



COACHES PLEDGE

As a CARD coach, I will be aware of the tremendous influence on the well-being of the athlete and will never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character. If necessary I will redefine what winning means in order to ensure that my team is having a great experience, regardless of our record or the score of any game.

As a CARD coach, and working for a public agency, I will not bring my spiritual beliefs, religion, or grade requirements into the program.

As a CARD coach, I will do my best to have open, honest, and respectful communication with the office and the parents/players on my team. This includes having a pre-season parent meeting, setting forth team rules that are followed through consistently, and sending weekly email updates to my team.

As a CARD coach, I will ensure that there is team camaraderie and team bonding and create an environment where there is no tolerance for unsportsmanlike conduct.

As a CARD coach, I will maintain my composure regardless of any game or practice situation that may arise. I will never curse or use derogatory/threatening language during any CARD function, practice, game or setting in which the players, parents or staff are present.

As a CARD coach, I will respect and support the officials. I will not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism or blame on officials or players is unacceptable.

As a CARD coach I will be respectful of the opposing team during all games. I will make the necessary adjustments with finesse if my team is over powering their opponent in an effort to not embarrass them.

As a CARD coach, I will make every effort to ensure that every player scores at least once, and I will make every effort that every player starts at least once.

As a CARD coach, I will make sure that every player has equal playing time EVERY game (unless there are disciplinary/unsportsmanlike issues, in which I will communicate with the player and parent before the game), and if necessary turn in a player rotation to the gym/field supervisor.

As a CARD coach I will make every effort to give every player a love of the game.



REFUSAL TO ABIDE BY THE OFFICIAL'S DECISION

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all members of the Youth Sports Department to achieve and maintain the standards of behavior as detailed in the Coaches Handbook and Coaches Pledge. The goal is to ensure consistent and fair treatment to all members.

If a coach refuses to abide by the Coaches Pledge and/or officials decision and/or argues with the judgment of the official making the call, the official is required to warn the coach first and notify the scorekeeper to record the warning in the scorebook. If conduct continues, the following will take place:

All offenses are cumulative throughout the current season

Baseball	Basketball	Flag Football	Volleyball
First Offense: Ejection from the game	First Offense: One (1) technical foul	First Offense: Unsportsmanlike penalty again team	First Offense: Ejection from game
Second Offense: Ejection from the game and removal from the program	Second Offense: One (1) technical foul and ejection from current game	Second Offense: Unsportsmanlike penalty again team, and ejection from game	Second Offense: Ejection from game and removal from program
	Third Offense: One (1) technical foul, ejection from the game and removal from the program	Third Offense: Unsportsmanlike penalty again team, ejection from game and removal from program.	



ACKNOWLEDGE AND AGREEMENT

By signing below, you hereby recognize, acknowledge and agreement to the expectations of you as a coach and agree to follow all set standards in the **Coaches Pledge** and the repercussion if there is **Refusal to Abide by the Official's Decision**. If you do not follow the above expectations, there will be consequences depending on the severity of the situation with the possibility of removal from the program.

Print Name

Sign Name

Date



TEAM INFORMATION

Season information at: www.chicorec.com/CARD-Programs/Athletics/

Game schedules at: www.teamsideline.com/chico

Team Information

Division:

Team Name:

Practices:

Coach Information

Name:

Number:

Email:

TEAM REMINDERS & PHILOSOPHY

1. Have fun and gain a LOVE OF THE GAME; CARD youth sports are leagues of all different skill levels, which allows everyone, equal opportunity to build on their skills. It is important that we are all supportive of each other, other players, other teams and all staff.

Our team values:

- a. Honoring the Game/ROOTS
- b. Filling Emotional Tanks
- c. The ELM Tree of Mastery
- d. For the LOVE of the GAME

Our team mistake ritual:

2. I ask that players keep all electronics away during programs (including cell phones). We want to create an environment about PLAY and social opportunities that are often hindered with electronics. Should a player need to get ahold of you, they should ask for permission from a team volunteer first. If you have a family situation where a player needs to have a cell phone out, please let me know!
3. Please respect the time and energy put into practice schedules/game rotations and have your player dropped up/picked up on time to all practices/games. Please communicate when you will be missing a practice or game.
4. Per the National Alliance for Youth Sports and the CARD philosophy, all children in recreational youth sports leagues should be given equal playing time, regardless of skill or experience. The only situation in which it may be acceptable to restrict playing time is if a child knowingly misses practices or games and it was not communicated OR if there are sportsmanship/behavior issues. A no call/no show/no communication to a practice or game will result in a "strike." Once "three strikes" are received during the season, the player will automatically be removed from the team.
5. Starting rotations will be based on who is putting forth the effort during practice and is constantly showing positive teamwork.
6. Open communication is best! However, I ask that no parent approaches me to talk about any team/player issues directly after a game, or when the team is around. It's best to show up early to practice and/or make an appointment with us so I can give you our undivided attention.

If you have any questions please come to me first so we can work out whatever the situation may be. I look forward to a great season!



The below philosophies are part of the CARD Youth Sports Department, and shared with Positive Coaching Alliance (<http://positivecoach.org/>)

The ELM Tree of Mastery

While winning is important and learning to compete is one of the major life lessons available through sports, not everyone can win every game. Still, youth athletes are winners, regardless of what the scoreboard says, when they pursue mastery of their sports. As a way to remember key elements of mastery, we will use the following acronyms:

ELM for Effort, Learning and Mistakes are OK

Youth athletes who keep these things in mind develop habits that will serve them well throughout their lives. As an added benefit, athletes who are coached toward Mastery tend to have reduced anxiety and increased self-confidence, because they focus on things they can control. Therefore, they are more likely to have fun and perform better.

