



Coon Rapids Athletic Association

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Welcome Volunteer!

Dear Volunteer

Welcome! The Coon Rapids Athletic Association (CRAA) is privileged to join ranks with you as a volunteer. CRAA has a distinguished history of service rendered by many as volunteer coaches, event and program organizers, service helpers, project helpers, and so on. We believe the substance that binds us together as a community is due to the volunteer spirit of the people of Coon Rapids.

As a volunteer, we desire to integrate your service with the personnel from CRAA in a safe and sound setting while providing you with orientation training opportunities that we hope meet your expectations. The enclosed information will introduce you to the process we have to start you off as a volunteer for the Coon Rapids Athletic Association.

We hope your service experience with us is fulfilling and rewarding to you. Thank you for considering us.

Thanks for all you do,

Ted J. Schmolke
President
Coon Rapids Athletic Association

Volunteer General Information

Process for becoming a volunteer:

- For youth volunteer sports, recruitment begins at the time of registration. Volunteers indicate on registration form if they are interested in volunteering as head coach, assistant coach, or team player.
- Upon receipt of a cleared background check, the Program Vice President/Director will contact the prospective volunteer to schedule the required training.
- In the event that a positive background check is reported, the report will be given to the Program Vice President. The Vice President will contact the appropriate Director/Coach(es) to take the appropriate action.
- All volunteer service for each sport shall include completion of the required forms for the purpose of ensuring volunteer safety and reducing risk to CRAA.
- Coaches receive a list of program rules, code of conduct, and expectations of the athletic program.
- CRAA volunteers are instructed on goals and objectives of the athletic program.
- A volunteer agrees to serve without monetary compensation for their donated time.

Responsibilities of a Volunteer

A volunteer has the following responsibilities:

- Stay in contact with your designated Program Director or Vice President.
- Follow the direction provided by CRAA Staff and Directors
- Ask questions when directions or information may not appear to be clear.
- Complete service indicated.
- Communicate with your CRAA Vice President or Director.
- Report all injuries or incidents to the Vice President of your sport immediately.
- Participate in the program or project evaluation with your designated Program Director/Vice President as circumstances permit
- CRAA wants to hear your ideas so we can always improve programs.

Volunteer Program Standards

- Respect the privacy of persons employed by and served by the City of Coon Rapids and School District. Hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of the volunteer work that you do.
- Volunteers shall not discriminate because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national ancestry, marital status, or ability.
- Personal use of City or School District owned tools, equipment, parts or supplies is prohibited.
- Volunteers should maintain a professional relationship with Department Staff and the general public during the course of his or her service.
- Volunteers may not solicit gratuities, gifts, or bequests from the City or School District patrons.
- Visitors and customers who are friends, relatives, or business associates of volunteers are not to receive preferential treatment while volunteering with CRAA.
- Volunteers' must call the designated Program Director or Vice President if you are unable to fulfill your duties.
- Volunteers do not give out CRAA news releases or press releases.
- Volunteers do not represent the City of Coon Rapids or School District #11 matters pertaining to operations, maintenance, direction, or leadership capacities.
- Dress Code: All volunteers should dress in a manner that follows the purpose of CRAA. Apparel should exclude age inappropriate advertisement or language that is in violation of CRAA Mission and goals. (Example, a shirt that advertises Beer.)

CRAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS DIRECTORY

May 2010

www.craakids.com

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CRAA Volunteer Check List

1. Complete a background check and application
2. Introduce yourself to the children and get involved with them quickly.
3. Become familiar with the daily schedule, rules, and surroundings at the site.
4. Follow all school rules and program rules and encourage participants to do the same.
5. Encourage all participants to participate in prepared activities. However, some children will not want to participate in an activity. If this occurs, be patient and talk over the situation with the child's parent(s).
6. When with a child, **ALWAYS** stay with the group. **NEVER** be alone with a participant.
7. Define your boundaries. Find a balance between being a friend and a leader. Do not give piggyback or shoulder rides, wrestle with the children, or allow them to sit on your lap. These things can show favoritism and take your attention away from the group as a whole.
8. Orient yourself with the site discipline policies so you can handle situations as they arise. If you have witnessed a problem, which needs discipline, or if you have directed a child to do something and they will not, inform the CRAA staff as soon as possible so that they may address the situation. Allow the CRAA staff member to handle major discipline issues and inform them of any discipline actions you have taken.
9. Introduce yourself to staff, parents, and school faculty as you practice or have games.
10. Call the CRAA Director to answer questions from parents, teachers, or others.
11. Limit cell phone use during your time with your team. This should be for emergency situations only. They distract your attention from the children.

