

# YMCA OF ABILENE

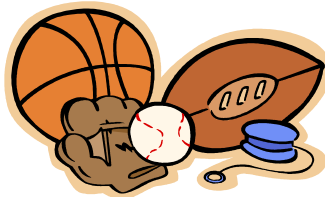


# YOUTH SPORTS COACHES MANUAL

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We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

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# SECTION I



## **Introduction/Philosophy/Policies**

- Who we are, Mission, What we do, How we do it
- Purpose and Goals for Youth Sports
- Philosophy & Youth Sports Pledge
- Sports Code of Conduct (All Creeds)
- Bill of Rights for Young Athletes
- Associations' Sports Policy

# YMCA YOUTH SPORTS MANUAL

## WHO WE ARE....

Over the years the YMCA of Abilene has expanded its service to include our youth sports programs for both male and female participants. The following manual will give an overview to the Youth Sports Programs.

## MISSION, WHAT WE DO....

The Mission of the YMCA of Abilene is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy Spirit, Mind and Body for all.

## HOW WE DO IT....

### **Everyone Plays:**

Every player is placed on a team and coached by a trained volunteer. There are no tryouts or cuts. Each participant will play at least half of each game. All players will have the opportunity to play different positions in the game, unless they are chosen to play a certain position.

### **Sports Skills:**

Each player will be taught the fundamental skills of the game. Self-confidence and discipline will be enhanced through the learning of these skills.

### **Sportsmanship:**

Learning how to compete with a positive attitude is the foundation of our programs. Respect for players, coaches, officials and parents are required at all games and practices. The outcome of all games is kept in perspective. Abusive language or violent behavior is not allowed.

### **Fitness:**

The improvement of the players' flexibility, muscle tone and cardiovascular efficiency is stressed.

### **Family Involvement:**

Family members are encouraged to become involved as coaches, officials, scorekeepers, team parents and spectators. Family ties are strengthened through this involvement.

### **Teamwork:**

Each team is asked to work together to form an effective unit. The coaches, officials and parents also work together toward the same goal. Teaching leadership and taking responsibility as a team are important elements.

### **Lifetime Attitudes:**

It is hoped that the player, coach and spectator will carry attitudes learned in our programs throughout their lives.

### **Fun:**

Playing for fun is the basic reason we have youth sports. League standings are not kept and there are no playoffs.

## **YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PURPOSE AND GOALS**

The sports program is designed to be an aid and tool in the development and growth of the participants. The YMCA is not a building, athletic fields or just sports. The YMCA is not just a sports association; however, the YMCA does use sports as one of its programs to foster physical, mental and spiritual growth. The attainments of exceptional athletic skills and the winning of games, though important, are secondary-the molding of future men and women is the goal.

The YMCA of Abilene provides sports programs that:

- Stress sportsmanship, fair play and teamwork
  - Emphasize the values of respect, responsibility, caring, honesty, effort and participation
  - Keep winning in perspective-child first, sport second
  - Enable all participants to play in every game
  - Include family involvement
  - Provide coaches, officials and parent orientations
  - Emphasize safety and age-appropriate development
  - Utilize volunteer leadership
  - Available to all segments of the community
  - To support and strengthen the family unit
  - To help children to develop to their fullest potential
  - To deliver programs in a positive YMCA environment of safety, support and care
  - To help each child have fun
  - To make "Everyone a Winner"
  - Welcome all participants regardless of race, sex, ethnicity or financial status
- Financial assistance for membership is available to all who qualify

## **YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PHILOSOPHY**

**YMCA youth sports are based on the concept that fair play is the very essence of competition. Everybody should have an equal opportunity to compete and a fair chance to participate.**

Fair play implies respect for oneself; one's opponent and others involved in conducting the competition. Players, coaches, officials and spectators share a responsibility for fair play. Fair play sets the child above the game. The YMCA believes that its youth sports

programs provide an excellent environment for developing sound spirit, mind and body. As these virtues grow, they will influence behavior in everyday life.

The YMCA also believes that its youth sports program will help families and individuals to grow personally, clarify values, improve relationships, appreciate diversity, develop leadership skills and have fun. It is for the development of such virtues that the YMCA promotes its youth sports programs. At the YMCA, “Everyone is a Winner”.

### **Youth Sports Pledge**

Teams may warm up prior to the start of the game. Before each game, the referee will blow the whistle signaling for the teams to line up at mid-field. Each team will line up around the center circle or mid-field, shoulder to shoulder and facing the opposing team. The referee will then ask the teams to repeat the YMCA pledge after reciting one line at a time.

Win or lose, I pledge before God,  
To play the game as well as I know how.  
To obey the rules,  
To be a good sport at all times,  
And to improve myself  
In spirit, mind and body.

The referee will thank the teams, give them any pre-game instructions, and inform the coaches of any necessary information. When this is done, the teams may move to their bench area and take their positions on the field.

### **YMCA Code of Sports Conduct**

We believe that sports should offer competitive fun in a learning and healthy environment. We want all players, parents, coaches and referees to read and abide by these codes of conduct. It will make the games more enjoyable for all and help teach our sons and daughters that competition can take place in a friendly and fun atmosphere.

#### **Coaches Code of Conduct**

I will remember that I am a youth sports coach and that this should be fun for the children. I will be knowledgeable of the rules and fundamentals of the game and do my best to teach them.

I will do my best to teach the “MVP” program values of honesty, respect, responsibility, caring, effort and participation.

I will not engage in negative discussions with any game official, spectator, parent or coach; neither before, during or after the game.

I will not allow my team's players or parents to act in a way that demonstrates disrespect for the game officials or any member of the opposing team: their players, coaches or parents.

I will assure that my players and I recite the sports pledge before each game and shake hands with the opposing team after each game.

I will abide by all the rules and regulations of the YMCA.

I will see that any disputes are handled calmly and by the proper procedures and proper authorities.

I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.

### Sports Officials Code of Conduct

I will remember that these games are for fun and development.

I will learn the rules of the game and know any age appropriate modifications.

I will apply the rules of the game fairly and impartially.

I will see that any disputes are handled calmly and by the proper procedures and authorities.

I will not tolerate any abusive behavior on the part of any participant, parent or coach.

I will place the safety of the participant above all else.

I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support to all involved in youth sports.

I will abide by all the rules and regulations of the YMCA.

I will not enter into negative discourse with any player, coach, spectator or parent; neither before, during or after the game.

### Player Code of Conduct

I am here to learn and have fun.

I will respect coaches, officials and players, both on my team and other teams.

I will not use any language or gestures that could cause bad feelings.

I will be respectful and will not argue calls with any official.

I will not play in such a way as to intentionally cause harm to any other player.

I will recite the sports pledge before each game and will shake hands with my opponents after each game.

I will try hard and play fair.

I will abide by the rules and regulations of the YMCA.

I will attend every practice and game that I can and I will be responsible to notify my coach if I can not attend.

### Parents Code of Conduct

I will cheer for my child and not yell at him or her.

I will not argue calls with the officials; neither during, or after the game.

I will respect the decision of the coaches, officials and program administrators in all matters.

I will not engage in any negative behavior towards the other team; their players, coaches or parents.

I will refrain from the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in a youth sports environment.

I will place the emotional and physical well being of all children ahead of a personal desire to win.

I will abide by all the rules and regulations of the YMCA.

I will stress to my child, and demonstrate by my behavior, the importance of sportsmanship in all areas of play.

## **YOUTH SPORTS BILL OF RIGHTS**

Right to participate in sports.

Right to participate at a level commensurate with each child's maturity and ability.

Right to have qualified adult leadership.

Right to play as a child and not as an adult.

Right of children to share in the leadership and decision making of their sport participation.

Right to participate in a safe and healthy environment.

Right to proper preparation for participation in sports.

Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success.

Right to be treated with dignity.

Right to have fun in sports.

## **ASSOCIATION SPORTS POLICY**

All participants, parents and spectators must follow the following policies. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in forfeiture, suspension or expulsion.

1. Spectators are not permitted to use tobacco, alcohol or drugs while watching games or at practices.
2. The Sports Director must have a signed waiver and code of conduct for parents and players, before a participant may participate in a game. The participant's legal guardian must sign these forms.
3. All coaches must complete a volunteer packet, sign a coaching contract and code of conduct prior to coaching.
4. No jewelry (including watches, rings, necklaces, earrings or facial piercings) may be worn during practice or games.
5. Parents or legal guardians must pick up their child when the practice or game ends. Parents or legal guardians must stay at practices and games for all divisions except 12 and up.
6. Weather: if your practice or game is cancelled due to inclement weather, then communication is handled through the coaches. Please contact your coach with any questions.
7. Refunds may be given prior to the first game. There is a uniform fee that cannot be refunded and an administrative fee for the processing of the refund that will apply. See refund policy.

8. The YMCA will do its best to honor requests for teams and/or locations. Keep in mind that requests may or may not be honored depending on a number of circumstances.
9. Referees will always do their best to call a game fair. However, we all make mistakes, and each one of us sees things from different perspectives. All spectators, parents, coaches and participants are EXPECTED to support the officials. Any negative comments or gestures towards an official will result in immediate suspension and/or expulsion.
10. No participant will be allowed to play if his/her uniform is defaced in any way (a participant who rips the sleeves off their jersey, will need to purchase another one prior to participating).

# SECTION II



## Character Development

- Character Development
- MVP Program
- MVP Huddles
- 40 Developmental Assets

## **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

### **The YMCA Challenge**

We at the YMCA are committed to quality programs that enhance the spirit, mind and body of all. Through the delivery of these programs we strive to incorporate and enhance the character values of caring, honesty, responsibility and respect. We believe that good character makes a better family member, program leader, community member and person. YMCA coaches must be willing to take the YMCA challenge to accept and demonstrate these character values. Leading by example and “walking the talk” is crucial to character development.

As YMCA coaches you are expected to assist the YMCA and the families in the community in furthering the character development of their children. This is partially accomplished by providing an environment in which the six character values fostered. Coaches, parents and officials are all role models and their behavior should be conducive to character development. The six values should be demonstrated by all at each game and practice.

When people think of YMCA programs, swimming, aerobics and childcare usually come to mind. These programs meet community needs and are great fun. However, these programs are not our primary task.

The YMCA’s job is to help people grow in spirit, mind and body. This can be accomplished through programs, which are mission driven and incorporate the six character values: honesty, caring, responsibility, respect, effort and participation.