Here's how you can help:

- Tell your children it's OK to make a mistake- they help them learn through sports.
- Tell them you appreciate their best effort even if they fall short of the desired result.
- Urge your child to get past mistakes by using a Mistake Ritual, such as a flushing motion, to trigger a reminder to flush the mistake and move on to the next play.
- Recognize that Mastery is hard work and an ongoing process over time that can fuel great conversations with your children about sports and life.

Filling Emotional Tanks

An "Emotional Tank" is like the gas tank in a car. When it's empty, we go nowhere, but when it's full, we can go most anywhere. The best fuel for an Emotional Tank is an average of **five specific, truthful praises for each specific, constructive criticism**

Here's how you can help:

- Encourage your children with specific tank-fillers regardless of scoreboard results.
- Be honest, but remember the value of that 5:1 ratio.
- Avoid an immediate and critical debrief right after the game.
- Remember that the only sentence your player needs to hear from you is **"I love to watch you play."**

Honoring the Game

To help remember the ideals of sportsmanship, which Positive Coaching Alliance calls "Honoring the Game," we talk about respecting ROOTS, an acronym for Rules, Officials, Opponents, Teammates and Self.

Here's how you can help:

- Review ROOTS with your children
- Model Honoring the Game yourself as you watch your children compete and even as you watch sports on TV together.
- Encourage other spectators to Honor the Game

*Find more information on how you can help at CARD's Youth Sports General Information & Parent Tips website:
<http://www.chicorec.com/CARD-Programs/Athletics/Youth-Sports-General-Information--Parent-Tips/index.html>*



Age-Appropriate Coaching

Ages 6-8

Characteristics	Coaching Consequences
Completely self-centered perspective: "I'm the only one that matters!"	Put each child at the center of practice session with small group exercises (no bigger than 3 v 3) Provide opportunities to demonstrate individual abilities.
Strong urge to move	Make sure all children are active and moving for the majority of practice
Desire to play	Use lots of practice games.
Desire to try out new things themselves	Keep rules to a minimum; provide lots of different activities, and let kids find their own solutions.
Powerful need for external positive reinforcement, highly susceptible to criticism	Give each child lots of recognition and praise, avoiding criticism as much as possible.
Focus on own performance	Provide plenty of positive experiences
Opponent frequently seen as playmate	Reinforce fair play; stop unfair behavior with brief explanation.
Short attention span	Vary exercises frequently, providing something new every few minutes (at least every 15 minutes).
Poorly developed intellectual ability	Keep explanations short (as few sentences as possible) and tailored to children's intellectual ability
Most effective way of learning: by example	Explain, then immediately demonstrate.
Well-developed sense of fairness	Treat all children the same, ideally giving each the same amount of attention.
Winning is relatively unimportant	Incorporate "no-win" games and keep the focus on the fun of playing.
Strong need for security	Be a strong leader, giving clear signals and instructions.
Powerful curiosity and desire to learn	Provide opportunities for novel experiences and new ideas.

Ages 9-10

Characteristics	Coaching Consequences
Continued belief in own importance	See 6-8 Chart: provide lots of positive experiences.
Increasing identification with teammates	Gradually develop a sense of the team with games and exercises in which players build connections: replay races, partner exercises, etc. Emphasize outward symbols of commonality (uniforms, etc.) but don't worry about self-centered play.
First understanding of common objectives	Formulate common objectives
Experience of the game often more important than winning	Support risk-taking; measure effort, not results (losing is allowed); emphasize the fun of playing and keep parents in check if needed.
Desire for lots of activity and movement	See 6-8 Chart
Coach seen as a model in terms of lifestyle and attitude toward soccer	Make sure your conduct is exemplary (e.g. control aggressive behavior).
Strong need for security	See 6-8 Chart
Curiosity	Provide opportunities for novel experiences and new ideas.

Ages 11-12

Characteristics	Coaching Consequences
Individual perspective becoming less dominant	Introduce position-specific play but don't start specializing; keep roles general.
Team mentality becoming more important	See 9-10 Chart; start reinforcing behavior that benefits the team.
Common objectives a bigger priority	Before the season or before each game, list common objectives and visualize them in an age-appropriate way.
Experience of the game still often more important than winning	Incorporate "no-win" games and keep the focus on the fun of playing.
Recognition of connections, first understanding of delayed gratification (i.e. today's efforts will eventually lead to desired results)	Make training more systematic, using exercises that build on one another.
Improved problem-solving ability	Let players discover and try out their own solutions for game situations.
Increased capacity for self-assessment and self-criticism	After practices and matches, ask for self-assessments; discuss and provide feedback.
Increased ability to concentrate	Incorporate exercises requiring more concentration.
Desire to start taking individual responsibility	Assign little duties to let players help organize individual exercises.

Ages 13-14

Characteristics	Coaching Consequences
Recognition expected and demanded	Start treating players more as partners.
Emotional variation (moodiness), open to (almost) anything but therefore quite susceptible to distractions	Be tolerant and understanding of mood swings and the increasing influence of peers. Act as an advisor, providing clear rules and principles and model behavior.
Increased ambition and desire to win, pleasure in comparing oneself with others	Start holding back with the praise (and even more with criticism) while cultivating players' internal motivation. Formulate common and individual objectives, but don't overemphasize them.
Increasing ability to concentrate	Incorporate exercises requiring more concentration.
Desire for more personal responsibility	Give players more responsibility, both on and off the field.
More of a long-term perspective	Work together to develop long-term training objectives.
Increasing identification with the team	Cultivate team spirit on and off the field
Need for individual improvement and development	Treat everyone in basically the same way while providing more individual encouragement.

