



NORTH HOUSTON FC

PLAYER HANDBOOK

& Professional Development Standards

Men's First Team • 2026-2027 Season

THE STANDARD.

THE PATHWAY.

THE OPPORTUNITY.



INTRODUCTION

00. Welcome to North Houston FC

Welcome to North Houston FC. By joining our club, you are entering an environment built for ambitious footballers who want to develop, compete, improve, and pursue the highest level of the game their ability and commitment will allow.

Our objective is to create a professional football environment within our level of competition.

We recognize that our players may have different backgrounds and different goals — current or former college players, professionals, and talented players who have not yet received the right opportunity, as well as players pursuing opportunities in USL, MLS NEXT Pro, MLS, or professional football internationally.

What unites every North Houston FC player is the expectation to approach the game seriously. We believe talented players deserve a serious environment in which to develop. North Houston FC exists to provide that environment.

Nothing is guaranteed. Playing time is not guaranteed. Starting positions are not guaranteed. Professional trials are not guaranteed. Professional contracts are not guaranteed.

What North Houston FC will strive to provide is an environment where players are given the opportunity to **earn** those things through their performances, development, attitude, and commitment.

This handbook defines our standard.



01. Our Mission

The mission of North Houston FC is to identify, develop, and showcase ambitious footballers while building a competitive senior men's team that operates according to professional standards.

We aim to provide players with:

- High-quality coaching.
- A clear football philosophy.
- Competitive training.
- Physical development.
- Tactical education.
- Individual player evaluations.
- Video and performance analysis.
- Opportunities to compete at a high level.
- Honest feedback about their development.
- Exposure to appropriate scouts, agents, coaches, and clubs when opportunities are available.
- A professional environment in which players can prepare themselves for the next level.

We want to win. We expect to compete. But our larger purpose is to build a football organization capable of developing players and helping them progress.

02. Our Vision

Our long-term vision is for North Houston FC to become one of the leading professional-development football clubs in Houston and the surrounding region — a destination for ambitious players who believe they have the ability to play at a higher level.

We aspire to develop relationships throughout the football ecosystem, including appropriate contacts within:

- Professional clubs.
- USL organizations.
- MLS and MLS NEXT Pro organizations.
- International professional clubs.
- College programs.
- Professional scouts.
- Sporting directors.
- Technical directors.
- Recruitment departments.
- Licensed football agents.

When North Houston FC recommends a player, that player has been trained, evaluated, and prepared in a serious environment.



03. Our Identity

North Houston FC will be defined by five principles.

PROFESSIONALISM	We behave like professionals before we become professionals.
DEVELOPMENT	Every player should have the opportunity to become better.
COMPETITION	Every training session and every match should challenge players to perform.
DISCIPLINE	Talent without discipline is not enough.
OPPORTUNITY	Players who demonstrate exceptional ability, character, and readiness should be supported in pursuing appropriate opportunities at higher levels.

04. What It Means to Be a North Houston FC Player

Wearing the North Houston FC badge is a responsibility. Players represent themselves, their teammates, their coaches, the club, and the North Houston community. We expect players to demonstrate:

Respect. Respect coaches, teammates, opponents, officials, staff, facilities, and supporters.

Accountability. Take responsibility for your preparation, performance, fitness, attendance, and decisions.

Coachability. Accept instruction and constructive criticism.

Competitiveness. Compete to win without compromising professionalism.

Discipline. Control your behavior and emotions.

Effort. Your technical level may vary from day to day. Your effort should not.

Humility. No individual is bigger than the team.

Ambition. Every player should want to improve.



05. Our Football Philosophy

North Houston FC wants to play intelligent, technical, aggressive, and courageous football. Our philosophy is influenced by principles found in modern possession-oriented and high-intensity football — but our objective is not to copy another club. Our objective is to establish a recognizable **North Houston FC identity**.

Technically excellent. Every player, regardless of position, should be comfortable receiving and passing the ball.

Intelligent in possession. Possession must have purpose. We use the ball to control matches, create advantages, and generate scoring opportunities.

Brave under pressure. Players should have the confidence to receive the ball in difficult situations.

Creative. When space exists, players should have the confidence to attack opponents individually.

Positionally intelligent. Players must understand space, movement, positioning, and their responsibilities within the team's structure.

Aggressive without the ball. When possession is lost, our first reaction should be to recover it.

Physically prepared. Our style requires players who can repeatedly run, press, recover, and compete.