# YMCA OF ABILENE

## MVP PROGRAM

### HONESTY

To tell the truth, to act in such a way that you are worthy of trust, to have integrity; making sure your choices match your values (represented by the color BLUE associated with TRUE BLUE)

### CARING

To love others, to be sensitive to the well being of others, to help others (represented by the color RED associated with a caring HEART)

### RESPONSIBILITY

To do what is right, what you ought to do, to be accountable for your behavior and obligations (represented by the color GREEN associated with ENVIRONMENTALISM)

### RESPECT

To treat others as you would have them treat you, to value the worth of every person, including yourself. (represented by the color YELLOW associated with the GOLDEN RULE)

### BEST EFFORT

To try your hardest in every minute of play, to learn new skills and accomplish personal goals. (represented by the color SILVER associated with the SILVER LINING WITHIN US ALL)

### PARTICIPATION

To join in with your teammates during games and practices, to play hard, play fair, and play for fun. (represented by the color WHITE associated with the PURE DESIRE WITHIN US ALL)

# Abilene YMCA Sport's Department

## “Making Values a Priority” Program

Sports is much more than instructing a child how to swing a bat or kick a ball, it is a n opportunity to teach life skills that can become the very foundation of a person's life. The YMCA has identified four core character values and two fundamental values that we believe should be used over and over, not only now but also in a child's adult life, causing them to be the very best person they can be. That is what the YMCA is really about. Helping people become the very best they can be. The Abilene YMCA Youth Sports Program is committed to building strong kids, strong families, and strong communities. We believe the cornerstone to achieve this objective is the teaching and encouraging of character values to everyone involved (children, parents, and coaches). The YMCA MVP program has been designed to assist Sports Administrators in emphasizing character values in their program. **We are asking all teams to help us build character by participation in the MVP Program.**

The following is an overview of the program:

1. Team assigns a Value Coach to help the Head Coach.
2. The Value Coach's responsibilities are to help introduce the program, encourage participation from the entire team, monitor success and record results.
3. Coach and Value Coach hold weekly huddles based on the weekly lessons with the team and chooses who as shown that value the most in the last week.
4. Value Coach then records accomplished items and turns the results to the YMCA Sports Coordinator.

**The Value Coach and Head Coach will help the parents, players and fans accomplish some of the following MVP values:**

**\*To display the value of Responsibility:**

Parents, Coaches and Players lead the YMCA Sports Pledge before all games.

**\*To display the value of Participation:**

Coaches provide and ensure equal playing time for all players.

**\*To display the value of Caring:**

Parents and fans of team actively cheer good plays by both teams during games, encouraging sportsmanship and not focusing on defeating the opposing team.

**\*To display the value of Honesty:**

All parents and coaches discuss with team members the importance of honesty in all aspects of life.

**\*To display the value of Respect:**

Players and coaches shake hands with the opposing team after every game.

**\*To display the values of the YMCA:**

Parents, coaches, and team members are aware and exhibit the YMCA Character Values (respect, responsibility, honesty and caring) during all aspects of the YMCA Youth Sports Program.

\*Team formally recognizes players that exhibit good sportsmanship and YMCA character values throughout the season. (**How did your team formally recognize sportsmanship** \_\_\_\_\_)

\*All team parents accept a specific role to assist in the success of the team. Examples: snack parents, clean up parents, practice parents, special events parents, etc. (**Please attach roster with list of team parent’s assignments**)

\*Team members and parents participate together in a planned practice activity during the season. Examples: parent/player game, relays, etc. (**What event did your team participate in?** \_\_\_\_\_)

\*Team members and their families participate together in an outside special team event. Examples: team picnic, Rough Riders game, etc. (**What event did you team participate in?** \_\_\_\_\_)

\*Team offers drinks and snacks to the officials after every game in the season.

\*The entire team participates in a “team circle” after every practice, discussing a specific YMCA character value or how it relates to the team. (Team lessons included in packet.)

\*Every family on the team commits to choose at least one positive and fun event that happened at the game and discuss it on the way home.

\*Every family commits to at least one time a week, outside of organized practice, to either discuss or physically review skills that were learned in practice.

**Our staff will implement the MVP program as follows:**

+Staff, including referees will remind participants and coaches of the program.

+Staff will conduct themselves in a manner that promotes the character values of the MVP program.

**Coach’s Role:**

+Refer to character values whenever possible in practices and games. Examples; team huddles, good sportsmanship, distribution of star stickers, etc.

+Challenge your kids to remember all four character values and see if they can recite them by the end of the season.

### **Parent's Role:**

Family involvement is one of the unique characteristics of YMCA Sports programs and should not be considered an option, but rather a required component. Parent involvement is a key part of the YMCA Sports philosophy and it is important that they understand and take part in the program to assure its success.

Following are components to a parent's role in the YMCA Sports philosophy:

- Being aware of YMCA Sports philosophy and supporting it by their own behavior with special awareness of the need to show respect for officials, coaches, and the opposing team-modeling the conduct expected of their children.
- Attending games, practices, and special events.
- Spending time with their children, practicing skills and attitudes developed during practice and games.
- Supporting their children by praising the things done well and the improvements made.
- Spending time with their children, listening and talking about their accomplishments and feelings.
- Volunteering to help the program.  
(Volunteer opportunity examples in Family Involvement List)

### **Family Involvement List**

There are numerous opportunities for adults to serve as volunteers within the YMCA Sports.

Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

- >Head Coach
- >Assistant Coach
- >Character Coach
- >Equipment Coach
- >Specific Skill Coach
- >Practice Coach
- >Bench Coach
- >Official
- >Timekeeper
- >Scorekeeper Team Parent
- >Team Event Planner
- >Telephone Parent
- >Refreshment Parent
- >Award and Recognition Parent

## **CHARACTER COACH OBJECTIVE**

A vital role in the success of the MVP program is the Character Coach. This Coach will help in implementing the MVP program with their team. YMCA sports are constructed around character development and family involvement, so everything on the team should be built on the achievements made by the Character Coach. Therefore, whether a team has a winning record or not, they are winners. The following is an outline of the Character Coaches season.

## **CHARACTER COACH SEASON OUTLINE**

### **\*Agree to serve as your teams Character Coach**

- Might be asked by Head Coach or YMCA Sports Coordinator
- Nominated by other parents on team

### **\*Help conduct Parent's meeting**

- This meeting can be part of the initial parents meeting by the coach or a separate meeting all together
- Review YMCA Code of Conduct and Guidelines
- Discuss your role as Character Coach
- Review YMCA MVP program philosophy, procedures and importance
- Review YMCA MVP program criteria
- Discuss team ideas for accomplishing MVP criteria (which options do they choose)
- Review importance of family involvement
- Distribute family involvement list
- Discuss "Team Huddles" and the importance of huddles
- Assign and nominate roles for parents on the team

### **\*Help Plan and Supervisor "Team Huddles"**

- Should be done at the end of each team practice or game (minimum of one per week)
- Should have scheduled leader for every "Huddle" throughout the season
- Can be led by Coach, Character Coach, parents or athlete
- Should be based on YMCA Character Values (honesty, respect, responsibility, and caring) and team issues combined (teamwork, punctuality, listening, sharing, maintaining equipment, etc.)
- All "Team Huddles" should be age appropriate

### **\*Ensure MVP Standards are being done throughout the season**

- Encourage and acknowledge team's success throughout the season by issuing Value Stars to all team members after each game
- Monitor sportsmanship on all levels: Coaches, Parents and Athletes
- Inform and counsel any individual not carrying out MVP responsibilities

### **\*End of Season**

- Discuss and review performance of team in regards to the MVP program at awards event or End of the Season Celebration
- Turn in MVP distribution form to YMCA Sports Coordinator

\*Evaluate MVP program with your team's Parent's and Coaches

- Informal discussion/interview throughout season
- Informal discussion/interview at the end of the season
- Have Coaches and Parents fill out Evaluation forms and turn them into the Program Director

# YMCA TEAM HUDDLES

Team huddles are an essential part of developing the players on your team. They give you the opportunity to discuss topics that will help your players learn character qualities needed to grow not only as an individual, but also as a team. The YMCA would like for you to take time to discuss the following character values throughout the season. You should spend roughly 5 to 10 minutes after each practice in your team huddle. During team huddles take the time to discuss the topic lesson with the team and allow each of your players to be an active part of the discussion. After the discussion issue each player one of the weekly Value Stars and discuss the reason behind the decision.

## Week 1 Lesson:

### Respect

Everyone knows that a poor loser is someone who gets angry or upset when they lose a competition. However, there is such a thing as a “poor winner”. A poor winner is one who degrades, makes fun of or laughs at someone who may take a bad shot, or miss a play. The YMCA wants to discourage both the poor loser and poor winner. If you are on the winning end of a competition you need to be sure to recognize the other team’s efforts and compliment them on playing a good game. You should shake hands afterwards and never make fun of your opponent during or after the game. By doing this you will gain not only your opponents respect, possibly a new friend.

+Activity-Ask the questions. What do you do if you think the official made a bad call?

Allow the players to give their answers and discuss both positive and negative reactions. Do you make a face at them, say something mean to them or kick the ball at them? Referees sometimes miss a call. They do not care who wins or loses.

Remember to respect their calls and keep playing the game.

## Week 2 Lesson:

### Responsibility

Responsibility is doing what is asked of you and being in control of your actions. As a team we have responsibilities to one another. If we are going to succeed as a team then we need to work as a team. We all have roles that are an important part of the success of this team. As long as we come to practice, games, and put forth 100%, this team will be successful no matter if we win or lose. Show up on time for all team events and take time to work on your skills, not only at practice, but at home. This will show that you are dedicated to the team and that they can count on you.

+Activity-Gather children into a group. “When you come to practice, you should do three things: (1) Be ready to play. (2) Learn and improve your skills and work with others. (3) Have Fun! I’m going to give you a way to remember these three things.

It’s called our ‘team motto’. Our team motto is **play hard, play fair, and have fun!**

Let’s say it together loud. Be sure to remember our team motto and put it to practice.

### **Week 3 Lesson:**

#### **Honesty**

While playing this sport there are rules we need to follow. The YMCA has put these rules into place to ensure that it is safe and that no one gets injured. While playing we need to be sure to follow the rules. By following the rules, not only for the sport, but also at school or church, your teammates, friends and family will see that they can trust you. If people know that they can trust you they will ask you to help them and be their friend.

+Activity-Gather the team into a group. “Give me some examples of being dishonest in practice and games.” Listen to their responses. After each response, have the players help change the examples into acts of honesty. “Honesty is an important value that all players should be practicing every day, especially if a coach isn’t there to help you make the right decision or if an official doesn’t see the play.”