Ages 15-16

Characteristics	Coaching Consequences
Increasing mental maturity and capacity for self-awareness and self-criticism	Focus more on the mental demands of match play (emotion, willpower, single-mindedness). Train players to assess themselves, (e.g. by keeping match journals with regular feedback from you).
Conscious awareness of stress and the pressure to perform	Teach simple stress relief methods. Cultivate realistic expectations and separate them from the expectations of others..
Conscious, sometimes exaggerated utilization of emotions	Be tolerant of frustration while providing and embodying an appropriate degree of enjoyment.
Development of individual identity	Provide structure via unambiguous actions, tolerance and clear rules.
Search for right lifestyle	Be exemplary in your behavior.
Uncertainty about entering world of adults	Treat players even more as peers.
Desire for individual responsibility	Let players structure parts of the training program themselves.

Ages 17-18

Characteristics	Coaching Consequences
Increased ability to concentrate	Provide complex technical/tactical exercises (follow-up plays, etc.).
Increased ability to deal with stress	Teach various methods of dealing with performance pressure. Use match-quality practice games.
More self-awareness and self-assessment	Focus more on the mental demands of match play (emotion, willpower, single-mindedness). Train players to assess themselves, (e.g. by keeping match journals with regular feedback from you).
Control of own actions during match play	In short practice games, let players select their own objectives, but add complicating factors (e.g. increased time pressure, external distractions, need to achieve a certain score).
Fully responsible	Set common rules and let the team regulate themselves.
Capacity and need for communication as equals	Speak to players as adults.
Desire for support in personal and/or professional life	Be available to give advice.
Interest in experiences outside soccer	Include non-soccer activities and unusual experiences.
Identity more firmly established	Promote a positive team identity while providing opportunities for individual expression.

These age charts are courtesy of *Success in Soccer* magazine. For more information, visit www.successinsoccer.com



YOUTH SPORTS BULLY PREVENTION

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is any intentional harmful act, committed by one or more persons against another. Bullying occurs when there is an imbalance of power between a bully and a victim. The main types of bullying include:

- Verbal: name calling, hurtful teasing, taunting, unwanted nicknames, gossiping.
- Social/Relational: exclusion, humiliation, blackmailing, manipulations friendships
- Physical: punching, hitting, shoving, stealing, or getting into someone's personal space when asked to stop.
- Cyber: using the computer or other technology to harass or threaten

Bullies are often smart, popular, well-liked and have good social skills. They may look like leaders and be liked by coaches and other players, but bullies lack empathy. The "victims" show some vulnerability that makes them an easy target. As a coach, you need to be aware of players who may be left out, or are having a difficult time fitting/making friends.

Bullying before, during or after sports may appear as: unwarranted yelling and screaming directed at the target, continually criticizing the target's abilities, blaming the target for mistakes, making unreasonable demands related to performance, repeated insults or put downs of the target, repeated threats to remove or restrict opportunities or privileges, denying or discounting the target's accomplishments, threats of, and actual, physical violence, e-mails or instant messages containing insults or threats.

Role of Coaches

It is the coach's obligation to ensure a safe and respectful sports environment by not engaging in, allowing, condoning, or ignoring behavior that constitutes or could be perceived as bullying. Coaches set the stage for how kids treat one another. Do not play favorites with some players since that would show players that it is okay to "exclude" others. Coaches need to establish open and honest communication between all parties involved. Coaches should look critically at their own behavior and be prepared to accept feedback without being defensive and change, if needed.

Coaches need to discuss sportsmanship, teamwork and positive attitude expectations at the parent meeting and then model that behavior. Let players know that bullying is unacceptable and won't be tolerated. A coach can say **"On my team, this is how we are going to communicate and treat each other. If I hear you talk negatively about anyone on our team, anyone on other teams, or the referees, you will sit."** Coaches need to make this something that parents and players understand from day one. They key is to make sure players understand the impact their behavior has on the rest of the team.

Procedures When Bullying Occurs

When a coach observes bullying of any kind, they must intervene by stepping in and separating the children involved. Support the victim.

- Procedure when dealing with bully
 - Communicate situation with parent
 - Penalties
 - Counseling/training/mentoring
- Procedure for helping the victim
 - Informing parents of situation
 - Counseling/mentoring
 - Re-establish a positive and safe environment



YOUTH SPORTS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION (from the National Alliance of Youth Sports)

In youth sports, child maltreatment is an issue that must be fully understood by administrators, staff, coaches, officials and parents. Not only are there opportunities within the sports environment for abuse, but administrators and coaches must understand that children may come to youth sports programs after being abused elsewhere. As providers of youth sports opportunities, we must strive to make our programs free from abuse and recognize when children arrive at our programs as victims of child abuse.

At times, adults are unaware that they are being abusive to the children participating in youth sports. Below is a list of common inappropriate behaviors taking place in youth sports programs nationwide:

- Benching less skilled athletes
- Grabbing players or grabbing them by their equipment
- Cursing, yelling or using 'put-downs' that demean a child
- Using excessive physical training techniques to punish/discipline young athletes
- Name calling, using racial slurs, using sexual put-downs or making cruel comments about body types
- Not allowing a young athlete to take a break or to use the restroom when needed
- Depriving young athletes of water
- Throwing equipment at players
- Stereotyping athletes and demanding unrealistic expectations, perfect performances, etc.
- Paying attention to only the best players, casting aside the less talented
- Hurtful comments and/or participation denial to persons with disabilities
- Inappropriate sexual contact between adult and child
- Teaching and/or expecting players to taunt, cheat, intimidate, fight, or trash talk

In instances that don't involve a parent or caretaker, we can significantly reduce the risk of abuse by eliminating situations involving one child and one adult. Abusers, primarily sexual abuse offenders, earn the trust of children and their families and gain time alone with children. In 90% of all cases of sexual abuse, the child or teen knows the abuser. The large majority of sexual abuse cases occur in one-adult/one-child situations. Think carefully about the safety of any one-adult/one-child situations.