Disciplined. Our intensity must remain organized.

06. Our Principles In Possession

When North Houston FC has the ball, we want to:

- Build intelligently from the back when appropriate.
- Create numerical advantages and provide multiple passing options.
- Play through pressure and use quick combinations.
- Recognize when to accelerate the game and when to control it.
- Use width effectively and encourage attacking contributions from fullbacks.
- Create overloads and switch the point of attack.
- Encourage intelligent movement between the lines.
- Attack space when opportunities appear and back creative 1v1 players.
- Create high-quality scoring opportunities.

Players must constantly scan the field. Receiving the ball should not be the moment a player begins deciding what to do — players should already have information before receiving.



07. Our Principles Out Of Possession

We want to be aggressive and organized. When possession is lost, players should react immediately. Our first objective is to determine whether the ball can be recovered quickly.

Players closest to the ball must apply intelligent pressure. Players away from the ball must:

- Compress space.
- Protect central areas.
- Close passing lanes.
- Support the press.
- Maintain defensive organization.

Pressing is a team action. One player running alone is not pressing. Our defensive intensity requires communication, discipline, fitness, and tactical understanding.

08. Transition

Transitions can decide matches.

When we win possession — if the opponent is disorganized, we should exploit the opportunity. If the immediate attack is not available, we should secure possession and establish our structure.

When we lose possession — react immediately. Do not complain. Do not stop. Do not look at the referee. Our first reaction is football.



09. Professional Training Environment

Every North Houston FC training session should have a purpose. Training is where playing time is earned. Sessions may include:

Dynamic activation	Ball mastery	Technical exercises
Rondos	Positional games	Possession exercises
Tactical training	Pattern play	Pressing exercises
Transition exercises	Finishing	Set pieces
Small-sided games	Conditioned games	Full-sided tactical games

10. Training Standards

Players are expected to:

- Arrive on time — preferably at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start.
- Be dressed and prepared when training begins.
- Bring appropriate footwear, equipment, and adequate hydration.
- Listen when coaches are speaking.
- Train with intensity and compete professionally.
- Encourage teammates and accept coaching.
- Help maintain training equipment and facilities.
- Remain engaged when not directly participating.

Repeated lateness, repeated unexcused absence, poor effort, and disrespectful behavior are all unacceptable. Players should train as they expect to play.



11. Attendance Policy

Consistency is essential to player development and team performance. Players are expected to attend scheduled training, matches, team meetings, tactical sessions, video sessions, fitness testing, and required club activities.

If a player cannot attend, the coaching staff should be notified as early as reasonably possible. Emergency situations will be handled appropriately. However, repeated absence due to poor planning or lack of commitment may affect match selection, starting opportunities, squad status, and continued participation with the team.

A player who consistently attends training will generally receive greater consideration than an equally talented player who is consistently unavailable. Availability is part of reliability. Reliability is part of professionalism.

12. Playing Time

Playing time is earned. Selection decisions may consider training performance, match performance, tactical fit, fitness, attendance, attitude, position competition, opponent, team needs, discipline, and development considerations.

No player is guaranteed to start. No player is guaranteed a specific number of minutes. Players who disagree with selection decisions may respectfully request feedback from the coaching staff at an appropriate time. Disrespectful confrontation regarding playing time will not be accepted.

13. Physical Performance Standards

North Houston FC wants to develop footballers capable of executing our style of play. Our philosophy requires players who can accelerate, sprint, change direction, press, recover, repeat high-intensity efforts, and maintain technical quality under fatigue.

Fitness testing may include 10-meter acceleration, 30-meter sprint, agility testing, countermovement or vertical jump, repeated sprint testing, the Yo-Yo Intermittent Recovery Test Level 1, and other football-specific assessments. Benchmarks are developmental targets and may vary by position, age, testing method, injury history, and individual circumstances.



14. Internal Physical Targets

North Houston FC may use the following general targets as internal reference points.

Test	Development Target	High-Performance Target
10m Sprint	≈ 1.85 s or faster	≈ 1.75 s or faster
30m Sprint	≈ 4.40 s or faster	≈ 4.20 s or faster
Yo-Yo IR1	≈ 1,600 m	≈ 2,200 m or greater

Testing methodology matters. Electronically timed and manually timed sprint results should not be treated as directly interchangeable. These numbers are club targets rather than official league requirements.