### **Week 4 Lesson:**

#### **Caring**

It is important to care for those you interact with; your family, friends, teammates, and opponents. At the YMCA we can do this by cheering on good plays by both teams and helping an opponent or teammate up when they fall.

+Activity-Point out to the players that one way to demonstrate caring is by volunteering. Ask the players to volunteer for one hour throughout the season. This could be helping a neighbor rake the yard, wash a car, or carry in groceries. Have them bring a note verifying they did it at the final practice. Have each player share their experience.

### **Week 5 Lesson:**

#### **Best Effort**

Every child shows effort during every practice and game. The effort can show up in many different forms from scoring a point, running, defensive play or in a drastic improvement of play. We need to encourage each child’s efforts in a positive manner when we talk about the success of the game.

+Activity-Gather the team and talk to your players about giving 110%. Ask them what makes effort so important to the team. Give them some examples of single efforts and total team efforts during the last weeks of practice and games.

### **Week 6 Lesson:**

#### **Participation**

At the YMCA we want every child to have equal opportunity to participate in our youth sports programs. We believe we are the building block to our youth in their development as an athlete. This is why we guarantee each kid will play at least half the game. It does not matter who wins or loses as long as the players are having fun and learning the game.

+Activity-Gather the team in a circle and ask the kids what the word participation means to them. Have them express their ideas on what participation is and then share with them that participation is about having fun while learning the sport. This is why we need to play different positions and different sports so we can have a better enjoyment for the game.

### **Week 7 Lesson:**

#### **Caring**

It is important to care for your teammates and your opponents. At the YMCA we can do this by cheering on good plays by both teams and helping an opponent or teammate when they fall.

+Activity-Gather the children in a circle. “Let’s talk about the game. When we did something good how do we show our teammates that we care about them?” Let them discuss. Then ask them what they would say when something bad happened. “It’s very important to support your teammates, especially when they make mistakes. Saying something that makes someone feel good show you care.”

### **Week 8 Lesson:**

#### **Respect**

Last Week-time to wrap up the season!

+Activity-Gather children into a group. “What have you learned about this sport or this season?” Listen to their responses. What does respect have to do with playing this sport or any sport? It takes many years to master any sport, so it deserves your respect. Every year there are new skills to learn and improve on; every year you play, you’ll get better. That’s why you need to come back next season! What examples of players showing respect have you seen this season? Listen to their responses and discuss.

## 40 Developmental Assets

	CATEGORY	ASSET NAME AND DEFINITION
E X T E R N A L  A S S E T S	Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family support-Family life provides high levels of love and support.</li> <li>2. Positive family communication-Young person and his/her parent(s) communicate positively and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).</li> <li>3. Other Adult relationships-young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.</li> <li>4. Caring neighborhood-Young person experiences caring neighbors.</li> <li>5. Caring school climate-School provides a caring, encouraging environment.</li> <li>6. Parent involvement in schooling-Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.</li> </ol>
	Empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Community values youth-Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.</li> <li>8. Youth as resource-Young people are given useful roles in the community.</li> <li>9. Service to others-Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.</li> <li>10. Safety-Young person feels safe at home, at school and in the neighborhood.</li> </ol>
	Boundaries & Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Family Boundaries-Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.</li> <li>12. School boundaries-School provides clear rules and consequences.</li> <li>13. Neighborhood boundaries-Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.</li> <li>14. Adult role models-Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.</li> <li>15. Positive peer influence-Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.</li> <li>16. High Expectations-Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.</li> </ol>
	Constructive Use of Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Creative activities-Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater or other arts.</li> <li>18. Youth programs-Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in the community.</li> <li>19. Religious community-Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.</li> <li>20. Time at home-Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.</li> </ol>
	Commitment To Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Achievement motivation-Young person is motivated to do well in school.</li> <li>22. School engagement-Young person is actively engaged in learning.</li> <li>23. Homework-Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.</li> <li>24. Bonding to school-Young person cares about his/her school.</li> <li>25. Reading for pleasure-Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.</li> </ol>
I N T E R N A L  A S S E T S	Positive Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26. Caring-Young person places high value on helping other people.</li> <li>27. Equality and social justice-Young person places value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.</li> <li>28. Integrity-Young person acts on convictions and stands up for his/her beliefs.</li> <li>29. Honesty-Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy".</li> <li>30. Responsibility-Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.</li> <li>31. Restraint-Young person believes it is more important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.</li> </ol>
	Social Competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32. Planning and decision making-Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.</li> <li>33. Interpersonal competence-Young person has empathy, sensitivity and friendship skills.</li> <li>34. Cultural competence-Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.</li> <li>35. Resistance skills-Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.</li> <li>36. Peaceful conflict resolution-Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.</li> </ol>
	Positive Identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>37. Personal power-Young person feels he/she has control over "things that happen to me".</li> <li>38. Self-esteem-Young person reports having a high self-esteem.</li> <li>39. Sense of purpose-Young person reports that "my life has purpose".</li> <li>40. Positive view of personal future-Young person is optimistic about his/her personal future.</li> </ol>

# SECTION III



## How to be a successful coach

- Coach Job Description
- Coach Checklist
- Coaching Philosophy/Contract
- Skill Development/Practice Session Outline
- Developmental Characteristics

**Coach in YMCA of Abilene**  
**Job Description**

- Title: Volunteer Coach for the YMCA
- Supervisor: YMCA Sports Coordinator
- Description: Coach of a YMCA Youth Sports team will be considered a role model for young athletes. Must display and teach sportsmanship, fair play and full participation for everyone. Will instruct and promote youth in specific sports in accordance with the YMCA of Abilene sports philosophy.
- Qualifications: Successfully completes coaches training and all paperwork  
Willingness to work with youth  
Must not want to win at all cost  
Be supportive of the YMCA and its philosophy  
Must be dependable, patient and enthusiastic  
Pass a federal background check
- Responsibilities: Treat all kids and parents with respect  
Supervise an assistant coach(es)  
Plan and supervise games, practices and team events  
Teach the young athlete the fundamentals of the sport  
Ensure that programs are taught to promote character development  
Encourage family involvement  
Schedule and conduct parent meetings  
Be present at main parent meeting to meet everyone  
Provide and ensure a fun and safe environment  
Learn and follow all league rules, policies and by-laws  
Enforce rules set by the YMCA and its Sports Committee  
Give each player equal playing time  
Maintain a high level of professionalism  
Put the feelings of the athlete ahead of your desire to win  
Implement MVP Program

## **Youth Sports Coach Checklist**

The coach is the single most important adult leader for his/her players. He or she is responsible for making sure that the team members develop positive attitudes about fair play and respect for others while learning specific sport skills and having fun. The coach teaches players about the rules of the game and helps them develop important values about life. The sport skills themselves are merely tools to achieve something far more significant-helping children reach their full potential.

### Checklist of Responsibilities

#### GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend Coaches Meeting
- Attend parent meeting
- Attend family events planned for team
- Serve as a resource person for team
- Share ideas and concerns with YMCA staff

#### PRACTICE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Make sure parents and team members are aware of the dates, times and locations of practices and are given adequate notice of changes
- Prepare for practice in advance; develop a lesson plan based on review and progress from previous practices-know what's been covered and what needs to be taught
- Follow outline for practice session, allowing enough time to cover all components
- Allow for as much practice time per individual as possible, avoid making players stand around waiting
- Be aware of the whereabouts of all team members during practice; remain at the site until all players have left; check with parents of the absent players about their children's whereabouts.
- Reward 100% attendance at practice
- Get to know team members personally; always call them by name
- Keep a current list of parent contact numbers in case of injury or illness of a child
- Help players set individual goals and work towards these goals
- Teach the skills of the sport and the importance of physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle
- Lead the discussions about the values, emphasized by the YMCA Youth Sports philosophy by asking questions and introducing problems and situations for the players to deal with
- Encourage parent involvement by providing volunteer opportunities for parents and by scheduling a family activity for team members
- During practice scrimmages, have team members take turns officiating
- Inform the assistant coaches if you cannot attend a practice, making sure that he/she has the appropriate lesson plan, equipment and other necessary

information. Make sure someone is covering and taking care of practice.

- ❑ Make sure a first aid kit is available at all practice sessions
- ❑ Check the condition of both equipment and site for safety hazards before beginning practice
- ❑ Maintain a positive attitude and enthusiasm toward practicing
- ❑ Make sure the necessary equipment is available
- ❑ Abide by the guidelines for practices as set by the YMCA

### GAME RESPONSIBILITIES

- ❑ Require team members to arrive early enough for an adequate warm-up prior to the start of the game
- ❑ Give a brief pregame talk:
  1. Put the importance of the game in its proper perspective
  2. Remind players of the skills they've been practicing and the individual goals they've set, and encourage them to concentrate on performing these skills rather than on what their opponents may do
  3. Emphasize the need to think and play as a team, not to criticize teammates
  4. Stress the importance of respecting the officials decisions
  5. Encourage players to have fun
- ❑ Demonstrate respect for the officials:
  1. Don't criticize or insult an official in front of children, parents or other coaches
  2. Don't assume an official intentionally made a mistake
  3. Help control parents and spectators during games
  4. Make sure that the team members cooperate with the officials and understand the importance of the officials' role
  5. Ask questions when you don't understand a call; listen and accept what the officials say even when you are sure they are wrong
  6. Thank the officials after the game and congratulate them on a job well done
  7. Assist the officials in their duties
  8. Set an example of good sportsmanship for team members and spectators to follow
- ❑ Support players during the game
  1. Be enthusiastic and compliment everyone, not just the best players, on their performance
  2. Say something positive about their performance when taking them out of the game, then give them ideas and suggestions for improvement
  3. Don't yell advice from the sidelines; give them a chance to make decisions and learn themselves
  4. Correct the mistakes of your players in a quiet, controlled and positive tone of voice during timeouts
  5. Show respect for opponents whether they are winning or losing and view them as partners in the sport
  6. Help players calm down when they lose their temper by staying calm

yourself

❑ Schedule playing time for team members in accordance with the YMCA Youth Sports philosophy:

1. Every team member plays at least half of the game regardless of the score
2. Team members have the opportunities to play different positions

❑ After the game, join team members in congratulating the coaches and players of the other team

❑ Hold a postgame Team Circle to help team members learn from the game by pointing out both mistakes and strengths, and asking questions and making suggestions

❑ Rainout Policy-If it is raining on game day, no decision will be made prior to 7:00AM on Saturdays. Every effort will be made to play the game as scheduled. If at least half of the game is played, it will be considered a full game and will not be rescheduled. However, if there is a rainout the YMCA will call the coach and the coach should call parents to notify them of the cancellation.