Types of Abuse in Youth Sports

There are five types of maltreatment that can occur in youth sports.

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect Philosophical Abuse

Reporting Child Maltreatment

Any person may report incidents of abuse or neglect. It is important to note that the duty to report does not require the professional to have definitive evidence of abuse. In the case you suspect a child is being abused, you must contact Child Protective Services at 800-400-0902 and complete a Suspected Child Abuse Report form. All reports must be submitted immediately following suspicion of abuse. Submitted reports are kept confidential and do not need approval from any CARD personal.



YOUTH SPORTS VS. THE CLASSROOM
 (from the National Alliance of Youth Sports)

COMPARING TWO

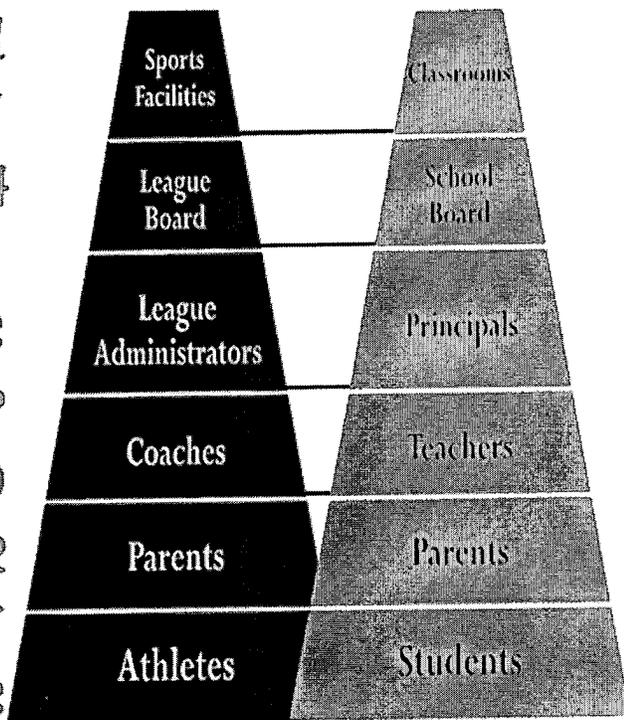
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Youth sports are an extension of a child’s education so they can continue to learn and develop important life skills while participating.

Youth sports facilities must be treated with the same respect and regard that a classroom enjoys. Fields, courts and rinks are classrooms. Teachers are trained in two broad areas – first they must understand the “needs” of children and how to teach a group of children. Secondly, they have to be trained in a specific subject. Volunteer coaches are really teachers too. They have to understand the “needs” of the players on their teams and they have to teach a specific subject – be it soccer, lacrosse, softball, etc.

EXAMPLE: We would not tolerate a teacher smoking or chewing tobacco in the classroom and would classify the behavior as grossly inappropriate. If youth sports facilities were looked at as classrooms and the coaches as teachers, we would also find it inappropriate for a coach to be smoking/chewing at a youth sports activity.

If a parent has a problem to discuss with a teacher in school, most parents understand that it is necessary to refrain from interrupting the class and ask for a meeting when class is not in session. If a coach is perceived by the parents to be a teacher and the youth sports facility as a classroom, people will begin to understand that there is a right time and a right place to discuss problems with their child’s coach.

A principal or teacher would not allow a parent to attend their child’s spelling bee and swear, taunt, intimidate and trash talk the other children who were ready to step to the podium to spell a word. Yet, this type of behavior is tolerated in the child’s sports classroom all too often.

A parent would not tolerate a teacher only allowing the most talented spellers to participate in the spelling bee while leaving the rest of the class sitting at their desk and never having an opportunity to test their skills. This type of behavior is tolerated in the child’s sports classroom all too often.

A parent would not tolerate a teacher that berates their child for making a mistake in the spelling bee. This type of behavior is tolerated in the child’s sports classroom all too often.



How to Introduce a Drill: DDADA

Describe the skill/drill

Demonstrate the skill/drill

Ask for questions

Do it

Adapt it

Progression in Skill/Drill

(Players should be successful 70% of the time before moving on to next step)

- Ground (if applicable)
- Standing Stationary
- Standing Movement
- Partner Stationary
- Partner Movement
- Drills (Focus on One Skill, Focus on Several Skills, Non-Competitive, Competitive, Game Like Situation)
- Scrimmage/Game Play



Dealing with Disruptions

From "Sporting Kid Live," a National Alliance for Youth Sports resource helping coaches, parents and administrators provide the best youth sports experiences for children.

Q: I manage a team for 6- to 8-year-old boys. Right off the bat last season a player dropped f-bombs during team warm-ups. He doesn't pay attention during meetings or drills, no matter how small the group. He has on numerous occasions cursed, punched, shoved, been inattentive, not followed coaches' instructions, etc. I have talked all this over with his parents and they don't understand what gets into him. Only as a last resort would I ask the parents to remove him from our team. Any suggestions?

A: There are three aspects to this situation that I think require action:

1. The child is not behaving appropriately according to the expectations of the coach.
2. The child is likely struggling with something emotional related to his participation on the team.
3. The coach and parents would benefit from specific guidelines for preparing the child for further participation.