15. Individual Fitness Responsibility

Team training alone may not be sufficient to maximize every player's physical potential. Players may be expected to complete appropriate individual work outside team sessions.

- Strength training.
- Mobility.
- Injury-prevention exercises.
- Recovery.
- Aerobic conditioning.
- Sprint development.
- Nutrition and hydration practices.

Players should communicate injuries or physical limitations to the coaching staff. Players should not hide injuries to protect their position. Long-term player health matters.



16. Player Development Evaluations

North Houston FC intends to provide structured player evaluations across four primary areas.

TECHNICAL	First touch, passing, receiving, ball control, weak-foot ability, dribbling, 1v1 ability, crossing, finishing, and position-specific technical qualities.
TACTICAL	Positioning, scanning, decision-making, spatial awareness, movement, understanding of team principles, defensive responsibility, pressing intelligence, and transition reactions.
PHYSICAL	Acceleration, speed, endurance, repeated sprint capacity, strength, power, agility, and availability.
MENTAL & PROFESSIONAL	Coachability, discipline, competitiveness, communication, reliability, leadership, response to adversity, training habits, and professionalism.

17. Individual Development Plans

Where appropriate, players may receive an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that identifies three primary strengths, three development priorities, and technical, tactical, physical, and professional objectives.

The objective is to give players clarity. We do not want to simply tell a player "you need to improve." We want players to understand: **what** needs to improve, **why**, **how** it can improve, and **how** progress will be measured.



18. Video Analysis

Where resources allow, North Houston FC intends to use video as part of player and team development. Video may be used for team tactical analysis, opposition analysis, individual player development, position-specific coaching, highlight creation, and scouting presentations.

Players pursuing higher-level opportunities should understand the importance of full-match footage. Highlight videos can generate interest — full matches help evaluators understand the player. Whenever possible, professional prospects should maintain access to both.

19. The North Houston FC Player Passport

Players identified as potential higher-level prospects may have a Player Passport created. The Passport may contain:

Full name	Date of birth	Nationality
Height	Preferred foot	Primary position
Secondary positions	Playing history	College history
Relevant statistics	Physical testing data	Highlight video
Full-match footage	Coaching evaluation	Contact information

The purpose is to present players professionally and efficiently to appropriate football contacts.



20. Professional Player Pathway

North Houston FC wants to become a bridge between talented players and higher levels of football. Potential pathways may include opportunities with:

- USL League One.
- USL Championship.
- MLS NEXT Pro.
- MLS.
- Professional clubs internationally.
- Professional trials and combines.

The pathway is based on performance. The club cannot guarantee trials, contracts, agent representation, scholarships, or professional employment. Our commitment is to evaluate players honestly and support appropriate opportunities when we believe a player is ready.

21. Our Responsibility to Scouts and Professional Clubs

North Houston FC must protect its credibility. We will not tell every player that he is ready for professional football. We will not send every player to every scout.

When North Houston FC recommends a player, our goal is for the receiving club or scout to know that the recommendation has been made seriously. This requires honesty. Sometimes the most valuable thing a coach can tell a player is: "You are not ready yet, but here is what you need to improve." Development requires truth.

22. Agents and Player Representation

North Houston FC may develop relationships with legitimate football agents and representatives, and may introduce appropriate players when it believes there could be a legitimate benefit.

Players are responsible for making their own decisions regarding representation. The club does not guarantee representation. Players should carefully evaluate any representative before signing an agreement and, where applicable, confirm the individual is appropriately licensed or authorized. North Houston FC will never pressure a player to sign with a particular agent.



23. Professional Scouting and Exposure

The club may pursue exposure opportunities including:

- Inviting scouts to matches.
- Sharing player profiles.
- Providing match footage.
- Organizing showcase matches.
- Hosting Pro Days.
- Arranging appropriate introductions.
- Communicating with recruitment departments.
- Facilitating trials where legitimate opportunities exist.

Exposure must be earned. The best way for a player to attract opportunities is to perform consistently.

24. North Houston FC Pro Day

The club's long-term objective is to establish a curated professional scouting event that may include selected first-team players, invited high-level prospects, physical testing, technical exercises, competitive 11v11 matches, player profiles, match footage, and invited scouts, coaches, agents, and recruitment professionals.

Participation does not guarantee professional interest. The purpose is to create legitimate opportunities for evaluation.