**Rescheduling Rainout Games:**

**COACHES** please call the YMCA on the Sunday after the rainout to receive your rescheduled game time. Games will be attempted to be made up during the week nights after the cancellation. We will attempt to make up every game, unless we run out of weeks to play in the season. Coaches, please notify your parents of this policy, so that they are not all calling the YMCA for cancellation information.

## **YMCA Coaching Philosophy**

As the coach, forget the professional and college role models and the win at all cost approach. Do not try to get your feelings of self-worth from your team's win-loss record. Coaching youth sports calls for teaching the fundamentals properly, developing the basic team concepts, working on fair play values and encouraging all players to participate and enjoy the sport. The most important element is the relationship between the coach and the team. The coach is a leader, role model, teacher and friend. This relationship is far more significant than runs scored or the games won. The quality of the coach-team relationship is the ultimate measure of success for youth sports coaches.

- \*Keep it simple: Most sports are relatively simple to play and can be enjoyed by all ages. Overcomplicated formations, plays and strategies tend to confuse and frustrate youth. By keeping it simple, it will build self-esteem and confidence.
- \*Work on basic skills: Younger teams especially should concentrate on fundamentals. Teach skills and concentrate on the basics. Help players become conscious of the importance of proper execution. Stop the action often to help individual players improve, but don't interfere excessively.
- \*Work with every player on your team: The most highly skilled and least skilled players on your team should be given equal attention. Every player should be helped to improve in ability and to enjoy the game. It is important that every player participates and has fun, rather than just a few good players dominating the action.
- \*Teach 'Fair Play': Playing fair is an essential part of youth sports. Respect for oneself, teammates, the other team, the rules and the officials who uphold them.
- \*Help players set and evaluate individual goals: Competing against oneself is perhaps the best way to improve skills, help players measure their skills, set goals for the future and work to reach those goals. What is important is not so much how players measure up against each other, but how much each player learns and reaches new levels of skills and enjoyment.
- \*Keep winning in perspective: Winning games is only one of the many goals that are important in sports. Help players and their parents become aware of other important goals: learning skills, becoming better physically fit, being a good leader and a good follower, dealing with the emotions of sports and having fun.

## **Coaching Objectives**

Players learn through playing the game. In all practice and learning situations, every player should be exposed to the demands made by the game. Every player should be confronted by enjoyable challenges he/she is able to cope with. They should experience success in coping with these challenges and only then should they be exposed to more challenging and more stressful situations. Everyone can play, but not everyone is talented enough to learn advanced techniques and skills. More naturally gifted players need to be exposed to more challenging situations than the less gifted players.

## Now You're a Coach

For your players, you, the coaches are the single most important adult leader. You will help the players have fun, learn skills, develop sportsmanship, and discuss values in a meaningful way.

### **You Will:**

- +Contact parents and players
- +Come to the parent/players meeting to meet and greet families
- +Look at yourself and explore your own motivations, values and goals
- +Listen to and share with other adult leaders
- +Recruit players through your children to complete your roster, if needed
- +Choose practice days with start and finish times, plus locations
- +Explain your discipline procedures for behavior problems, missed practices, etc., (nothing too severe , unless cleared with Sports Coordinator)
- +Stress parental and player conduct while on the field
- +Inform parents about what equipment will be needed. Players are responsible for their own equipment.
- +Require clean uniforms for every game. Shirts should always be tucked in.
- +Stress the need for players to maintain good school grades
- +Get parents involved: at practice, linesperson, team mom, character coach, etc.
- +Verify your roster, making sure all player information is correct; pass on any corrections to the YMCA Sports Coordinator
- +Follow MVP program
- +Have a question and answer period

### **Conduct Practice Sessions:**

- +Get to know your players personally
- +Help the players set goals and work towards them
- +Lead discussions by asking questions and introducing problems and situations for players to deal with
- +Teach skills and physical fitness
- +Build teamwork
- +Enjoy yourself and let your players know it

### **Game Responsibilities:**

- +See that your players are present and ready to play
- +Pre-game warm ups
- +Introduce yourself to the game official and the opposing teams coach
- +Control yourself, players, fans for your team and parent behavior during and after the game
- +Coach and encourage your team during the game. DO NOT try and officiate the game from the sideline! If you or any parents would like to officiate, please call the Sports Department.

## **Disciplinary Actions**

The YMCA understands the necessity of a coach being permitted to discipline a player. The YMCA will allow this in regards to disruptive behavior at practice or games and excessive practice absences. If the coach elects to utilize this disciplinary option as a teaching method, he/she must abide by the following procedures.

1. Clearance with the Sports Coordinator or Director of Operations at the YMCA.
2. Discuss the situation with the parents.
3. Notify the opposing coach prior to the start of the game.
4. Clearance is for one game only, each offense must be processed.

**Note:** This action is to deter a habitual action, not a single unavoidable circumstance.

Any player arriving late for the game may lose their spot in the rotation. This is the coaches decision.

## **Ejected**

If a player, coach or a fan is ejected from a game, the head coach must notify the Sports Coordinator within 48 hours. Failure to report an ejection may result in further action taken against the head coach. The player, coach or fan will be placed on probation for the remainder of the season and can receive a one game suspension to be served at the next game. If the same player, coach or fan endures a second ejection during the season he/she could face the possibility of being suspended for the remainder of the season depending on the nature of the offense. The YMCA of Abilene **will not** issue refunds to any player, coach or fan ejected from a game or any one involved in a suspended game or season.

## YMCA Coaching Contract

I understand that my responsibilities as a youth coach are of great importance and that my actions have the potential to significantly influence the young athletes that I coach. Therefore, I promise to uphold the following rights of young athletes to the best of my ability:

- I. Right to participate in sports
- II. Right to participate at a level commensurate with each child's maturity and ability
- III. Right to have qualified adult leadership
- IV. Right to play as a child and not as an adult
- V. Right of children to share in the leadership and decision making of their sport participation
- VI. Right to participate in safe and healthy environments
- VII. Right to proper preparation for participation in sports
- VIII. Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success
- IX. Right to be treated with dignity
- X. Right to have fun in sports

I also promise to conduct myself in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Coaches as given next:

1. I will treat each athlete, opposing coach, official, parent, and administrator with dignity, based on the four values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
2. I will do my best to learn the fundamental skills, teaching and evaluation techniques, and strategies of my sport.
3. I will become thoroughly familiar with the rules of my sport.
4. I will become familiar with the objectives of the YMCA Youth Sports program with which I am affiliated. I will strive to achieve these objectives and communicate them to my athletes and their parents.
5. I will uphold the authority of officials who are assigned to the contest in which I coach and will assist them in every way to conduct fair and impartial competitive contests.
6. I will learn the strengths and weaknesses of my athletes so that I might place them in situations where they have a maximum opportunity to achieve success.
7. I will conduct my practices and contests so that all athletes have an opportunity to improve their skill level in different areas through active participation.
8. I will communicate to my athletes and their parents the rights and responsibilities of individuals on our team.
9. I will cooperate with the administrator of our organization in the enforcement of rules and regulations and will report any irregularities that violate sound competitive practices.
10. I will protect the health and safety of my athletes by insisting that all of the activities under my control are conducted for their psychological and physiological welfare, rather than for the vicarious interests of adults.
11. I will implement the YMCA Sports Department's "MVP" Program.

With my signature, which I voluntarily affix to this contract, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and will do my best to fulfill the promises made herein.

\_\_\_\_\_

Sport

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Sports Coordinator

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The first practice initiates the season. The first order of business should be to introduce yourself, welcome the parents and players, and provide a brief overview of the YMCA's coaching philosophy. Make them feel important and ask for their support and involvement. If you do not have volunteers for co-coaches, team parent, or character coach, this is the time to request help from the parents. If it is at all possible, try to arrange your first informational meeting with players and parents prior to your first practice so that you do not infringe on practice time.

Usually two practices are scheduled prior to the first game. These practice sessions should be used to provide the basic rules, skills and procedures needed for the first game. During these practices, the players should learn:

1. Positions-Each position and its role should be explained. Stress the need for each position and how players need to work together.
2. Strategy-Teach basic defense and offense by using controlled scrimmages.
3. Basic Skills-Use drills to teach the basic skills and rules needed to fully participate and perform in the sport.

Be sure to have all the equipment you need for each practice and game. Have the balls, your whistle, goal markers, game rules, coach's manual, first aid kit, etc. ready.

### Practice Session Outline (1 hour practice)

#### I. Warm Up (5 minutes)

Warm up activities prepare the body for more intense activity, thus reducing the risk of injury. Each practice must begin with some simple warm up exercises. The following are tips for leading warm up exercises with children:

- A. Demonstrating the exercise while giving verbal instruction
  1. Explain the purpose of the exercise.
  2. Speak in words the players can understand.
- B. Exercising with the players (be a positive role model)
  1. Give all players an opportunity to lead the exercises.
  2. Make sure all players can see and hear the leader.
- C. Discussing good habits with the players while exercising.
  1. Suggest positive thoughts like "jog one lap and think about the best thing that happened to you this week".
  2. Remind the players about the YMCA house rules.
    - Speak for yourself
    - Listen to others
    - Avoid put downs
    - Take charge of yourself
    - Show respect
- D. Using a variety of exercises

1. Allow players to help select the exercises.
2. Never use exercise as a form of punishment.

## **II. Skill Development (25 minutes)**

The skill development component should be age appropriate and organized so that everyone is involved. Use individual and partner drills frequently. Arrange players so that everyone has room to practice at the same time. This allows a player to make mistakes without fear of being ridiculed in front of teammates and ensures plenty of activity. The skill development component consists of two parts:

- A. Practice previously taught skills (all players benefit from working on fundamentals)
  1. During this part of the practice, players should work on improving skills they already know.
  2. Ask for player input on what skills they need to work on based on previous practice sessions or games.
  3. Use a “personal success card”, so players can see the progress being made.
- B. Teach new skills (at least one new skill per practice should be taught, using the existing skills for a foundation).
  1. Give players something new to try at each practice
    - a. Briefly explain the skill.
    - b. Demonstrate the skill (coach or player).
    - c. Let players try the skill.
  2. Keep instructions to a minimum as players are practicing skills
    - a. Give encouragement.
    - b. Try to correct errors in a positive way.