First, establish a common understanding of what the goal is for participation. What does he think is "fun" about baseball? Get to know his motives for playing. Work to match those motives with expectations for his behavior. Pay attention to the situation that immediately precedes any of these outbursts. There could be a pattern to his behavior that you have missed. Did he make a mistake? Is he being ignored? Is he bored?

Secondly, it is important to establish behavioral expectations and consequences on a team, even for 6- to 8-year-olds. They respond to stern communication that is balanced with compassion and flexibility. It is not uncommon to be able to elicit a desired behavior through negotiation with a 6- or 8-year-old. Coming to "agreements" is a great way to teach problem solving and the benefits of agreeableness. It also builds autonomy in the child and trust with the coach and parents.

It is important to communicate to the child at a time when he is calm and focused. Get down to his level (e.g. kneeling down so you are eye to eye with him or sitting together on a bench), and review what is expected of all players on the team. Ask him what he thinks it means to be a good teammate and a good sport. Connect what he shares with specific expectations. Let him know that if he cannot control his behavior he will not be able to play. Communicate with a very matter-of-fact tone. An immediate response to inappropriate behavior is crucial.

Be sure you judge the behavior and not the child. One approach is to establish a "one-warning policy" in which he will receive one warning followed by having to sit down, think about alternative responses that would have been more appropriate (I often call this "Fix it!" and use the prompt, "Next time I will... instead") and rejoin the team after they have shared their "Fix it!" ideas with a coach. If apologies are required, they must also be taken care of before participation can resume. Make sure you communicate to the child what the consequence will be if the behavior recurs. Then, quickly refocus onto the goals of the practice, game or drill and having fun. (e.g. "Alright, let's see your best fielding now!" or "Okay, let's have some fun now!")



There are myriad reasons for why this young boy could be acting out. Understanding the root of his outbursts would be helpful, but may not be realistic in the moment. If possible, and time allows, the coach or parent can pull the child aside, ask him to calm down (“Will you count to 10 with me?”) and then communicate what you observed (“When I see someone hit someone else, it makes me think they are upset about something. Can you tell me what has upset you?”) Another approach is to help the child connect his physical reaction to a verbal one by asking him, “When you just [shoved/punched/cursed], what was your hand/body/anger trying to say?” Sometimes providing response prompts can be helpful (“I am angry because...”). If we give the child an opportunity to express himself with words, when he would otherwise think no one is listening or the physical or aggressive response is simply easier, he very often will.

Lastly, it is important for coaches and parents to take an approach that is collaborative and authoritative with the child, rather than autocratic or authoritarian. Behavior modification techniques might also be appropriate with this child if the behaviors are frequent. Before each practice (or drill, if needed) and game set a goal with the child. If he achieves it, he may earn something. Remember that positive reinforcement is most effective for replicating a desired behavior. It’s important to catch him doing the right thing and give him a heartfelt positive response (“Great self-control, even though I could tell you were bummed you got out at first. That’s what it means to be tough! Keep it up!”). Negative punishment such as taking away a bat, or removing the child from the game, or even kicking him off the team should be reserved for unsafe situations, extreme behaviors and last resorts.

Q: I have a few kids on my team that do not pay attention every time I am giving out instructions or teaching them something. How do I motivate them to pay attention without using punishment?

A: First, you should know that you are not alone in this matter, and that this type of behavior is quite common in boys of this age group. However, there are two very important sides to this issue.

When discussing behavior, I always find it best to begin my season by sharing my expectations with the players. I let them know that when I am speaking, they must show respect and listen. The same as they would do for a teacher in school. Next, it is critical that you remain firm and consistent in the enforcement of this expectation. If you are not, they will take advantage of you as much as you allow.

If you are further along in the season and the problem has escalated to the point that you can no longer tolerate it, then you need to have a team meeting. I might suggest that you include the parents in the meeting (by doing so, you now have allies working to help you). In a very serious manner, you let the boys know that their lack of respect and attention has reached a point that is no longer acceptable. Moving forward, they will be held accountable.

One way of doing this is to tell the boys that they will be asked to sit out for five minutes for their first transgression. For the second occurrence, you will call their parents and have them picked up from practice. This should get their attention.

Remember, it’s always easier to begin your season by being strict, but it’s critical that you remain firm and consistent throughout the entire season.

The other side of this issue that we sometimes get caught in as coaches is that we tend to over coach. It’s a good idea to constantly check yourself and make sure you are not falling into this category. Kids don’t want to stand around and listen to us adults....they want to play!



Q: One of my players is very talented – and she knows it. She can be very condescending to her own teammates. How can I address her attitude while avoiding creating a rift among my players and affecting team cohesion?

A: It is critical that coaches teach their athletes the importance of good character. The type of character befitting a champion athlete reflects sportsmanship, humbleness, integrity and leadership, not to mention dedication, commitment and discipline. By taking the focus off of this one individual athlete who is showing poor behavior and refocusing on the group as a whole, you will allow the entire team to grow together.

I have seen coaches who demand as much good character from their athletes as they do physical performance, and the result of this is not only a cohesive team, but a group of strong individuals who feel good about themselves before they even hit the playing field. There are several ways to do this.

Start with a group discussion pointing out examples of good character in team members. This gives focus to the positive and takes energy away from the negative behavior. Next, provide leadership opportunities, possibly for the player who has been showing poor behavior, to enable team members to receive praise for actions that reflect good character. This may be as simple as providing opportunities to assist younger players, helping a team member with a recovering injury to practice a skill, or doing community service together as a team. Make sure that all team members recognize that you highly value and support this behavior.

Basically, taking your energy away from the difficult team member and giving attention to the acts that support the behavior you want should change things in your team dynamic.

