



## Youth Sports Handbook Parents & Coaches

### Goals of YMCA Sports Programs

1. To build self-esteem, and confidence
2. To teach social skills, values, communication, team work
3. To teach physical skills-fitness and health
4. To develop responsibility and decision-making skills
5. To enhance leadership skills in youth and adults
6. To build relationships among peers and between parent and child
7. To support and strengthen family life
8. To create fun experiences for coaches, children and their families
9. Our programs balance educating the players and enforcing the sports rules
10. Provide a safe environment!

### Volunteer Coaching

Our volunteer coaches are vital to the success of our youth sport programs. We want to thank you for your time and talents to the Hastings Family YMCA. Throughout the years, committed and talented volunteers have impacted the lives of many children within our community through our youth programming. The Y greatly appreciates every volunteer coach each season.

### Keys to Being a Good Coach

**Have Fun:** Make sure that smiles are your main focus. If each of your participants walk away everyday excited about coming back, you know you accomplished your goal.

**Be Enthusiastic:** Kids know when you're going through the motions.

**Be Prepared:** come to practice ready to go and make the most of your time.

**Be A Role Model:** Your players will have a tendency to copy your actions and moods. Show the players at all times how to act and carry themselves in the proper manner.

**Be Positive:** Stress everyone's strengths and good points. It will also help to make each situation, whether positive or negative, a learning experience.

**Be A Friend:** Give encouragement, take the time to talk, and listen to the kids. **Everyone Plays:** Every player must play at least one half of every

### Volunteer Responsibilities

- Follow the Y policies and procedures.
  - Have the best interest of the kids, families, and communities the Y serves.
  - To abide by the commitment that you make.
  - To speak up, ask questions, and share ideas. Open communication is vital.
  - To offer constructive criticism, seeking to understand before judging.
  - To treat every participant, parent, official, and community member with kindness regardless of age, income, ability, background, gender, or religion.
  - To seek joy in your volunteer service.
- Having fun is an essential part of volunteering at the YMCA

### PRACTICES

Practices are an important part of the Y sport experience and league! It is where children learn and improve sport skills. Parents should be conveyed this message. The importance of attendance of practices should be emphasized to parents as well. Tips for running an effective practice:

- Learn everyone's name!



- Make sure to contact each parent to notify them of practice times and locations. Try to keep it consistent to avoid confusion from week to week.
- Communication is key.
- Get to practice early to set up equipment, be prepared, and greet all players.
- Check your roster!
- Late additions to a roster can only be made with the approval of the Sports Director.
- Explain your “team rules” and expectations.
- Create team unity by talking with all players, having players run drills with different partners and encouraging high-fives and positive comments.
- Schedule warm up and cool down exercises for each practice (see Injury Prevention for more information).
- During each practice players should learn:
  - Positions: Each position and its role should be explained.
  - Basic Skills: Use drills to teach the skills of each sport. Simplify them to accommodate to the age you are coaching.
  - Strategy: Teach and demonstrate plays, offense, and defense.
- Refer to sample practice plans and demonstrate skills as much as possible and explain the purpose of them.
- Think of multiple ways to show each skill.
- Have scrimmages in which players are rotated positions.
- Stop the scrimmage to instruct and explain.
- Provide positive feedback.
- Never use physical activity or exercise as a form of punishment.
- Trail and error with drills and games, reflect and make adjustments.

- Remind all players of upcoming practice and game times.

### **Steps to Take After the Coaches Meeting**

1. Contact any assistant coaches listed and introduce yourself. Divide responsibilities and talk about the season.
2. As soon as you get your roster call AND email your team!! Parents want to know who their coach is and want information about the season (Practice night, first games, etc.) An informational email is also a good idea but always call them for the first contact and updated them when new information is received.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Game Cancellation and Make-up Games**

Games may be cancelled because of excessive rain and active lightning. Depending upon the sport, road conditions will factor into game cancellations. Games will not be cancelled because of heat, but games may be shortened, and water breaks will be given. For updated Youth Sports Game information please use the following methods. If games are cancelled a notice will be posted on Facebook: YMCA of Springfield Youth Sports page.

Coaches will be notified via email first and are expected to contact parents on their team.

### **Lightning/Thunderstorm Procedures**

Any lightning that is visible or detected within “1-5” mile radius of the game site will immediately result in stoppage of play. In some cases lightning may be far away, in which the “30 second flash-to-bang method” will be used. If there is less than 30 seconds between the lightning and the thunder then lightning is a danger. Stoppage of play will occur immediately. YMCA on-site staff will notify officials/coaches when lightning is too



close. During stoppage of play due to lightning, everybody must go to their vehicles or indoors.

The approved time to resume play after the last thunder heard or lightning seen is 30 minutes. Soccer games will be cancelled on an hourly basis only.

\*Coaches should enforce this policy during all practices!

### **Sportsmanship and Conduct**

Sportsmanlike behavior is expected from all coaches, players, and spectators at all times. If an individual is asked to stop their unsportsmanlike conduct, and they fail to comply, they will be asked to leave the facility.

Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct include, but are not limited to: intimidating officials, players, and/or coaches, arguing, taunting, swearing, pushing, and fighting.

### **No Tolerance Spectator Code**

To help teach our philosophy to kids, we ask for parents' cooperation and coach enforcement with our Y SPECTATOR CODE:

1. Remember children play organized sports for their own fun. They are not there to entertain you.
2. Be on your best behavior. Don't use profane language or harass players, coaches, or officials.
3. Applaud good plays by your own team AND the opposite team.
4. Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a game or practice. They are still learning the game.
5. Respect the officials' decisions.
6. Encourage players to always play according to the rules.

### **Zero Tolerance Policy**

The YMCA of Springfield has implemented a Zero Tolerance policy throughout our sports programs. Coaches are asked to encourage

their players in a positive fashion and avoid verbally harassing game personnel. No trash talking, obscene gestures, spiking the ball or other unsportsmanlike behavior will be tolerated. The Y Staff reserves the right to suspend any coach or spectator for unsportsmanlike behavior during games or practices. Coaches who demonstrate this type of behavior will be required to meet with the Sports Director and other staff deemed necessary for the situation. Players or parents will be removed from the game for a period deemed necessary by Y staff.

## **Injury and Emergency Procedures**

### **General Responsibilities**

- Be aware of any situation that may cause injury or an accident and take steps to prevent injury or accidents from happening. Inspect safety of equipment and playing areas, provide proper skill/sport technique, and have a warm-up and cool down to every practice and game.
- Carry a cell phone in case of emergencies.
- Keep your team roster with you at all times to contact the child's parents in the event of an emergency.
- Know the exact location and address of the location in which you are practicing and playing games.
- If you are unsure of a situation contact the child's parents or 911. Use your best judgment!

### **First Aid**

Safety is paramount! First aid will be available at game sites. Our first aid kits have bandages, gauze pads, rubber gloves and ice packs.

### **Treatment for sprains and strains**

Common practice: R.I.C.E.

Rest: No weight-bearing.



*Ice:* Use a layer of material between ice and skin.

*Compression:* Wrap with an elastic bandage to minimize swelling.

*Elevation:* The injured part to control swelling. It is most effective when the injured part is raised above the level of the heart.

### **Injury Prevention**

Know the risk factors for specific activities that the children are participating in. Ensuring that all participants have the appropriate protective equipment will prevent injury. Inspect their equipment on a regular basis and teach them the proper way to wear it.

*Warm Up and Cool Down:* It is important to teach the children the importance of a proper warm up and cool down. Warm up activities should include exercises to increase body temperature, heart rate, and respiration. (High Knees, Butt Kicks, Warm-up lap, Dynamic Exercises). Cool down activities should include light movements and static stretching to increase flexibility.

*Supervision:* Your attention and supervision is required at all practices and games. Supervise all activities and teach your players to observe game rules at all times. "Horsing around" is a common cause of injuries.

*Weather/Dehydration:* Be aware that heat exhaustion or stroke may occur in extreme heat conditions. Make sure participants are allowed rest periods and water breaks—every 15-20 minutes. 2/3 water to 1/3 electrolytes based drink is the best choice to rehydrate.

### **Equipment and Uniforms**

Participants are encouraged to bring their own balls, gloves, water etc. to team practices. Below is an outline of what basic equipment is needed for each sport and what will be provided to coaches for

practices and on game day. Jewelry should be removed or taped completely.

**Volleyball** - Each player needs to have non-marking tennis shoes and shorts or pants. Knee pads are recommended but not required. The YMCA will provide team jerseys and balls to use.

**Soccer** -Shin guards are required Each player should have tennis shoes or rubber cleats (no metal) and shorts or pants. Jerseys will be given to coaches to distribute to their players.

**Basketball** – Each player needs to have non-marking tennis shoes and shorts. The YMCA will provide team jerseys for games and balls for coaches to use during games.

### **Communication**

#### **Working with Parents**

Coaching a youth league should be exciting and rewarding. From time to time, you may experience difficulty with parents. Some parents may 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. Encourage parents to communicate with you. It is always best to get concerns out in the open. You should express appreciation for their interest and concern.
2. 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. If



they have an issue that you cannot resolve, refer them to the Sports Director.

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. If you treat all players equally you will gain their respect.

6. 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 everyone.

3. Most officials want to improve and appreciate constructive criticism when it is given in a positive and respectful manner.

4. Please communicate any problems with officials to the Sports Director in a respectful and timely manner.

### **Working with Officials Youth**

Sports officials are **volunteers**. Most of these are learning how to officiate through practical experience. They officiate because that enjoy being around sports and around kids—same reason as most of you. Coaches and parents should try to be sympathetic rather than critical of the official's role.

1. It is inevitable that officials will occasionally miss calls. Please be respectful and understand that mistakes happen.

2. If you have a concern please wait until halftime or until the game is over to express your concerns.