## **III. Play (20 minutes)**

Scrimmages are fun and they increase the likelihood that skills learned in practice will be used in games. Include activities that simulate the contest conditions players will face and that develop useful team skills.

- A. Rotate players so they all get to play all positions.
- B. Scrimmage using simplifications of the game (e.g. half field or half court)
  1. Play for specific periods of time, not score.
  2. Focus on one or two rules or skills at a time.
  3. Control the scrimmage by periodically stopping play and pointing out learning opportunities.
- C. In older age groups, allow players to take turns at being an official or assistant coach.

## **IV. Team Circle and Evaluation (10 minutes)**

Team circles provide for cool down exercises, evaluation and reflection. In terms of good health habits, players should always participate in a cool down routine after intense exercise. During the cool down period, the character coach should do the following:

- A. Announce the topic of the day and ask players to think about it as they cool

down.

1. Use a topic from the YMCA's MVP program and discuss how players demonstrated that in their actions during practice or a recent game.
  2. Describe a situation that might occur in practice (i.e. a player not showing up) or in a game situation (i.e. an opponent pushing a teammate) and talk about how the team should respond.
  3. Use an incident that actually occurred and discuss what was good about the team's response or how they could have handled it differently.
- B. Ask for player input for planning the next practice.
1. Review the practice in terms of skills and values.
  2. Discuss what the players feel needs to be improved.
  3. Make assignments such as leader for warm up, assistant coach for review drill, demonstrator for new skill, or scrimmage official (when players know they have a special part to play, it generates enthusiasm for practice).
- C. Finish practice by giving players a skill or drill to practice at home (this is helpful in getting family involvement).
- D. Remind the team of the next scheduled game or practice.

### **Skills and Drills**

Plan your practice program in detail. Always organize practice drills on a sheet of paper, so that you may progress quickly and without hesitation from one activity to another. In making your plan, have active skill sessions alternate with quiet skill sessions. There are various ways to practice skills, including: Group drills (practice specific skills), short sided matches (3 on 2, 2 on 1), controlled scrimmages (frequent stops to explain things) and free scrimmage (game like conditions).

Young players respond best to challenges. Try to build on the foundation of skills and give your players something new to practice in each session. When you present a skill, give a brief explanation, demonstrate the skill (use a player if they can perform the skill), and then let players try the skill. Remember that players learn more from doing rather than listening, so keep instructions to a minimum. As the players are practicing, give encouragement and try to correct errors. Remember to be positive in your comments, so players are not discouraged. Some helpful rules for teaching new skills:

1. Understand thoroughly what you want done and make your directions brief. Demonstrate the skill using proper terminology in your explanations.
2. Stand where you can face everyone. Speak so that you can be heard, but do not shout. Let the group listen. If the group is too large use a whistle, but use it sparingly.
3. Get into the practice skill activity without hesitating. Choose something that is familiar or that is easy to explain in a few words, and get the group actively interested from the very start. More difficult material may be presented after the players have gained confidence in themselves.

4. Practice a skill until it is almost at its best, and then move on to another. Progressive learning and exposure to several skills will help eliminate boredom.
5. Actively participate.
6. Use positive reinforcement. Your players need smiles, eye contact, encouragement and communication when they do well.
7. Keep practices fun through a games approach to drills.

### **Developmental Characteristics**

During each practice, coaches are expected to provide the leadership needed for the players by instilling in them the basic philosophies and developmental principles of the YMCA Youth Sports Program. Some important developmental principles which must be considered by youth sport coaches include:

1. Teaching the basic movements that develop motor coordination (hand-eye-foot) are of prime importance.
2. Developmental difference between boys and girls are usually not of great consequence before the age of 12. Use a progressive approach to practices and developmentally appropriate practices.
3. Young players may be accident-prone because of their lack of mobility and coordination.
4. Players are interested in organized games, but not in complicated game rules.

Generally, emphasis on training should be put on basic essentials of the game. The following two structures are a guide to teach based on age groups. Allow for variation within teams and players.

#### **Fundamental Stage**

1. Fun
2. Introduction to individual skills
3. Introduction to team strategies
4. Game related strategies

#### **Preparatory Stage**

1. Fun
2. Enhancing individual skills
3. Individual & team strategies
4. Principles of offense and defense
5. League competition

# **Developmental Characteristics of Five-Through Twelve-Year-Old Children\***

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## **General Characteristics of Five Year Olds**

- Very energetic.
  - Egocentric.
  - Develop ways of channeling feelings and emotions.
  - Capable of well developed gross motor activity.
  - Control over large muscles is still more advanced than control over small ones.
  - Can step on alternate foot and use alternate feet when descending down stairs.
  - Dramatic play is a natural part of their life; enjoy dramatizing home and community life.
  - Enjoy world of make believe and has begun to distinguish between fantasy and reality.
  - Actively seeks praise and approval from adults more than from peers.
  - Require more immediate feedback from teacher than older school-age children.
  - Do not like to share things but will do so in order to please the grown-ups around them.
  - Like to work and play in small groups and shift from one group to another.
  - Like to play with other children but are not terribly concerned about the rules of the game; enjoy playing near or with other children using manipulative games.
  - Need to engage in direct and concrete experiences.
  - Need to be able to integrate experiences with the things they already know in order to formulate new concepts and new ideas.
  - Increased interest in table activities, drawing, writing, manipulative games.
  - Attention span is shorter than in six and seven year olds.
  - Take pride in work well done, will crumple work that they feel is not their best.
- work hard to achieve success at such tasks (e.g., writing, sewing).
- Boisterous and enjoy horsing around.
  - Very interested in making friends.
  - Often bossy with friends.
  - Can sometimes appear “rude”.
  - Lots of including and excluding.
  - Want to do everything.
  - Like to explore and examine by taking things apart and putting them together again.
  - Enjoy various table games.
  - Hate losing and may “bend” the rules.
  - Love to collect and sort things: shells, baseball cards, rocks, bottle caps, insects, etc.
  - Are more sophisticated in use of blocks.
  - Writing tasks are often difficult and painstakingly completed, but will try with encouragement.
  - Enjoy telling and hearing stories.
  - May find it difficult to exercise self-control(e.g., too much talking, pushing, arguing).
  - May worry about doing what they “are supposed to do”.
  - Get angry with self.
  - May often complain about unfairness or behavior of situations or other’s actions.
  - Like to please adults.
  - Want to be liked by other children.

## **General Characteristics of Six-Year Olds**

- Very active.
- Prefer active outdoor activities.
- Are still awkward with small muscle tasks but will

## **General Characteristics of Seven-Year Olds**

- Give more thought to how body is used, less likely to hurt themselves.
- Enjoy organized activities, games and sports.
- Enjoy producing finished products.
- Developing an interest in instruments.
- Demonstrate more seriousness than six year olds.
- Enjoy friends but will often play alone.
- Generally sensitive to how others feel.
- Usually polite.
- Often eager to take on responsibilities.

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\*From *YMCA of Greater Baltimore School Age Child Care Manual* (pp.157-162), 1988, Baltimore: YMCA of Greater Baltimore, Copyright 1988 by YMCA of Greater Baltimore. Reprinted by permission.

- Less responsive to adult requests but basically still want to please.
- Have become “better losers” at games.
- Do more thinking than when age six.
- Beginning to see relationships between the part and the whole.
- Concept of time and seasons developing more fully.
- Can make up minds about things.
- Many can read, writing is easier. Still can enjoy being read to. Level of environment is usually greater than reading ability.
- Worry about success and failure in doing things.
- Easier to reason with than a six year old.
- Very sensitive and easily embarrassed.
- Respond well to praise.
- Tend to exaggerate.

### **General Characteristics of Eight-Year Olds**

- Show interest in games requiring fine muscle coordination.
- Show improved rhythmic sense.
- Show ability to accommodate eyes to near and far vision.
- Enjoy rough play; Frequently fist fights (boys).
- Dislike playing alone; boys often form gangs.
- Will often tackle tasks beyond their readiness.
- Show evidence of increasing modesty.
- Are becoming more selective in choice of friends.
- Enjoy swapping and trading articles.
- Are more perceptive of responses of others.
- Are somewhat sensitive about being told directly what to do.
- Have fewer fears.
- Enjoy teasing, are frequently selfish and quarrelsome about possessions.
- Are very cognizant of right and wrong.
- Begin to be interested in what happens in the distant past.
- Enjoy fairy tales.
- Can make change for small amounts of money.
- Can tell day of month and year.
- Active.
- Need help to set realistic goals.
- May be arrogant.
- Interested in TV, sports, science, collecting.
- Play group consists mostly of same sex.

### **General Characteristics of Nine-Year Olds**

- Are willing and able to take on responsibilities.
- Having friends and belonging to a group are very important.
- Having stronger ties with formal groups, such as clubs.
- Need adult help in accepting others who may be left out of the group.

- Understand explanations.
- Are interested in trying to do things well.
- Individual differences and definite personalities are apparent.
- Are beginning to think for themselves.
- Are becoming critical of their own performance and may need help in sorting out realistic goals and standards.
- Enjoy competitive games, but need help in keeping competition within reasonable limits.
- Are beginning to understand right and wrong and are trying to develop acceptable behaviors.
- Have genuine fondness for adults they know, but may be outspoken and critical of them.
- Are becoming increasingly skillful with hands.
- Can plan step by step and carry out a project over a long period of time as long as they retain their interest in it.
- Are more responsive and cooperative when they are included in making plans.
- Show sex differences increasingly in play: boys shout, wrestle, punch and race around; girls begin to show interest in clothes and are less noisy and energetic.
- May show wide differences from their peers in reading interest and reading ability.
- Can make decisions.
- Are apt to be embarrassed if praised publicly.
- Are beginning to be reasonable.
- Have strong reactions to things they feel are unfair.

### **General Characteristics of Ten-Year Olds**

- Much more relaxed and poised than at nine. Generally comfortable about their bodies.
- Boys are gaining more strength and proficiency in gross motor activities (e.g., baseball, football, soccer).
- Generally like school and want to be responsible students.
- Will most often get assigned work done if it is understood.
- Quite capable of pursuing projects that span over a prolonged period of time.
- Still enjoy being read to by the teacher, and show a strong preference for mystery and adventure stories.
- Enjoy discussing thoughts and ideas.
- Interested in the achievement and accomplishments of others. Beginning of hero-worship, identify personally with hero.
- Most even period of emotional growth during middle years.
- Fears and anxieties are at an all-time low.
- Self-concept is generally good. A general feeling of well being.
- Occasionally get extremely angry, depressed or sad.

