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To Whom it may Concern,

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for Ethan Pettengill's professional portfolio. I had the opportunity to observe Ethan teaching PED 283: Racket Activities, and I was impressed by his thoughtful approach to instruction, strong rapport with students, effective classroom management, and ability to connect sport-specific content to the broader responsibilities of teaching and coaching.

Ethan began the class with a warm-up that incorporated recall from previous lessons, providing students with an opportunity to revisit previously learned skills before progressing to new content. His warm-up was appropriately progressive and prepared students for the day's focus on serving. Throughout the lesson, Ethan clearly identified and emphasized important performance cues, such as the "back scratch" and transfer of weight. He supported his verbal explanations with visual demonstrations, giving students multiple ways to understand and apply the skills being taught.

One of Ethan's particular strengths is his ability to move beyond simply teaching sport-specific skills and help students understand how the content can be applied in future professional settings. Although PED 283 focuses on developing students' racket sport skills, Ethan consistently connected the lesson content to coaching and physical education. He discussed how particular drills and activities might be adapted for use in a practice or physical education class, helping students make connections between their own skill development and their future roles as teachers and coaches. I found this particularly valuable because it encouraged students to think not only about how to perform a skill, but also about how to teach and develop that skill in others.

Ethan also demonstrated strong awareness of the importance of individualized instruction and feedback. He discussed with students the distinction between coaching and physical education and emphasized the importance of determining how much feedback an individual student can effectively process. His use of both individual and group feedback demonstrated an understanding that students have different instructional needs. He also incorporated modifications into the lesson, including visual equipment to help guide students to appropriate locations for cones and poly spots. These modifications provided additional structure and support while maintaining students' engagement in the activities.

Classroom management was another clear strength of Ethan's teaching. Because students were working across seven courts, in two separate court areas. Ethan made a deliberate effort to repeat instructions at both locations so that all students had access to the same information. He also had students switch courts, ensuring that the same students were not consistently positioned farther away from the instructor. These seemingly small instructional decisions demonstrated Ethan's attention to equitable access to instruction and his awareness of how the physical organization of a class can influence students' learning experiences.

Ethan also demonstrated a strong rapport with his students. Despite being only in the third week of the semester, he already knew many students by name and was able to recognize when particular students were absent. His interactions with students were positive and supportive, and students appeared comfortable participating in the activities and receiving feedback. I was also impressed that Ethan had maintained positive relationships with two teaching assistants who had worked with him during a previous semester, further demonstrating his ability to build productive professional relationships with students.

Overall, Ethan created a class environment in which students were actively engaged, supported in their skill development, and encouraged to think critically about how the content could translate to their future work as teachers and coaches. His combination of clear instruction, demonstrations, relevant feedback, modifications, effective classroom management, and connections to professional practice reflects a thoughtful and student-centered approach to teaching.

My only recommendation for Ethan's continued development would be to make his checks for understanding somewhat more interactive. During the observed lesson, students participated very well and appeared to enjoy the activities; however, their demonstrations of understanding during checks for understanding were primarily limited to head nods. Incorporating additional opportunities for students to verbalize, demonstrate, or otherwise actively communicate their understanding could provide Ethan with even more meaningful information about student learning. I view this as a relatively minor area for continued growth within an otherwise strong instructional practice.

I strongly support Ethan's professional portfolio and believe that his teaching demonstrates a genuine commitment to student learning, effective pedagogy, and the preparation of future professionals in physical education and coaching.

Sincerely,

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