Q: Two of my eight-year-old players collided during a drill and got into a fistfight. We coaches broke it up quickly so nobody was hurt, but now we're wondering what to do next in terms of discussing this situation with players and parents. Any ideas?

Hopefully, you have explained to all players and parents the high value you place on teammates respecting each other. Before any players left the practice in which the incident occurred, ideally you would have gathered all the players to re-emphasize the importance of respecting each other.

If you have not already expressed a zero-tolerance policy toward fighting, now is the time do so in front of the whole team. "Fighting is NEVER OK unless it is absolutely necessary to defend yourself from harm. That is much different than just being angry or feeling like someone gave you a cheap shot."

As soon as possible, communicate with the parents of the players who fought. Let those parents know what happened. Hear them out for any insights that might explain their child's behavior and for clues on how you can prevent any further outbursts.

If you have ever expressed a specific consequence for fighting, deliver on it or risk losing the weight your word carries with players and parents. Even if you have not mentioned a specific consequence, it is within your right to impose one, such as a single-game suspension.

Please choose **one** player on your team who has displayed the best **WORD OF THE WEEK** this week during practice and the game. This player is **NOT** the one who is the most athletic or scored the most, but instead is the player that has the best attitude, helped their teammates and respected the opposing team and officials. Once filled out completely, please return to an official. The official will gather both teams together and present the Word of the Week Award.

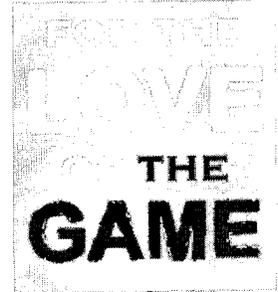
Date: _____

Team Name: _____

Player's Name: _____

Why: _____

Coach's Initials: _____



Please choose **one** player on your team who has displayed the best **WORD OF THE WEEK** this week during practice and the game. This player is **NOT** the one who is the most athletic or scored the most, but instead is the player that has hustled, helped their teammates and respected the opposing team and officials. Once filled out completely, please return to an official. The official will gather both teams together and present the Word of the Week Award.

Date: _____

Team Name: _____

Player's Name: _____

Why: _____

Coach's Initials: _____





CONCUSSION TRAINING FOR COACHES

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A traumatic injury to the brain that alters mental status or changes the way the brain normally works. It is caused by a blow to the head or body that forces the brain to move rapidly inside the skull.

IDENTIFYING CONCUSSIONS

As an NYSCA coach you have a responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all your players at all times, so it is imperative that you are always closely watching them and if any of the following signs are observed, or symptoms are reported, that you immediately remove that youngster from play since it may signal that a concussion has been sustained:

<u>Signs observed by coaching staff</u>	<u>Symptoms reported by the athlete</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appears dazed or stunned• Is confused about assignment or position• Forgets sports plays• Is unsure of game, score or opponent• Moves clumsily• Answers questions slowly• Loses consciousness (even briefly)• Shows behavior or personality changes• Can't recall events prior to hit or fall• Can't recall events after hit or fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache or "pressure" in head• Nausea or vomiting• Balance problems or dizziness• Double or blurry vision• Sensitivity to light• Sensitivity to noise• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy• Concentration or memory problems• Confusion• Does not "feel right"

DANGER SIGNS

If concussion symptoms become more severe you need to call 9-1-1 or have the parent/guardian take the child to the closest hospital immediately.

Athletes who have sustained a concussion can have blood clots form on their brain and squeeze their brain against their skull, which can cause serious damage. The following danger signs represent a medical emergency:

- Headache worsens or doesn't go away
- Weakness or numbness
- Loss or decrease in coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- One pupil larger than the other
- Restlessness
- Unusual behavior
- Increasing confusion or agitation
- Loss of consciousness/drowsiness
- Inability to wake up

LIMITING THE RISK OF CONCUSSIONS

- **Educate parents** – Take time before the season to go over concussion education with your players' parents. Parents can reinforce the rules, safe play procedures and how to wear protective equipment correctly.
- **Educate athletes** – Before the season, provide your players with a list of symptoms they might experience as a result of a concussion. Stress to them to report any bump or blow to their head – even if they feel fine – and it is always best to remove that player from the competition just as a precaution.
- **Teach safe play and good sportsmanship** – You should always educate your athletes to play by the rules and show good sportsmanship toward the opposition; rules are in place to help prevent injuries.
- **Wear the right protective gear** – It is also important to teach your players to wear their protective equipment properly, make sure it fits well, and that it is used every time they play.
- **Strengthen the neck** – This is a relatively new concept in youth sports to help prevent concussions so please consult a physical trainer before beginning any type of strengthening activity.

Did You Know?

- ***A player does not have to be knocked unconscious to have experienced a concussion.***
- ***A concussion can occur in any sport or recreation activity.***
- ***Children do not recover quicker than adults from concussions.***

DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION

If you suspect one of your players has sustained a concussion you should:

1. Immediately remove the athlete from play if you notice any signs or symptoms of a concussion.
2. Have the athlete checked by a medical professional trained to evaluate concussions.
3. Inform the athlete's parents of any symptoms you observed and remind them that the player must be evaluated by a medical professional.



ALLOWING PLAYERS BACK ON THE FIELD

Make sure that the player has permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating concussions before they can return to play. If the athlete returns before they are fully recovered and experience a repeat concussion it is often much more severe and can even be fatal.

Resting

Doctors recommend an athlete who has sustained a concussion get as much rest as possible in the days and weeks following the incident. Rest helps the brain recover and heal itself. Resting includes getting plenty of sleep and avoiding physical activity throughout the day. Also, activities such as watching television, playing video games or even homework can cause symptoms to remain, reappear or even get worse. Players returning to play too soon will cause their brain to divert the energy it needs to heal into energy needed for the activity.