### **Ten Year Olds Continued....**

- Tend to be organized and competitive. Boys love team sports such as baseball. Argue a lot, but generally not serious. Girls often have more intense relationships with each other and will have more serious “falling outs.”
- Tend also to be adventurous and to enjoy adventure bordering on danger.
- Very sensitive to the fairness of adults.
- Desire to be cooperative with adults.
- Need encouragement and the opportunity to follow a special interest.
- Like to join organized groups.
- Like to rush around and keep busy.

### **General Characteristics of Eleven and Twelve Year Olds**

- Individual differences are even more pronounced than during earlier years. Children are maturing at very rapid and increasingly different rates.
- Boys show marked differences in body proportions, have longer legs and broader shoulders than girls and are generally stronger than girls of the same age.
- Girls are generally taller than boys of the same age. Many girls show an increase in weight and widening hips. Girls appear to have increasing control over hands and fingers and continue to show superiority over boys in fine muscle activity.
- Many girls are beginning to develop breasts and some will begin menstruation.
- Appetite often takes a big leap and children often share a marked increase in their food intake.
- Increase in ability to use logic, but often very impatient about reasoning things out.
- Concern for capacity to learn in general is often a source of anxiety, for children are very much aware of their capabilities in comparison with others. There is often a general lack of confidence.
- Considerable interest in general information about the world, as well as in personal interests or hobbies.
- Are often sensitive, emotional and argumentative.
- Often feel that everything they do is wrong and that adults may be picking on them.
- Very self-conscious about how they look.
- Show a great deal of self-doubt.
- Are very defensive.
- Rather critical of adults.
- Tend to challenge adults' knowledge.
- Generally have an adult hero who is not a part of their present life situation.
- Admire peers who are skillful, bold and daring.
- Girls are very close and friendly with each other. Girls are beginning to be interested in boys.
- Boys are generally close and friendly with each other.
- Boys are interested in girls.

# SECTION IV



## What to do in an Emergency

- Emergency Medical Plan
- Injury & Risk Management Prevention Guidelines
- Risk Issues
- Daily Safety Checklist
- Common Injuries & Prevention
- First Aid

**Emergency Medical Plan  
Required Information For All Game and Practice Sites**

1. The closest working phone is:
2. The exact address of the activity site is:
3. The major cross streets are:
4. The exact entry location (which gate or door) for the emergency personnel is:
5. The first aid kit is:

**What to do When a Child gets hurt....**

1. Acknowledge what happened and take care of the child (Band-aids, ice packs, ice cubes, etc., administer first aid and seek medical attention if needed).
2. If the parent is not present, notify them immediately, even if the injury is minor. If someone other than the parent transports the child, tell them and then call the parents to follow up.
3. If the injury is serious make every attempt to notify the parents or emergency contact and let them make the judgment for treatment. If they are unavailable or the injury demands immediate attention you can make the determination of whether to seek medical assistance.
4. **Notify the YMCA.**
5. The coach or assistant coach must document the injury with an Incident Report-fill out the report and get it to the Sports Coordinator ASAP.

**Procedure for Calling 911**

1. Remain calm; this will aid the operator in receiving your information.
2. Dial 911.
3. Let the operator direct the call. Give them the information in the order they ask it.
4. Have the following information ready to give to the operator:
  - Your name
  - Address of the injury
  - Type of injury/symptoms
  - Activity area
  - Phone # you are calling from
  - Specify place and person who will meet paramedics
5. Let the operator terminate the call, not you.

## **Injury and Risk Prevention Guidelines**

### **THE DO'S**

Coaches have a responsibility to help prevent injuries. Many injuries can be prevented if coaches take a few simple precautions.

1. Regularly inspect your playing area and equipment for hazards. Report dangerous conditions immediately and do not permit your athletes to play until it is safe.
2. Warn your players of potential injuries, which can occur in sports and point out their responsibility for the health of teammates and opponents. List common injuries and how to prevent them.
3. Make sure that players do not participate in physical activities when hurt.
4. Make sure that players warm up/cool down before all practices and games.
5. Supervise all activities and teach strict observance of game rules. "Horsing around" is a common cause of injuries.
6. Prevent heat injuries by encouraging regular water breaks and include brief rest periods.
7. Advise players about the proper playing equipment. Teach players how to prevent blisters by wearing footwear that fits correctly, by gradually breaking in new shoes, and by wearing two pair of socks if needed.
8. **Never be the only adult on site.** An accident requires a lot of attention. Always take a first aid kit.

### **THE DON'T'S**

You must avoid doing these things. This will further protect the youth, the YMCA, and yourself.

1. Don't administer medications. This includes aspirin and sunscreen.
2. Don't transport the injured child/youth yourself. If you feel the youth needs medical attention notify the parents or call 911.
3. Don't give a diagnosis of injury unless you are a physician. Just state the symptoms and what happened.
4. Don't leave any youth unattended without adult supervision.
5. Don't give a statement to the media concerning an incident. Direct them to the Director.

## **RISK ISSUES**

**BAD WEATHER:** In case of bad weather, decisions about whether or not a game will be played will be made by the YMCA staff. If a coach cancels a practice, please inform all of your parents and call the YMCA. If it is raining or has rained most of the day practices will be cancelled.

**TORNADO WARNING:** Discontinue practice and return to building or seek shelter near by.

**CHILD ABUSE:** Protect yourself against possible accusations. Never allow yourself to be alone with a youth. Always have another adult with you. Do not escort youth into their house when their parents are not there. Do not show any special treatment for one particular youth. Never transport children. If you must transfer a child due to an emergency situation, always take another adult with you.

**DIFFICULT PARENTS:** Occasionally, a team will have a parent that disagrees with the coach or the coaching style. If you encounter difficulties with parents and you need help, call the YMCA Sports Coordinator.

**MEDIA:** Please do not speak to the media regarding any incident. All inquiries are to be sent to the YMCA.

**EXTRA PRACTICES OR GAMES:** No outside practices or games shall be held other than the one scheduled practice a one scheduled game per week. Failure to follow this rule could result in termination. Furthermore, you could be found personally liable for incidents that occur as part of a non-YMCA sanctioned event.

**MISSING CHILD:** If you have a child in your care that has gone missing: 1. Determine through a quick search that they are really missing (never leave other children unattended). 2. Arrange for other adults to continue searching while you call the YMCA to notify the staff in charge. The YMCA will send help and call the parents. 3. Activate the 911 system.

**UNATTENDED CHILDREN:** Occasionally, parents drop off their children and don't return on time to pick them up. The coach is responsible for that youth until the parents arrive. Always attempt to call the parents and emergency contact person if a child has not been picked up. Don't transport the child home. Do not put a child in your vehicle without another adult present. If you have no choice but to drive the child to the YMCA, always call the YMCA and tell them the name of the child and your expected arrival time to the YMCA.

**CHILDREN WITHOUT TRANSPORTATION:** Occasionally, parents mistakenly expect coaches to provide transportation to and from practices and games. Providing transportation is outside the scope of your responsibility and violates the YMCA "non-fraternization" policy. Doing so would be at your own risk. Parents should be encouraged to carpool between themselves.

**RESTRICTIVE PROBLEMS:** Please ask every parent if their child has any special needs that might effect their participation in the program. If you are aware of a special need a child has, and you are unsure how or if an accommodation can be made, please contact the YMCA Sports Coordinator.

## **DAILY SAFETY CHECKLIST GUIDELINES FOR SPORTS**

Safety is our primary concern.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have inspected the playing surfaces prior to use.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have asked all the athletes if they have any injuries and/or pains.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have inspected the equipment for any damage.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have reviewed the proper use of equipment with team members and all coaches.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have inspected the players' equipment to make sure it fits properly.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have made sure spectators are observing from a safe area.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have a copy of the emergency procedures document.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have access to a first aid kit.

# Common Injuries and Prevention

## Common Injuries

### Basketball

- Finger Sprains
- Muscle Pulls-quads and hamstrings
- Sprained Ankles-knees
- Nose Bleeds

### Baseball

- Tendonitis-shoulder and elbow
- Slide burns
- Rotator Cuff
- Hamstring Pulls-muscle strain

### Soccer

- Ankle Sprains
- Strain to a Muscle
- Fractures to a Bone
- Nose Bleeds

### Flag Football

- Finger Sprains
- Muscle Pulls
- Sprained Ankles
- Nose Bleeds

### Volleyball

- Nose Bleeds
- Sprained Ankle
- Finger Sprains
- Rotator Cuff

### Chronic (over use)

- Tendonitis-inflammation of a Tendon
- Bursitis-inflammation of a bursa
- Stress Fracture-small crack in the bone usually lower leg

All include other injuries that could occur, but these are the most common.

## Prevention

**General Injury Prevention:** Know the risk factors of the sport specific physical activity. Help athletes to develop strength flexibility and endurance. Increase training time, distance and repetitions, no more than 10% a week. *Encourage athletes to report pain and injury.* Respond positively about complaints of pain.

### **Preventing Muscle Strains**

Warm up activities are slow sustained stretching exercises, calisthenics and slowly increasing the intensity of motion.

Ingredients of a good warm up:

Increased Body Temperature

Increased Respiration

Increased Heart Rate

Followed by stretching muscles with a slow static stretch

**Cool Down** gradually reduce workout intensity. Have athletes walk at a slow rate until their heart rates get near normal. Follow up with light stretching.

**Over Use Injuries:** Tendonitis, Bursitis, and Stress Fractures. They are usually caused by repetitive stress and damage to tissue. Usually athletes continue to play fatigued or injured. Athletes often fail to report injuries. It is very important that coaches are proactive and ask pointed questions if they suspect an athlete is injured or overly fatigued. Youth are predisposed to over use injuries because of the physiology of growing. Cartilage of young athletes is easily damaged. Muscles and tendons of young athletes tend to be tighter. Some youth specialize in a select sport too early, cross training is very important.

**Dehydration Prevention:** Two to three hours before a workout or competition drink 2 cups of fluid. One hour before a workout drink 1 cup of fluid. Fifteen minutes before, ½ cup of fluid. Fluid should be caffeine free. Athletes should have water breaks every 10-20 minutes.

**Preventing Sprained Ankles and Knees:** Stretching of muscle groups surrounding the joints is very helpful in reducing sprains. Many sprains happen when the entire foot is planted and the leg twists. Have players practice pivoting on the ball of their foot with their heels elevated.

