

COACHES MANUAL



Dear Youth Sports Coach,

Welcome to the City of Arlington's "Playing is Winning" Youth Sports Program. The "Playing is Winning" philosophy was introduced several years ago to promote recreational sports in Arlington. Our program goal focuses on the child and their involvement instead of the score.

Through participating in youth sports, your child is winning in social skills, teamwork and physical fitness while having fun. There is a saying, "it takes a village to raise a child." By working together with the volunteer coaches, league administrators and officials, your child will benefit from all aspects of the program and witness first-hand what being a role model is all about.

Our program goal is to provide a safe, supportive and encouraging environment for kids to enjoy while playing sports. This handbook will provide information about our program, ways for you to become involved and guides for youth sports development.

Teaching and learning is a lifelong task. Your involvement and encouragement for the team will confirm our "Playing is Winning" philosophy.

Wendy Parker
Athletics Director

"You don't stop playing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop playing." *George Bernard Shaw*

Vision Statement

Arlington is a vibrant city that enjoys a high quality of life through great parks and exceptional recreational opportunities. These services provide a foundation for the physical, social, economic and environmental viability and well-being of the community.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department is to provide quality facilities and services that are responsive to a diverse community and sustained with a focus on partnerships, innovation and environmental leadership.

Athletics Division Vision Statement Sports Empowerment

Style – Individual expression

Play – Participate in fun activities

Order – Unite as a team

Respect – Honor each other

Teach - How to play the game!

Succeed – Accomplish team goal

Athletics Division Mission Statement

The mission of the Athletics Division is to foster creative lifestyles through sports development and a positive self image.

Athletic Staff Members

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For general program information, please contact us at
Elzie Odom Athletic Center at (817) 459-6434.

Most important Goals as a Coach

TO HAVE FUN

The main reason youth participate in sports is to have fun. We strongly believe that the experience, development, and safety of our participants come before anything else, including winning. Please help us convey to our players the importance of having fun, building friendships, and enjoying sports in a recreational environment.

TO TEACH

Every child has the right to learn sports in a safe and comfortable environment. For many, this will be the only organized sport they play. Stick to the basics - help players build a strong foundation. There are many lessons to be learned besides the rules of the game. Please incorporate teamwork, sportsmanship, and positive thinking in all activities.

**YOU ARE IN A POSITION
TO GREATLY
INFLUENCE YOUR
PLAYERS!**

Ten Ways to Motivate Your Athletes

1. **Recognize achievement**

The majority of athletes develop self confidence and the motivation to try harder when they receive positive recognition for their efforts. These positive results are even more pronounced when that recognition comes from someone they respect, such as a coach, parent or senior player. By recognizing athletes' achievements in a variety of areas, in addition to those related to performance or skill development, you have the ability to encourage:

- Positive social behavior
- Regular attendance
- Respect for equipment
- Showing initiative by assisting the coach, official or younger athletes

2. **Set Goals**

Success or failure should not be determined by the scoreboard, or even by the number of games won.

Provide opportunities for all your athletes to experience success by setting goals in both the short term and long term. Goal setting can have a dramatic positive effect on both motivation and skill development. You can set specific performance goals that can be measured. For example:

- In this activity see how many times you can use only one hand.
- This season try to miss only two training sessions.

An essential feature of goal setting is giving frequent feedback. Otherwise, the tracking of progress may become difficult and minor improvements may not be obvious.

3. **Self motivation**

The feeling of pride and self-confidence that arises from success, and the feedback gained from the coach and significant others, may be more important than the achievement itself. It encourages the development of self-motivation, hence reducing a young person's need for reinforcement.

4. **Provide leadership opportunities**

Providing opportunities for leadership and expecting your athletes to assume (not too great) responsibilities are very important. Acknowledging their efforts through leadership motivates further success.

5. **Be consistent and enthusiastic**

Young people are often heard to say 'I hope the coach is in a good mood today'. This indicates that the mood of the coach can affect how young people enjoy their sport.