Players might try and resist the doctor's and/or parent's orders so be prepared to handle these situations. They might see their friends playing and want to join them but you should:

- Speak with the parent first and find out what diagnosis the doctor gave the player.
- Discuss the situation with the player and his/her parents.
- Talk about the risks involved of them playing too soon.
- Offer support and encouragement that they will get better if they follow the proper recovery procedures outlined by their doctor.

Returning to Play

All athletes must receive written permission from a health care professional with concussion management experience before returning to play. Your player's doctor should also provide an action plan to get your player ready to compete again. Players should be symptom free at rest, as well as while doing any physical or cognitive activities, before attempting a comeback.

Sample Plan

Begin one week after concussion symptoms have stopped. Each step takes approximately one day to complete and a player should only go to the next step if no symptoms have been experienced.

- Step 1:** Walking, light jogging, riding a stationary exercise bike (5-10 min.)
- Step 2:** Moderate jogging and biking, light calisthenics, brief sprinting (20-30 min.)
- Step 3:** Sprinting or running, intense exercise biking, non-contact drills (45-60 min.)
- Step 4:** Full contact practice but in a controlled environment with teammates
- Step 5:** Game activity, assuming no concussion symptoms have been experienced

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Excellence Comes From the Bench, Too

Fundamentals eNewsletter from Play Positive with Positive Coaching Alliance

6/11/2015

During the NBA Finals, many of us heard about Dell Curry, the father of Warriors starting point guard Stephen Curry. In addition to being the NBA reigning MVP's dad, Dell Curry was himself an NBA star, playing 17 seasons and retiring from the Charlotte Hornets as the all-time leader in points and three-point field goals. Many consider Dell to be one of the best pure shooters the NBA has ever seen.

But you might not know that his amazing career came from the bench! That's right: Dell Curry was an NBA Sixth Man! "It is very hard to come off the bench and be consistent on a nightly basis. That was something that I prided myself on. Everybody would love to start. I did start a few games. To have a guy come off the bench and the coach can rely on you on a nightly basis and as well as your teammates was a good thing. Just like the starters, your teammates needed and expected your input to help win the game each night," said Dell.

For many youth athletes, time on the bench can be tough. But being on the bench shouldn't be seen or feel like punishment. Instead, coaches and parents should help players recognize their critical role in the success of a team even from the sidelines. By using examples like Dell Curry, coaches and parents can help athletes see how their contribution to their team can be great from the bench.

Want to learn how to talk to your kids about greatness from the bench?

On the Bench Because of Injury

Athletes unfortunately find themselves on the bench because of an injury. But just because they can't contribute in the game doesn't mean they can't contribute to the team in other ways.

Coaches should help players find the ways that they can contribute:

- Help read the offenses or defenses of the opposing team, sharing insights with teammates.
- Keep statistics for coaches.
- Be a valuable player-coach to the athlete who took their spot, sharing their insights and tips.
- Be a motivator and cheerleader for their teammates.

On the Bench Because of Tenure

On many school teams, upperclassmen play while underclassmen sit, with playing time being earned by tenure and not necessarily by talent. And this experience can be tough for the underclassmen, especially if they are eager to prove their skills, and show that they are the more talented player for the position.

- Coaches can keep underclassmen motivated by asking them to form the practice squad and to study and emulate each week's opponent. The better they master the skills and talents of the opponent, the better they can prepare the upperclassmen for the upcoming game.



- During the game itself, underclassmen can scout the opponent and share insights with upperclassmen.
- And when the game is done, success can be attributed to both the squads and the preparation they each contributed.

On the Bench Because of Skill Level

When kids are first starting out, youth sports should focus on skills development, with all kids getting the chance to play. But as kids age and sports become more competitive, playing time goes from being given to being earned. And the relative skill of each player helps determine playing time. Finding yourself on the bench because you are less skilled than your peers can be one of the most challenging experiences for a youth athlete.

Coaches have an obligation to make the criteria for playing time clear to all players, and to create a pathway to get there. Positive coaches sit down with players to map out skills plans – what skills do players need to take their game to the next level, how and when will these skills be taught, and how will the athlete get a chance to put those new skills to use in a game situation.

On the Bench Because of Game Strategy

Players can sometimes find themselves on the bench because the game strategy dictates it. A right-handed pitcher is suddenly benched because the coach decides that a lefty-on-lefty strategy for the next batter is the team's best opportunity for an out. The opposing team is able to consistently stop your running back so he's benched in favor of a bruising full-back.

Coaches can lessen the potential negative impact of being benched by sharing the game strategy with athletes before, during and after the game. Sometimes, coaches may also share that information with players' parents, who might not understand why their son or daughter is being replaced. Remind athletes that individuals each have unique skills and talents that will come into play as the game evolves and that each player has an important role on the team.

On The Bench Because of Poor Sportsmanship

Finally, athletes might find themselves on the bench because they lost their cool and, in some instances, demonstrated a lack of sportsmanship. When coaches and parents set out a code of behavior for athletes that includes sportsmanship, then consequences like benching need to follow when those codes are not honored. Playing is a privilege and subject to honoring the game and respecting officials, opponents and teammates.

Coaches should do their best not to just sit players without a discussion. They can ask the player if they know and understand why they have been benched, explain it clearly if they don't, and establish a clear path to reinstatement.

Honoring teammates is an important part of practicing good sportsmanship. Players on the bench should demonstrate that by staying engaged during games and supporting their teammates. Coaches and parents can help by reinforcing that message with bench players before, during and after games.