**Preventing Slide Burns:** If possible, an athlete should wear long pants or have protective pads on when sliding.

**Preventing Tendonitis:** Most commonly caused by repetitive movements on body parts that lack conditioning and stamina. It is an inflammatory response to repeated stress or irritation. Keep athletes from increasing training time, distance and repetitions to no more than 10% per week.

## **First Aid**

1. Coaches and parents are responsible for providing first aid to their own team and child.
2. Cover open sores or lesions before practices or games.
3. A team member who has an open wound is prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered.
4. If medical care or treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual would not have to leave the game. The length of time that is considered reasonable is judged by the official or a YMCA representative.
5. Suggested guidelines for providing first aid:
  - a. Wear gloves when contact with blood or other body fluid is anticipated.
  - b. Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces with soap and water if in contact with blood or body fluids.
  - c. The bloodied portion of the uniform must be properly disinfected or the uniform changed before the individual may return to play.
  - d. Clean all blood contaminated surfaces and equipment with a solution of 1:10 bleach water or other disinfectant.
  - e. Articles contaminated with blood or body fluids should be properly disinfected or disposed of as soon as possible.

Disinfect means washing the material in a product such as Pine Sol, Lysol, Clorox, etc. Disposed means place the contaminated material in a plastic bag, seal the bag, then dispose of the material properly.

### **Things to Include in a First Aid Kit**

1. Gloves
2. Sandwich bags
3. Safety pins
4. Ace bandage
5. Plastic bags
6. Band-aids (various sizes)
7. Alcohol swabs
8. Triple Antibiotic Ointment
9. Bug bite relief
10. Burn Spray
11. Mosquito repellent
12. Sunscreen
13. Gauze
14. Rubber bands
15. Athletic tape

# SECTION V



YMCA

## Coaching

- Expectations of Parents
- Expectations of Players
- Codes of Ethics/Conduct
- Coaching Guidelines
- Working with Officials
- Dealing with Parents
- Youth Parent Guidelines

## **YMCA EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS**

The YMCA encourages you as a parent to be a positive force in your child's sport by coming to games, being present at some practices, being aware and empathetic to some of their fears, encouraging your child to do his/her best, and reminding them that winning does not always mean you have to score the most points. Our coaches and staff will help you with this, but your child really depends on you encouragement.

## **YMCA EXPECTATIONS OF PLAYERS**

We expect your child to have fun. We want him/her to participate as a team member, to show good sportsmanship when both winning and losing, and to respect other team members, coaches, officials and themselves. We expect your child to learn new skills and to feel good about what they have accomplished.

## **YMCA CODE OF SPORTS CONDUCT**

We believe that sports should offer competitive fun in a learning environment. We want all players, parents, coaches and officials to read and abide by their codes of conduct. It will make the games more enjoyable for all and help teach our sons and daughters that competition can take place in a friendly and fun atmosphere.

## YMCA PARENT'S CODE OF ETHICS

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports events.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will support the implementation of the YMCA's four character development values; caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol. I will refrain from their use and ensure that my guests also refrain from their use, at all YMCA youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth-NOT FOR ADULTS!
- I will do the very best to make the youth sports experience fun for my child.
- I will help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching, or providing transportation.
- I will teach my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability. I will also abide by this statement as a parent and as a spectator.

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parent's Code of Ethics.












\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child(ren) Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Redbud  
YMCA Branch

## PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT

-  I am here to have fun.
-  I will respect coaches, officials, and players, both on my team and other teams.
-  I will not get into any arguments/confrontations with coaches, officials, parents or players from either team.
-  I will not use any language or gestures that could cause bad feelings.
-  I will be respectful and will not argue calls with any official.
-  I will not play in such a way as to intentionally cause harm to any other player.
-  I will recite the sports pledge before each game and will shake hands with my opponents after each game.
-  I will participate in the YMCA's MVP Program.
-  I will try hard and play fair.
-  I will abide by all the rules and regulations of the YMCA.
-  I will attend every practice and game that I can and I will be responsible to notify my coach if I cannot attend or will be late.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Player Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Redbud  
YMCA Branch

## YMCA COACHING GUIDELINES

### **Before the first practice:**

1. Call all the kids and parents on your roster and introduce yourself. Remind them of the parent orientation. Let them know what day and time and where practice is. Let them know you will be at the orientation to go over information.
2. At the parent orientation pass out schedules and collect all signature forms. Turn the signature forms into the YMCA. This is the best time to find a team parent who can help with phone calls, organization of team functions, Assistant Coach or Character Coach. The team parent should have a copy of the team roster with phone numbers of each player and their parents. The team parent should help make calls if practice is cancelled, to remind participants of when pictures are scheduled, etc. The team parent should take leadership in coordinating and delegating responsibilities for team functions such as team party, coaches acknowledgement, etc.
3. Let your parents know your expectations of them and find out what they expect from you. If the expectations are unrealistic, now is the time to address them. Get a list of parent's names, numbers, emergency numbers and e-mail address.
4. Indicate how important practice is. It can be negative for a child and the team when a player does not show up for practices or games or arrives at a game late or without the necessary information or preparation to be a member of the team. Let's not set the children up for failure.
5. Arrange for a parent who will be at every practice to help with drills, lavatory duty or general supervision.
6. If you need an assistant or a backup, now is the time to find them.
7. Secure a couple of regular scorekeepers to take turns keeping score for the games for games if they are needed.

### **First Practice:**

1. LEARN EVERYONE'S NAME...FAST (using name tags if necessary).
2. The number one reason kids drop out of programs are because they do not feel connected to the team. It is your job to create team unity and encourage new friendships from the start. Make sure the kids who know each other are separated and mixed with kids they do not know.
3. They will be excited at the beginning of the practice. It is okay to start warming up and do some light running before you talk with them.

4. Be organized. Have your practice planned out in detail. Go over the practice plan with your assistants before the practice.
5. Make sure every child present is on your roster. If not, then they are not on your team or could be an add-on (late registration). Please call the Sports Coordinator if there are any problems. Friends and neighbors may not participate in practices or games. Only the Sports Coordinator may add a player to your roster or make changes.
6. Do not forget to spend time warming up and stretching. Remember we are trying to develop good fitness habits now, rather than later.
7. Remember your objectives. Participating in sports helps increase the self-esteem of the athletes and develop character in youth. When you explain a drill or make a statement to a player, think of it as a self-esteem drill or a character development statement.

### **Before the Game:**

1. Before the first game, arrive early (at least 30 minutes).
2. Decide who is playing each quarter beforehand, be prepared to make adjustments.
3. Determine any necessary volunteers, and fill out proper line up sheets if applicable.
4. The performance of most athletes will increase if competition pressures can be reduced. A brief pre-game talk gives you the opportunity to put the importance of the game in its proper perspective. Remind players of the skills they have been practicing and tell them to concentrate on performing skills rather than worrying about what their opponents will do. Emphasize the need to think and play as a team and not to criticize teammates. Above all, stress the importance of behaving properly at all times, not arguing with officials and playing around.

### **During the Game:**

1. Relax and enjoy, remember we are having fun. To be a good coach you do not always have to give advice. It is okay to spend some time smiling and being supportive.
2. Try to be enthusiastic and compliment players on good performances. Remember, everyone on your team deserves encouragement, not only the best players.
3. Substitute players allowing everybody to play at least half the game regardless of the score.
4. Make sure no player plays the entire game, unless there are no subs.

5. When players come out of the game, first try to say something positive about their performance, and then give them ideas and suggestions for improvements.
6. Do not focus on what a player is doing wrong, focus on what you would like them to do right.
7. Make sure children not participating in the game are supervised. This is a good task for an assistant coach or team parent. Remind them that they can learn a lot by watching their teammates.

### **At Half Time:**

1. Calmly review what went well and what could have been better in the first half, and then discuss the improvements that players should make in the second half.
2. Avoid focusing on player's mistakes or blowing their mistakes out of proportion. This is just a friendly game being conducted by your neighborhood YMCA.
3. Be optimistic, encouraging and keep your decisions simple.
4. Avoid sarcastic or negative comments about members of your team, the other team or officials.

### **After the Game:**

1. Always congratulate the other team and thank them for their participation.
2. Talk to you team about the positive things that happened during the game, regardless of the result of the game.
3. Now is the time to discuss problems with opposing coaches or officials. They do not work for you. Their employer is the Sports Coordinator at the YMCA, to which all problems should be directed.
4. Team circle discussion about the game. The discussion can focus on the following questions:
  - Did everyone have a good time today?
  - What went well for the team today?
  - Did we have a good attitude toward the other team?
  - Did we have a good attitude toward the officials?
  - What can we do better next time?
  - What do we need to work on in practice?
  - In what ways were we caring, honest, respectful and responsible?
5. Help us clear the playing area of people connected with your team so the next game may get underway or the staff can clean up.

### **Suggestions for player problems:**

1. If you are having any type of problems with a player, it is your job to communicate the problem to the parents(s) immediately. Just making the parents aware solves most of your problems. Adopt a philosophy of stopping small problems before they become large problems.
2. If you discipline a player in practice (i.e. having them sit by the side for 5 minutes), always indicate what behavior was unacceptable and what behavior is more appropriate.
3. If behavior problems become frequent, ask a parent if they would please attend the whole practice/game , so that they can deal with the problem and you can focus on the other players.
4. If your efforts with the parent seem to be ineffective, notify the YMCA Sports Coordinator for further support.

### **Extra Reminders:**

1. If you must cancel practice, please inform the front desk at the YMCA as soon as possible.
2. Administrative questions or comments are handled by the Sports Coordinator. As you might expect, game days are quite hectic. Try to contact the Sports Coordinator on a non-game day if it is possible.

## **WORKING WITH OFFICIALS**


Youth Sports officials are usually parents, other coaches, high school or college students or other employees from the YMCA. Some of these people are volunteers who learn how to officiate through practical experience. We do offer officials training, but all people make mistakes. Coaches should try to be sympathetic rather than critical of the official's role. If you see that mistakes are being made, try not to embarrass the official by pointing out errors in front of everyone. A better approach is to wait until half time or until the game is over, thank the person for officiating the game, and then politely express your observations. Most officials want to improve and appreciate constructive criticism given in a positive and respectful manner. Screaming at them from the sidelines will only make matters worse. Think, if you were the official and for a moment you were in their shoes, how you would feel when you made a mistake and people were screaming at you, because all people can't be pleased all of the time, you will make a mistake in someone's eyes. No official can please everyone all of the time. Just keep that thought with you when dealing appropriately with the official. Should an official not want to speak with you, please respect their wishes and direct your comments to the Sports Coordinator.