Remember, Volunteers are just as important to the program as everyone else is. Your behavior and attitude have a significant effect on the children and the program!

CRAA Youth Sports Coaches Manual

INTRODUCTION

Coon Rapids Athletic Association provides year round sports leagues to the City's youth between the ages of 5 and 18 years old. The program is designed for young children and teens to involve themselves in recreational sport activities in order to promote sportsmanship, fair play, and to educate participants on the importance of involving themselves in positive and healthy physical activity.

WHAT DO WE PROVIDE

- Year-round sports leagues are offered to Coon Rapids resident youths.
- Free sport clinics for players and coaches to start each season, as applicable.
- Mandatory coaches' meetings prior to each season.
- Sportsmanship guidelines for all spectators.
- Game Officials and on-site coordinators.
- Practice and game facilities.
- Uniforms, equipment and awards.
- Background check for all volunteer coaches.

LEAGUE PHILOSOPHY

The Youth Sports Program is designed to provide children the opportunity to participate in an organized recreational sports activity.

This program has been established to:

- Introduce youth to an athletic experience;
- Promote values associated with group participation such as teamwork, unity, cooperation and a sense of belonging;
- Give children the opportunity, regardless of ability, to engage in competitive activities and at the same time have fun;
- Establish a sense of responsibility to someone other than one's self.

MANAGER/COACHES DUTIES

- Will be a good moral character and able to deal with children, assistant coaches, parents, game officials, city officials, and league administrators in a positive manner and continue to practice the CRAA Coaches Code of Ethics.
- Responsible for returning all equipment and uniforms issued to him/her.
- Responsible for the team's actions, including parents and fans, and representing the teams in communication with the officials and opposing team before, during and after games. This rule also applies to conduct of teams that travel to other communities.
- Responsible for appointing a representative with a criminal background check to replace him/her if he/she is unable to be present.
- A coach's tone of voice should be informative /positive and never harassing at any time.
- Responsible to insure that all equipment is in good working order and informing the Program Director if certain equipment needs to be replaced and/or repaired.
- Current criminal backgrounds check on file for all coaches with the CRAA Board by the second week of games. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Responsible to ensure all coaches and players are at each game at their prescribed time. If a team is unable to make the game, the coach is responsible to notify the CRAA Director a minimum of 48 hours in advance.
- Coaches must always be in the facility with his/her team throughout the game. Any coach that leaves his/her team while the game is still in progress without notifying CRAA Director may be subject to disciplinary action.
- At the end of each game or practice, coaches will remind players and parents to collect all personal items they may have brought with them to the game, and assist in the clean up the area from left over water/beverage bottles, and garbage.
- The information provided on the Player Roster is considered private information and may not be shared or distributed without permission from the player's parents.

MANDATORY COACHES MEETING

All volunteer coaches or a team representative are required to attend a mandatory coaches meeting prior to each sports season in order to comply with the mission of the program, review league rules, and complete the CRAA training. Coaches will have two (2) opportunities in order to obtain all information as it pertains to the program and to complete all necessary forms.

BACKGROUND CHECK

ALL coaches must submit to a criminal background check PRIOR to any coaching assignment. Coaches will be instructed to complete the background questionnaire on a secure website. Instructions on how to access the website will be provided by the Vice President of the sport activity.

SAFETY

The safety and well being of the players must be of prime concern, and every precaution should be taken to prevent any injury to the participant. Facilities should be kept free of hazards, and extreme care in the use of equipment should be exercised. Any unsafe facilities or equipment

should be reported immediately to the CRAA staff. Responsibility for providing safe playing facilities for practices and games rests with the City of Coon Rapids, and School District 11.

