

**OF**

**ABILENE**



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**SPORTS**

**PARENTS' MANUAL**

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## 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).

## RAINOUT POLICY

☐ 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 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

## Snack Sign-up Schedule

Parents please 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## **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

# 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.

## **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 an 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.