## **DEALING WITH PARENTS**

Coaching a youth league is exciting and rewarding. From time to time, you may experience difficulty with parents. Some may want their children to play more, or they might question some of your judgments as a coach. This is normal; so do not feel that you are alone if this happens. Here are a few thoughts to remember when dealing with parents:

1. Always listen to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children who are involved. Encourage parents to communicate with you. It is always best to get concerns out in the open.
2. Express appreciation for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease.
3. No coach can please everyone. Do not try. Give the parents a response to their concerns but do not feel like you need to give a lengthy justification for every decision you make.
4. Know what your objectives are and do what you believe to be of value to the players and the team.
5. Resist unfair pressure. You are the coach, and it is your responsibility to make the final decision.
6. Most important, be fair. If you treat all players equally, you will gain their respect.
7. Handle any confrontations one-to-one, and not in a crowd situation. Try not to be defensive. Do not argue with a parent. Listen to their viewpoint and thank them for it, then give them your response. Remember you do not work for them; you work for the Sports Coordinator at the YMCA. If they have an issue that you cannot resolve, refer them to the Sports Coordinator.
8. Ask parents not to criticize their (or other) children during a practice or game. Do not let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents.
9. Do not blame the players for their parents' actions, if negative. Try to maintain a fair attitude.
10. Always remember that you are dealing with all types of children and parents with different backgrounds and ideas. One of your main challenges as a coach is to deal with these differences in a positive manner so that the teams' season will be an exciting and enjoyable experience for all.

# YMCA Youth Sports Parent Guidelines



## Welcome to YMCA Youth Sports

Your son or daughter is entering the most unique sports program offered in America. Our objective for YMCA Youth Sports is to help young athletes not only become better players, but also better people. We recognize that not every athlete can be on the winning team, but every kid can be a winner in YMCA Youth Sports.

### YMCA Rookies

YMCA Rookies is a skill development program that prepares children ages 3-6 to participate in YMCA Winners, the more competitive sports program. Players learn the basics of the game in a precompetitive environment where they can focus on learning the sport, not performing to win.

Too often today kids are thrust into competitive sports programs with little instruction on the skills and rules of the game. They often do not obtain sufficient instruction or have time to develop basic skills in a precompetitive environment. The consequence of such an introduction to sports is that kids who have had early opportunities for instruction and who are physically more gifted often succeed while those without these advantages are more likely to fail. YMCA Rookies was designed to address these problems by providing a positive introduction to sports for all children.

### YMCA Winners

YMCA Winners is the values based, more competitive program in YMCA Youth Sports. It's for the young people ages 7-16, with the competition grouped in these age ranges:

- >7 to 8
- >9 to 11
- >12 to 16

The objectives of YMCA Winners are the same as those for YMCA Rookies: learning the tactics and skills of the game, the rules and traditions of the sport, important

fitness concepts, and character development. However, in YMCA Winners they are achieved along with more competition with other players and teams with many different skill levels.

## **What Makes YMCA Youth Sports So Special?**

### **The YMCA Philosophy of Youth Sports**

YMCA Youth Sports is not just another sports program. We have a mission, and that mission is stated in our seven links of YMCA Youth Sports.

**\*One-Everyone Plays.** We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from YMCA Youth Sports. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays at least half of every game.

**\*Two-Safety First.** Although kids may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. Coaches make sure the equipment and facilities are safe, and they teach the sport as we've prescribed so that the skills taught are appropriate for athletes' developmental levels. Coaches constantly supervise their players and stop any unsafe activities.

**\*Three-Fair Play.** Fair play is about playing by the rules-and more. It's about the coaches and players showing respect for all involved in YMCA Youth Sports. It's about coaches being good role models of good sporting behavior and guiding their players to do the same.

**\*Four-Positive Competition.** We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. The right perspective is when adults make decisions that put the best interests of the players before winning the contest. Learning to compete is important for youngsters, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. Through YMCA Youth Sports we want to help kids learn these lessons.

**\*Five-Family Involvement.** YMCA Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately in their child's participation in our sports programs. In addition to parents being helpful as volunteer coaches, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation. To help parents get involved appropriately, YMCA Youth Sports offers parent orientations.

**\*Six-Sport for All.** YMCA Youth Sports is an "inclusive" sports program. We offer programs to all youngsters regardless of their race, gender, religious creed, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the kids and their parents to do the same.

**\*Seven-Sport for Fun.** Sports are naturally fun for most kids. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sporting activities they over-organize and dominate the activities to the point that it destroys kids' enjoyment of them. If we take the fun out of sports for young athletes, we are in danger of the young athletes taking themselves out of sports.

## **Your Responsibilities As a YMCA Youth Sports Parent**

All parents want their kids to do well and have fun in the activities they pursue. We want you to be actively involved in positive ways with your child's sport experiences in YMCA Youth Sports. To do that, you need to first understand your responsibilities as a parent of a child in YMCA Youth Sports:

1. Encourage your child to play sports, but don't pressure. Let your child choose to play-and to quit-if he or she wants.
2. Understand what your child wants from sports, and provide a supportive atmosphere for achieving these goals.
3. Set limits on your child's participation. Don't make sports everything in your child's life; make it a part of life.
4. Make sure the coach is qualified to guide your child through the sport experience.
5. Keep winning in perspective, and help your child do the same.
6. Help your child set challenging, but realistic performance goals rather than focusing only on "winning the game".
7. Help your child understand the valuable lessons sports can teach.
8. Help your child meet responsibilities to the team and to the coach.
9. Turn your child over to the coach at practices and games-don't meddle or coach from the sidelines. Don't leave your child at practices and games, stay and be apart of the team. Help your child's coach with any disciplinary actions necessary for your child.
10. Supply the coach with information on any allergies or special health conditions your child has. Make sure your child brings any necessary medications to practices and games.
11. Be sure your child participates in the Sports Department's "**Making Values a Priority Program**".

## **Be Involved, But Not TOO Involved**

YMCA Youth Sports needs enthusiastic involvement from parents to be successful. Volunteering your time not only helps the program; it's also an enjoyable way to meet other adults and to make new friends. Here are just a few ways to become involved:

- +Be a coach or an assistant coach.
- +Be a Character Coach.
- +Be an official or an umpire.
- +Keep time or the score.
- +Maintain equipment or facilities.
- +Be a first aid attendant.
- +Coordinate refreshments.
- +Become part of a carpool
- +Team event planner.
- +Telephone parent.

A healthy involvement will usually be welcomed by both the coach and your son or daughter. However, no coach wants to be-or should be-second guessed by parents on strategy moves or other coaching decisions. If you want to coach please sign up to do so. Signs of parents being too closely involved include:

- >You are overly concerned with the outcome of the game.
- >You spend a lot of time talking with the coach about the game plan, player skills levels, and the way he or she conducts practices and coaches games.
- >Your son or daughter has stopped enjoying the sport or has asked you to stop coming to games or practices.
- >You require your son or daughter to take extra practice.

Be involved, show interest, and help the coach where he or she needs help, encourage your child-and enjoy the sport yourself! Don't make sports stressful, it should be something you and your child enjoy!

## **As a YMCA Youth Sports Parent I Will:**

1. Remain in the spectator area during competitions.
2. Let the coaches coach.
3. Keep comments positive to all players, parents, officials, and coaches both of my team and the opposing team as well.
4. Come to games sober, and refrain from drinking alcohol at contests.
5. Cheer for your team.
6. Show interest, enthusiasm, and support for your child.
7. Be in control of your emotions.
8. Help when you are asked to by a coach or an official.
9. Thank the coaches, officials, and other volunteers who conducted the event.
10. Sign, turn in and abide by the parents code of conduct.

## **Helping Your Child Enjoy Sports**

You can help your child enjoy sports by doing the following:

- Developing a winning perspective
- Building your child's self-esteem
- Emphasizing fun, skill development, and striving to win
- Helping your child set performance goals

### **Developing a Winning Perspective**

Every decision parents make in guiding their children should be based first on what's best for the child and second on what may help the child win. Stated another way, this perspective places Athletes First, Winning Second!

We're not saying winning is unimportant. Winning-or striving to win-is essential to enjoyable competition. Pursuing victory and achieving goals are sweet rewards of sport competition, but they can turn sour if, through losing you or your child lose the proper perspective also. An obsession with winning often produces a fear of failure, resulting in below average performances and upset children.

### **Building Your Child's Self-Esteem**

Building self-esteem in your child is one of your most important parenting duties. It's not easy-and it's made even more difficult in sports by the prevailing attitude of "winning is everything". Athletes who find their self-worth through winning will go through tough times when they lose.

Building self-esteem in your child takes more encouragement. You need to show your child unconditional approval and love. Don't praise dishonesty; children can see through that. If your child strikes out three times and makes an error in a baseball game, don't tell them they played well. Just show the same amount of love and approval for them-not for the performance-that you showed before the game.

## **Emphasizing Fun, Skill Development, and Striving to Win**

The reason you should emphasize fun is quite simple: without it, your child may not want to keep playing. Kids do not have fun when they stand around in practice or sit on the bench during games, when they feel pressure to win and don't improve or learn new skills. Conversely, they do have fun when practices are well organized, they get to play in games, they develop new skills, and the focus is on striving to win.

## **Helping Your Child Set Performance Goals**

Performance goals-which emphasize individual skill improvement-are much better than the outcome goal of winning for two reasons:

1. Performance goals are in the athlete's control.
2. Performance goals help the athlete improve.

Performance goals should be specific, and they should be challenging but not too difficult to achieve. For example, if your child plays soccer, you might help him/her set goals of making short, crisp passes; or staying between the ball and the goal on defense; and giving their best effort throughout the game.

You (and your child's coach) should help your young athlete set goals. Help your child focus on performance goals before a game; this focus will help sports be an enjoyable learning experience for your son or daughter.

## Snack Sign-up Schedule

Coaches, have parents sign-up to bring a snack and drink for each child on the team on game days only.

\*Game #1 \_\_\_\_\_

\*Game #2 \_\_\_\_\_

\*Game #3 \_\_\_\_\_

\* Game #4 \_\_\_\_\_

\* Game #5 \_\_\_\_\_

\* Game #6 \_\_\_\_\_

\* Game #7 \_\_\_\_\_

\* Game #8 \_\_\_\_\_