Those working with children, as it pertains to safety, often overlook the discipline factor. Accidents may occur when physical efforts of vigorous children are matched. Among well-disciplined athletes, there is less likelihood of players exposing themselves to situations, which could lead to serious accident. CRAA philosophy stresses "Safety First."

RELATIONSHIP WITH GAME OFFICIALS

CRAA has made every effort to secure and train the best officials available. Many hours are spent in the process of orientation, rule study, game administration, etc.

Points to remember in Coach/Official relationships:

- Officials must be treated with respect. Treat officials, as you would wish to be treated. Officials are expected to treat all volunteers with mutual respect.
- Only head coaches are permitted to speak to game officials.
- A decision based on an official's judgment should not be questioned. In questioning a rule, officials should be addressed courteously. The case should be explained in a way that does not jeopardize the role of the officials. Officials are instructed to answer a coach's question, if submitted courteously and according to any rules that may apply to the situation.
- Coaches should remain off the playing field/court unless a time-out is requested to discuss the situation with the officials.
- Players will not be permitted to question an official's decision.

DISCIPLINARY RULINGS

- Players ejected from a game will receive a minimum of a one (1) game suspension. This suspension will not include the current game. Note: An ejected manager/coach or fan must leave the playing field, court and bleachers before play resumes. Any attempt to continue coaching will result in a forfeit and possibly further disciplinary action.

Any coach or player ejected from a game could eliminate that person's opportunity to coach or play in the CRAA tournament at the end of the season.

- Players guilty of fighting on the field/court before and during games shall receive a two (2) game suspension. The suspension will not include the current game. If the fighting occurs after a game, the suspension will be for next two (2) games. All such matters should be promptly reported to the CRAA Vice President of that sport.

- Players/Managers/Coaches guilty of using profanity, either by word or sign, against other players, coaches, spectators, league officials, league administrators, city officials or any other person just before, during, or immediately after a game or practice shall receive an immediate suspension.
- Players/Managers/Coaches guilty of making threatening gestures (including gang signs) against other players, coaches, spectators, umpires, city officials or school district employees, league administrators or any other person shall receive an immediate suspension.
- Players/Managers/Coaches guilty of any threatening verbal or physical contact in a game or practice against any other players, coaches, spectators, umpires, city officials or school district employees, league administrators or any other person shall receive a maximum lifetime suspension.
- Players/Managers/Coaches who are found in possession of firearms, weapons and/or illegal drugs will be automatically banned from the league with a lifetime suspension.
- Any team (defined as all players and coaches) who forfeit a game as a result of a no show will eliminate the team's bid to the Coon Rapids Athletic Association tournament at the end of the season.
- Any disciplinary action taken will carry over and may affect the eligibility of any individual to coach or otherwise participate in all programs/sports administered by CRAA.
- The CRAA Athletic Association reserves the right to issue penalties different from those listed above in situations deemed necessary.

EJECTION AND SUSPENSIONS

Any coach ejected from a game will be suspended for the remainder of the sports season and placed on probation (in the form of a letter) for one (1) calendar year. This suspension will equal a minimum of four (4) games. If said coach is ejected a second time during this probation period, he/she will be suspended for a minimum of one (1) calendar year.

RELATIONSHIP WITH SPECTATORS

Setting a proper example for the spectators is one of the coach's responsibilities. The basic philosophy of the Program must be conveyed to spectators by coaches. The basic purpose of the entire Program is for participants to enjoy themselves and to learn the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, fair play, etc. Spectators often lose sight of this. It is sometimes necessary for coaches to meet with parents to remind them of the Program's purpose. Many times a word from the coach to a spectator that is out of line has a better effect than intervention by a CRAA representative.

RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS

Volunteer coaches must do everything possible to maintain and develop good working relationships with parents. This is not always easy. Parents often feel that their children are perfect and “can do no wrong”. In their eyes, their children are the best on the team. However, volunteer coaches must always keep in mind the objectives of the Program; the spirit of “team play” must be emphasized rather than singling out anyone as a star player. Parents will be better supporters if they understand what you are trying to accomplish. One of the best ways to keep them informed is to hold a pre-season meeting, at which time the objectives of the Program are described. The success of your meeting will depend greatly on your approach. Among the topics you should cover are:

- The philosophies of the Program, and the responsibility players have to the team, coaches and themselves.
- Your role as leader of the team.
- The role the parents have in seeing that their children attend all practices and games.

