cleaning or completing walking/sitting tours.

Members Hurting Other Members: This is cause for grounds of immediate excommunication from the club.

Challenges: A Senior member is allowed to challenge someone's leadership if there is negligence that needs to be brought to the table.



## ACTIVITIES

- **Open Houses/Socials**
  - Current members showcase facilities and clubhouses to prospective members.
- **New Member Ceremonies**
  - Special service for new members.
  - Recognition of past participants, volunteers, sponsors, donors and partners of the program.
- **Athlete / Parent Meetings**
  - Parent Forum
    - Allows parents and the community to get-to-know the staff of the program and voice concerns, observations (evaluations & progress reports) or critiques of the program.
- **Sports Competitions**
  - Members regularly participate in tournaments and games for the sports season.
- **Community Run**
  - This is a time for our members to work on conditioning, have a change in venue/setting and make the community aware of who we are.
- **Full-Day Summer Intramurals Camp**
  - This activity is where we allow our members to experience different sports without the pressure of competition and compete against each other.
- **Media Day**
  - Members have their pictures taken for the yearbook albums and do promotional videos for the program.
- **Board House Meetings**
  - Our existing members vote on clubhouse policy, new officers and membership for new prospective youth and children members.
- **Senior Member Dinners**
  - Once a month our senior members have a communal dinner to break bread with each other.
- **Chapel**
  - On Sunday's members attend a local church service.



## **DUES**

Dues are monthly or annual fees paid for members to participate in activities and events. Members are responsible for keeping dues payments current. Dues are used solely for the operations of the program and, in the future, helps pay for the living expenses of the clubhouse. Program fees for participating in sports can be paid by the organization in exchange for a 1-year commitment to service.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Members must develop ways to “earn” for program activities which should include various fundraisers. As an incentive to fundraising, members are offered recognitions, such as credits toward sports activities or uniforms. The recognitions are usually cumulative, so that a member who earns the recognition for selling the “most” items will also get the “most” box items.

Members may choose to earn more money for their program instead of recognition if they are working toward a goal such as a trip or other expensive activities. This type of fundraising is intended to teach members valuable skills in planning, teamwork, finance, organization, communication, and goal setting. Also, award badges and promotion exist for sales.

Each member operates its own sale of an item. Approximately 70% of the proceeds stay in the program to support members in that area, including a portion, approximately 15%, that goes directly to the member for selling the items. The profits are divided by a formula, with members receiving about 10-15% of the retail price, the council more than 50%, and the manufacturer the remainder. Some members may be “taxed” more than others. The senior members set the rate taxes are issued based on what’s made and the level of the member.

Revenues at all levels are used to pay for events and activities for the program, maintenance of the sports programs and other properties, sale incentives, and program administrative costs. Members can sell door to door, through a form, or from a cart/bag to on-goers on the street (Commuters, bystanders, etc.)



## ATTIRE

Our program attire is our business card and represents the brotherhood that we've established. All members shall wear the official program attire while in participating in sports and, in the future, the clubhouse which is as followed:

- ❖ For Polo's, T-Shirts, Jackets or Sweaters the color is the following based on ranking:
  - White: Originals, Senior Members, Officers (Vote)
  - Black: Captains
  - Grey: Current Members
  - No Logo/or colors: Rookies (Athletes-in-Training)
  
- ❖ Comets Jerseys
  - Captains get the letter "C" on their attire and uniforms.
  - Levels of Membership, Role, Concentration and Rankings are also put on their Jerseys, Polo's, Hats as patches/pins.
  
- ❖ Only Officers and Originals wear the Chicago flag on their attire.
  
- ❖ Athlete-in-Training (Rookies) are not allowed to wear the Comet's logo, colors, jerseys, patches/pins until they have finished their initiation probation process.





## TRADITIONS

There are special ceremonies, occasions and important life traditions that our program takes part in including funerals, weddings, anniversaries, graduations, retirements, birthday parties, prom and births of a new child (bridal showers), bachelor and bachelorette parties.

- Funerals
  - Senior members and officers shall pay their respects on behalf of the club to the death of members.
  - Senior members shall present attire/jerseys and club flags to the mourning families.
  - All club members shall wear black tape on their jerseys for respect.
  - Members shall wear attire to funerals and frame jerseys.
  
- Weddings
  - Members should help and participate in the wedding ceremony.
  - Members shall present a gift to the bride and groom.
  
- Graduations, Retirement Parties, Birthday/Sweet Sixteen Parties, Anniversary, Prom, Father's Day
  - Members shall present a gift to the graduating member.
  - Members shall perform a special ritual to simulate a right of passage for young men.
  - Members shall wear their program attire (Special Blazer with logo and dress slacks) to all functions.

Salute: When greeting a fellow member, to salute them properly they must put hands together in remembrance of prayer to signal unity, humility and dependence on Jesus Christ.

All rules or guidelines not written in this book should be taken up with the leadership team and put to a vote.