The environment a coach creates, what they say and how they say it, should be consistent, caring and enthusiastic. The coach's behavior towards all young people, regardless of their sporting ability, should be the same.

6. **Provide Challenges**

Don't underestimate the motivational value of small-sided competitive activities or seemingly frivolous challenges.

7. **Vary your practice programs**

A variety of practice routines and activities will reduce the chance of boredom.

8. **You can make practices fun**

Regardless of the level of competition or the ability of the participants, most young people take part in sports for enjoyment and fun. Ensuring that young people have fun encourages them to maintain their involvement.

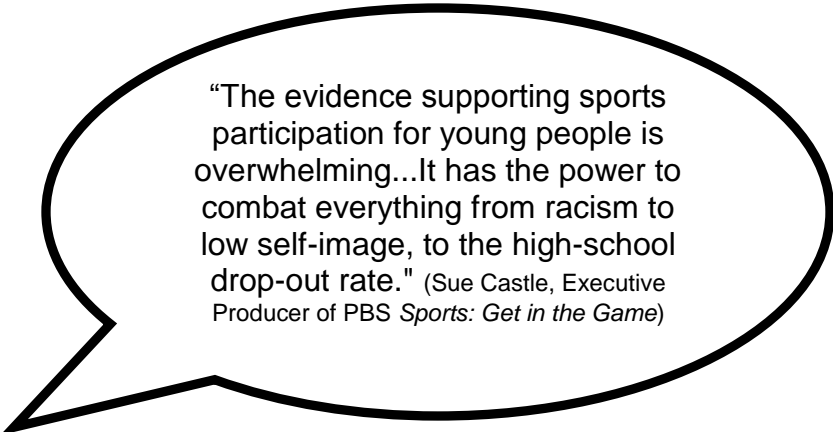
9. **Be organized**

Make sure there is enough equipment for the session. Nothing bores or frustrates young people more than waiting in long lines or watching more talented athletes dominate the equipment.

10. **Discipline**

Discipline may or may not be an effective deterrent to undesirable behavior; but discipline alone, without corrective direction, does nothing to tell young people what behavior is acceptable, or how they can modify their behavior. The threat of discipline can also increase the amount of pressure under which a young person performs, often leading to a mistake as a result of the fear of the consequences of making an error.

www.activeaustralia.org



"The evidence supporting sports participation for young people is overwhelming...It has the power to combat everything from racism to low self-image, to the high-school drop-out rate." (Sue Castle, Executive Producer of PBS *Sports: Get in the Game*)

RULES OF CONDUCT FOR ALL YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMS

I. PROGRAM PURPOSE

- A. The City of Arlington Youth Sports League strives to provide a fun and safe environment where boys and girls, ages 3-15, can learn the fundamentals of sports, sportsmanship and teamwork under the guidance of volunteer leaders. The league will emphasize participation (everyone plays), physical fitness, building self-esteem, the opportunity to meet new friends, and, above all, fun.
- B. The League recognizes the various developmental stages of boys and girls. Instruction in the teaching of basic skills will be given by volunteers. Height-adjustable goals are used in the basketball program.
- C. The League will expose the youth to healthy competition, teamwork, and skill, on their level of physical maturity. Individual success should not be measured by winning or losing.
- D. Youth sports should be a positive learning experience. Too often children are immersed in a highly competitive league before they are prepared to handle it.
- E. We believe for the long-term personal and sports success of our youth, a progressive system is essential. Our leagues allow boys and girls to play at the level best suited to their physical and emotional maturity.

II. CLASSIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY

- A. Leagues will be divided by ages. Consideration will be given to the parent's request for a child to be moved up or down one division to accommodate playing ability, based on the parent's knowledge of their child's ability.
- B. Participants registered by the deadline, will be placed on a team as follows:
 - 1. Players will be assigned to a team. Special requests will be honored as long as they do not jeopardize the competitiveness of the teams.
 - 2. The head coach and one assistant coach may have their own children on their team.
 - 3. When requested, brothers and sisters will be assigned on the same team.
 - 4. Participants registered after the deadline will be assigned to teams on a space available basis.
 - 5. Only registered, rostered players may participate in games.
 - 6. Participants play at their own risk. The City of Arlington Parks and Recreation Department does not assume responsibility or liability for accidents and/or injuries which may result from participation in the program. A parent signature is required on the participant waiver form for all players to be eligible.

III. THE COACH

- A. The volunteer coach is the critical link to ensuring the League's success. Coaches will be approved only according to their willingness to adhere to the philosophy and rules of the program. Coaches are strongly encouraged to attend coaches meeting as scheduled.
- B. Coaches should set an example for their players and spectators at all times. They must accept that both correct and incorrect calls are part of the game (especially a youth sports game) and teach players to concentrate on playing the game.
- C. Coaches are to encourage players to be on time for all games and practices, and ready to play.
- D. Coaches and parents should be examples of good sportsmanship to the players.

IV. PARENTS/ SPECTATORS

- A. The League encourages the positive support of parents and spectators at all youth recreation games. Some points to remember:
 - 1. Do not take the outcome of the game too seriously. The focus is **kids first**, winning second.
 - 2. Make positive comments. Criticizing of players, opponents, coaches or officials does not create a positive experience. This type of behavior will not be tolerated.
 - 3. Accept the official's decisions. The officials strive to contribute positively to our youth sports leagues.
 - 4. **Verbal abuse, loud or intimidating behavior is prohibited.** Those displaying this behavior will be asked to leave the facility or playing field, and possibly face suspension.

V. PRACTICES

- A. Practices will be held at a location designated by the team coach and parents.
 - 1. Practices will take place one hour a week.
 - 2. Practices will take place at a school, park or recreation center.
 - 3. Teams may only meet twice a week including games. (one practice, one game)

VI. PARTICIPATION RULES

- A. It is our goal for **all** players to participate equally during games.
- B. Participation rules apply except for disciplinary action and injury.

VII. EQUIPMENT

- A. Equipment (when required) will be handed out to the coach at the beginning of the season. Equipment for games will be provided by the Athletics Department.
- B. Shoes: For leagues in the gym, players must wear non-marking rubber soled athletic shoes. Proper tread on the shoes ensures traction for the youth while playing.

- C. Team uniforms are provided by the Youth Sports League and is the required uniform for games.
- D. Under no condition may a player wear any equipment that is a danger to other players (The Athletics Manager will determine if equipment, such as medical casts, etc. is dangerous.)
- E. All jewelry, including earrings, rings, and necklaces must be removed prior to games or practices.

VIII. **FORFEIT**

- A. Failure of a team to appear at a scheduled game with the required number of players will result in a forfeit for that team. A team will be given a 5 minute grace period, if at the end of the 5 minute they still don't have enough to play another 5 minute grace period will be issued and the game will be shortened. Following the second grace period the game will be played within whatever adjustments are possible (Divide players up from both teams).
- B. Unsportsmanlike conduct of players, coaches, or spectators may result on a game being stopped. The Athletic Manager will review the situation and take appropriate action.
- C. Playing ineligible players will result in a forfeit.

IX. **TEAM ROSTERS**

- A. Players are allowed to play on only one team during the season.
- B. The responsibility of moving players from team to team will be at the discretion of the Athletics Manager. Coaches cannot move/trade players unless approved by the Youth Sports Manager.
- C. Should it become necessary to add players to a team, the Athletics Manager will make the addition. **Coaches cannot add players to their rosters without knowledge or permission of the Athletics Manager.**

X. **SPORTSMANSHIP**

- A. Sportsmanship is major part of this league. It is expected that coaches will exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. It is the coach's responsibility to see that their players, parents, and spectators show proper sportsmanship. **Flagrant fouls or unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.**
- B. Teams will shake hands with the opponents after every game.
Sportsmanship goals:
 1. Accept the official's decisions. Mistakes will be made...stay focused on the game.
 2. Keep sideline conduct under control and make positive comments.
 3. Cooperate with staff.
 4. Avoid flagrant fouls or unsportsmanlike conduct.
 5. Respect your opponents.
 6. Do not criticize.