Positive Behavior Management: Prevention

The first and most important step in prevention is to support positive behavior. Many coaches dwell on behavioral challenges without thinking about what they are doing to get kids to behave positively. 90% of behavior management is about supporting positive behavior. The four key elements of supporting positive behavior are: 1) providing clear instruction, 2) transitioning from one activity to the next smoothly, 3) building positive relationships, and 4) fun and appropriately challenging activities.

Instruction

Kids feel: "I know what I am supposed to be doing."

- Give clear, easy-to-follow instructions.
- Make sure instructions are concise (short and to the point).
- Give only 1-2 instructions at a time.
- Ask players to repeat back instructions as a whole group where appropriate (e.g., "Which group, group one or group two, is going to sprint to the cone first?").
- Ask players if they have any questions.
- Use visual demos.

Transitions

Kids feel: "I am engaged at all times."

- Use energizers, icebreakers and games.
- Use attention getters instead of yelling for players' attention.
- Use games and activities you can use as "fillers". For example, when players will be finishing a task at different times, have players juggle the soccer ball while teammates finish the dribbling activity.
- Have a clear, ritualized way that you always begin practice (e.g., when players arrive at baseball practice, they always throw and catch with a teammate, then the coach circles the team up when ready to start).
- Have a clear, ritualized way that you always end practice (e.g., always close with a team cheer).



Relationships

Kids feel: "I am cared for."

- Coach builds relationships with each youth
 - Learn names quickly.
 - Get to know each youth as an individual.
 - Give specific, positive (and constructive) feedback.
 - Play with them, laugh and smile.
- Coach helps youth build relationships with each other
 - Use energizers, icebreakers and games.
 - Have time for personal check-in (e.g., Thumb Check-In).
 - Include relationship questions in your debriefing (e.g., who saw someone else trying hard? Who saw someone else improve?).
 - Use unifying team rituals (e.g., counting out loud when stretching, team cheers).
 - Teach players how to give positive and constructive feedback to each other.
 - React quickly to prevent put-downs, bullying or cliques.
 - Know when to get out of the way and let kids play with each other.

Engaging

Kids feel: "I am having fun, learning, and enjoying practice."

- Introduce new and appropriately challenging activities that keep youth feeling like they are learning and improving.
- Vary your practices so the players are not doing the same thing all the time.
- Make sure you have enough equipment and/or design drills so players are not standing in long lines waiting to do the skill.
- Sometimes give your team a choice (e.g., give the team three different shooting drills and let them pick which one they want to do).
- Don't rely only on drills; include games and scrimmages to make it fun.
- Create opportunities for youth to be leaders (e.g., warm-up leaders, equipment).



WORD OF THE WEEK "WOW" 2nd, 3rd, 4th Grade Leagues

Activities: Each week there is an activity for the team to complete.

Discussions: There will be 2-3 discussion questions to go over with all the players. You may have these discussions before a practice/game, during practice or after a practice/game.

Sportsmanship Award: At the end of each game, the coach is responsible to choose players that demonstrated the "WOW" the best.

Week One: TEAMWORK (Red)

There is no "I" in team

Activity: Make sure everyone gets involved. Do a team bonding activity.

- Team Flag Making
- Establish a Buddy System for "filling up each other's emotion tanks"
- Team Cheer
- Team Potluck
- "Getting to Know You" Activities
- Ice Breakers/Team Building
- Pizza Party
- Coaches watch for who is demonstrating the most teamwork during the week for the sportsmanship award.

Discussion Questions:

- What does being a part of a team mean to you as a player?
- What are other team sports?
- What are qualities that make a good teammate?

Week Two: CONFIDENCE (Orange)

Don't sweat it

Activity: Come up with a "don't sweat it" ritual for when players make a mistake. The ritual can be a saying, a hand motion or a cheer for the coach and the players.

- Make sure to explain to your players that it is okay to make a mistake.
- Coaches watch for who is demonstrating the most confidence during the week for the sportsmanship award.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is confidence important?
- How can you improve your confidence?
- When have you shown confidence?
- Why is it okay to make mistakes?

Week Three: RESPECT (Yellow)

Rules Opponents Officials Teammates Self= R.O.O.T.S

Activity: The team chooses one official from the games. Make a "thank you" or "appreciation" card, note or picture for them.

- Give the card, note and picture to official on game day



- Coaches watch for who is demonstrating the most respect during the week for the sportsmanship award.

Discussion Questions:

- Do the officials make the wrong calls sometimes? Is it okay?
- Why is it important to be respectful to others like officials, coaches, teammates and opponents?
- How can you show respect to others?

Week Four: LEADERSHIP (Blue)

Lead by example

Activity: Have players lead stretching or a drill. They can also show leadership by leading by example or cheering on their team or other team during practice/game.

- Coaches watch for who is demonstrating the most leadership during the week for the sportsmanship award.

Discussion Questions:

- What are the qualities do you think a good leader should have?
- How can you be a leader at school? At home?
- Explain to your players that every player on the team can be a leader and can lead by example.
- What is a quiet leader?

Week Five: LOVE OF THE GAME (Various Colors)

Winning with grace and losing with dignity

Activity: Play a game or drill that has no score involved. The only way they can get points is by having good sportsmanship. Make sure to also explain that a "Love of the Game" means playing with your teammates, confidence, respect, leadership and good sportsmanship. You should not focus on the negative or the score of the game.

- Coaches watch for who is demonstrating the most Love of the Game during the week for the sportsmanship award.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you have a Love of the Game?
- What does Love of the Game mean to you?
- How can you have good sportsmanship?
- How can you share your love of the game with others?