25. The Coaches' Commitment to Players

Professional standards must work both ways. We expect significant commitment from players. Players should expect commitment from coaches.

North Houston FC coaches should strive to:

- Arrive prepared and design purposeful training sessions.
- Communicate expectations clearly.
- Treat players with respect.
- Evaluate players honestly and provide constructive feedback.
- Continue developing as coaches.
- Make decisions based on the interests of the team.
- Create opportunities when appropriate.
- Never intentionally mislead players regarding professional opportunities.

We will demand accountability from players. Players should expect accountability from us.

26. Communication

Players should communicate professionally with coaches and teammates. Concerns should be addressed directly whenever possible. Players should avoid publicly criticizing teammates or coaches, creating unnecessary conflict, spreading rumors, or undermining team decisions.

Disagreement is allowed. Disrespect is not.

27. Social Media and Public Conduct

Players represent North Houston FC when publicly associated with the club. Players should avoid conduct that seriously damages the reputation of the player, the team, the club, teammates, coaches, sponsors, or partners.

Players should not publish confidential tactical information or private team matters without authorization. Players are encouraged to positively promote matches, club activities, community involvement, teammates, sponsors, and their own football development.



28. Match-Day Standards

Players should arrive at the designated time and bring all required equipment. Preparation begins before kickoff.

Players are expected to:

- Be mentally prepared.
- Participate fully in warmups.
- Understand the match plan.
- Support teammates.
- Respect officials and opponents.
- Maintain emotional control.

Substitutes remain part of the team. Players who are not starting must remain prepared to enter the match and contribute. Negative behavior from the bench is unacceptable.

29. Discipline

Violations of team standards may result in disciplinary action. Depending on severity, this may include:

1	Verbal conversation.
2	Formal warning.
3	Individual performance or behavior plan.
4	Reduced selection consideration.
5	Match suspension.
6	Temporary removal from team activities.
7	Removal from the club, subject to applicable club, league, registration, and contractual rules.

Serious misconduct may result in immediate escalation. Discipline should be fair, consistent, and appropriately documented.



30. The North Houston FC Standard

We believe professionalism is a habit.

It is arriving early.

It is training when nobody is watching.

It is taking care of your body.

It is listening.

It is communicating.

It is competing.

It is accepting criticism.

It is supporting teammates.

It is responding after mistakes.

It is doing the work repeatedly.

*Professionalism does not begin when a player signs a professional contract.
Professionalism begins when a player decides to behave like a professional.*

31. Our Promise

North Houston FC will strive to create an environment where serious players can pursue serious goals.

We will challenge you. We will coach you. We will evaluate you.

We will tell you where we believe you are succeeding. We will tell you where we believe you need to improve.

When we believe you are ready for a legitimate opportunity, we will make reasonable efforts to help you pursue it.

But the work belongs to you. Your career belongs to you. Your development belongs to you.

We can create an environment. We can provide coaching. We can open a door.
You must earn the opportunity to walk through it.



32. Our Goal

Our goal is not simply to participate. Our goal is to build. To develop. To compete. To win. To create opportunities. To help players progress. To establish North Houston FC as a respected football institution within Houston and beyond.

We want players to be proud to represent North Houston FC. We want opponents to respect North Houston FC. We want scouts to trust North Houston FC. We want talented players to seek out North Houston FC.

And we want every player who enters our environment to understand:

NORTH HOUSTON FC

**There is a
standard here.**

THE STANDARD • THE PATHWAY • THE OPPORTUNITY



THE NORTH HOUSTON FC CREED

We train with purpose.

We play with courage.

We compete with intensity.

We treat people with respect.

We take responsibility for our development.

We put the team before ourselves.

We pursue excellence without entitlement.

We behave like professionals before we become professionals.

We represent North Houston.

WE ARE NORTH HOUSTON FC.



SIGNATURE PAGE

33. Player Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the North Houston FC Player Handbook & Professional Development Standards.

I understand the expectations regarding professionalism, attendance, training, fitness, competition, conduct, and team responsibilities.

I understand that roster selection, playing time, starting positions, trials, professional opportunities, agent representation, and professional contracts are not guaranteed.

I understand that opportunities within the club are earned through factors including performance, attendance, fitness, tactical suitability, attitude, professionalism, and team needs.

I agree to make a good-faith effort to uphold the standards of North Houston FC while participating with the club.

Player Name

**Player
Signature**

Date

**Coach / Club
Representative**

Signature

Date