7. No trash talking. Players, coaches, and spectators are to refrain from using harsh, derogatory, or abusive remarks. Trash talkers will be warned one time. If other instances occur, the participant, coach or spectator may be ejected from the game.
8. Any player, coach or parent/spectator who is, at the discretion of the Coach or Athletics Manager, deemed out of control will be asked to leave the gym or facility in which the game is being conducted.

XI. **YOUTH BILL OF RIGHTS**

- Right to participate in sports.
- Right to participate at a level equal with each child's maturity and ability.
- Right to have qualified adult leadership.
- Right to play as a child not as an adult.
- Right 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.

XII. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- A. Team players, coaches, parents and spectators are subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by the decision of the game officials and rule stated within.

TO COACHES:

What you can expect from us:

- The City of Arlington – Parks and Recreation Department will provide the necessary training materials for youth sports coaches.
- We will provide all the necessary uniforms and equipment for teams.
- We will provide participation awards for every player.
- We will provide a practice schedule for basketball and indoor soccer. All other sports will schedule their own practices.
- We will begin and end games on time, barring unforeseen extenuating circumstances.
- We will strictly enforce rules, especially rules of sportsmanlike conduct.
- We will treat players, coaches, parents and spectators fairly and equally.
- We will promptly address any concerns or questions you have.

What we expect from you:

- The City of Arlington – Parks and Recreation Department expects that volunteer coaches will abide by the regulations outlined in this Coaches Manual.
- We expect that our volunteer coaches set examples for our youth participants of sportsmanlike conduct, team work, and respect for officials.
- We expect that our volunteer coaches will communicate any and all important information to their team.
- We expect that our volunteer coaches will not have any other scheduled practices except for what is outlined in the program.
- We expect that our volunteer coach's first concerns are the safety of the youth in the program and their overall experience. **Winning should not be the focus!**
- We expect that our volunteer coaches provide positive coaching for all participants.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COACHING

1. Learn the names of all the children on your team.
2. Ask one of the parents to be an assistant coach so they can step in, in the event you cannot attend a game or practice. Only approved coaches will be allowed to coach in your absence. Please plan ahead!
3. Have extra copies of practice/game schedules.
4. Encourage parents to be prompt when dropping off and picking up kids.
5. Recruit a team mom or dad.
6. Establish team rules. Have the players assist in developing the team rules.
7. Have FUN at practice.
8. End each practice with a team cheer.
9. Encourage players to bring water bottles to games and practices.



“When you serve as a parent leader for your children’s teams, you find many opportunities to create positive experiences for the entire sports community.”

From the Bleachers With Love

by David Canning Epperson and George Selleck

“Assume leadership in helping sports become a sanctuary from the normal stresses of everyday life, a place where a good time is had by all.”

From the Bleachers With Love

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“Encourage sportsmanship in your children and others by living good sportsmanship yourself.”

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COACH QUALIFICATIONS

- All coaches will become a registered volunteer with the City of Arlington.
- All coaches must pass the criminal background check.

COACHES DUTIES

- Will be of good moral character
- Able to deal with children, assistant coaches, parents, game officials, city officials, and league administrators in a positive manner.
- Be responsible for equipment issued by the City of Arlington staff.
- Return all equipment in good condition at the end of the season.
- Be responsible for the team's actions, including parents and fans, and representing the team in communication with the officials and opposing team before, during and after games.
- Must be informative/positive and never harassing at any time.
- Must be at the game or practice facility with their team throughout the activity.
- Coaches must wear the City issued coach's shirt at all times during the game and have their City issued Identification Card upon request.

FACILITY USAGE

Elzie Odom Athletic Center and Sports Facilities:

Please help us to keep our facilities safe and clean. Food and drink is prohibited in either of the gyms. Please eat food in the lobby or concession area. Shoes that make markings on the floor are prohibited. Only athletic shoes can be worn on gym floors. During games, only players and coaches are allowed on the courts.

PRACTICE FORMAT

It is up to the coaches to determine how practices are run. Here are some suggestions for an effective practice:

1. Have an outline of what will take place before practice begins.
2. Warm-up (10 minutes). This will reduce the chances of injuries.
3. Skill Warm-up (10 minutes). Revise a skill taught in an earlier session and reinforce the key points as players warm up. Remember to use praise.
4. Skill Development (20 minutes). Demonstrate the new skill you have planned for the session. Remember to stick to the basics. Demonstrate slowly and in pieces if needed. Practice the skill. Observe all players so that you can praise good technique and spot basic errors. Be positive and supportive as you correct mistakes.
5. Modified Game (20). Play a game. Make sure there isn't anyone sitting out for long amounts of time.

BEFORE AND AFTER THE GAMES

Before games:

Games are scheduled with limited leeway time. Please make sure that your team is on time and ready to play at your assigned time. Remind your players that only water is allowed on the benches. Introduce yourself to the referees of the game. Ask parents to sit in the stands.

After games:

Quickly do a cheer and hand shake with the opposing team. Clear off the field/court or field quickly so that the next game can begin on time. Compliment your team on their playing. If your team has chosen to have snacks, please pass them out off the courts or fields. **Please dispose of any trash in the available trash cans.** Remind the players and participants of the next game/practice.

SNACKS

The City of Arlington does not provide snacks for league play. A successful suggestion has been that the coach brings snacks the first week, and then creates a schedule for the rest of the season, assigning a different family each week. Another suggestion is requesting a parent accept the role of "Team Parent" and coordinate snack duties. We will be offering a drink and snack special at our concession stand on game days.

UNIFORMS AND DRESS CODE

The City of Arlington will provide uniforms each league season. This uniform is included in the price of the program. Please remind your players to wear their uniforms to the games. Encourage them to tuck in shirts and keep pants at their waist. Participants do not need to wear their uniforms to practice. The safety of our participants is very important. All players need to remove jewelry before playing and need to have appropriate athletic shoes.

PICTURES

Team pictures will be taken every season. These pictures are optional and are not included in the price of the program. A picture time will be assigned to your team. Please make sure you are there 15 minutes early. To ensure that all team members' show up for the team picture, each coach (or designated parent) should make reminder calls the night before. Even if families aren't buying pictures, encourage them to be in the team picture. If there are problems with the photos, the photographer needs to be contacted directly. This information is located on the picture envelope.

AWARDS

The City of Arlington provides individual trophies/medals for each participant. These will be given to coaches near the end of the season. We ask that other awards or trophies are not handed out.

PARENTS

Parents are not allowed on the court/field unless they are an assistant coach. Parents are under the same sportsmanlike conduct rules as the coaches and players are. Coaches should encourage parents to cheer and support **all** teams in a positive way.

Parents like to be informed. Please clearly communicate information to them. A suggestion is to have a coach-parent-player meeting. This meeting can take place following the Informational Meeting or at the first practice. Here is a recommended check list of what to go over:

- ❑ Introduce yourself and give parents your contact information.
- ❑ Explain your goals for this season. (They should reflect those goals established in this manual.)
- ❑ Have the team introduce themselves and introduce their parents.
- ❑ Recruit an assistant coach and/or a team mom or dad.
- ❑ Hand out all game/practice schedules (Make sure the group can practice on the night you have chosen, it not discuss a night with the group).
- ❑ Explain snacks.
- ❑ Go over any rules you have as a coach.
- ❑ Establish rules as a team.
- ❑ Address any concerns or questions they may have.

Hint: Focus on the kids! This is their team, not their parent's team.