Various jobs needing to be handled may be discussed and volunteers recruited to perform them. Assistant coaches and “Team Moms/Dads” may be recruited in this manner.

Parents must realize that they should not interfere with the coaches during games. Shouting criticisms at a child only embarrasses that child in front of teammates. Furthermore, parents should not punish their children at home for mistakes during a game.

Often friendships develop between volunteer coaches and parents, sometime continuing through the entire year and for years to come. The practice of having family, league or team potluck dinners, barbecues, picnics and other social events during the season does much to strengthen the relationships between coaches and parents.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CRAA BOARD AND VOLUNTEERS OF EACH SPORT

Any help that you need or any problem that may occur should be discussed with a representative from CRAA. They are always willing to assist you in any way possible in an attempt to make your season a successful one.

NOTE: *If a coach has a problem or complaint regarding officials, spectators, or parents, he/she should present this matter to CRAA within two working days. If the coach does not adhere to the time constraints, the specific problem or complaints will not be considered for review the CRAA Board.*

RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILDREN

The most important relationship a volunteer coach makes is that with his/her players. The following thoughts are important to remember:

- Remember that all members of your team are individuals, and though they possess certain characteristics common with other children, they are each different in many ways. Successful coaches must be able to deal with their players as individuals.
- Too much emphasis by coaches on perfection may lead to a loss of interest among some players. Generally speaking, children in the early stages of learning need some good examples of fundamental skills. Once the basics are learned, there is ample time for more technical aspects of the activity.
- Consistency in handling children is a great virtue. Inconsistency by adults makes it near impossible to establish standards of conduct. Players need to know with some assurance, the consequences of their behavior. Coaches who display genuine liking and regard for children accomplish the best results with them. Young people respond best to adults who like them, and are firm, considerate, sympathetic, and respect the dignity of each individual.
- Scolding, sarcasm, nagging, taking away privileges, and restricting a youth's behavior often intensify the very conditions, which give rise to a problem. Humiliating children in front of others is especially harmful. The practice of having a player run laps is inadvisable, as it reinforces a negative attitude toward running and conditioning. Isolating a player from the group is a more recommended form of punishment. Isolation is an effective form of punishment as it denies the child the right to be active, a fate dreaded by any athlete.
- Children and youth readily agree that the coaches who helped them the most are kind, considerate, cooperative, democratic, and patient and respect their opinions. Coaches who are rigid, quarrelsome and commanding tend to increase conflicts and misunderstandings.
- Children are not small adults and do not feel, think, or react as adults do. Volunteer coaches must accept without too much concern, behavior that seems foolish, strange, unreasonable or immature. Children will often blow off steam by being defiant, sassy, irresponsible, or unstable. They should not be expected to conform to adult standards of behavior, nor should they be expected to acquire all of the adult virtues at an early age.
- Careful study of actions requiring some form of discipline should be made. Team rules are helpful, such as "being on time for practice", proper care of equipment, etc. Coaches must use good judgment in selecting the items of behavior upon which they draw the line. Children cannot disregard rules of conduct. A small number of essential rules and expectations should be selected for discussion and the player should be made to realize that violations might result in punishment.

- Coaches must make practice sessions as interesting and appealing as possible. “All work and no play” is not natural for children. When practice periods become drudgery, enthusiasm and interest wanes.
- Volunteer coaches should insist upon players’ proper attitudes toward games. Players should treat officials with respect; refrain from debating decisions and should be encouraged not to voice disagreement. It is inappropriate for players to engage in discussion with spectators during the course of the game. The relationship with opposing teams should be one of mutual respect and esteem. Players that continually argue with officials should be removed from the game and their misconduct discussed after the game.
- There is more to coaching an athletic team than just developing a high level of playing ability. Children can become better persons and learn valuable lessons in getting along with others. Some of the positive qualities of personality and character, which can be acquired in sports, are ultimately of more value than the technical aspects of the sport. Consequently, volunteer coaches should be alert to opportunities, which may help children to develop desirable habits and attitudes.

In conclusion, the concerns of successful volunteer coaches should not be the win-loss record of their team. Rather, successful coaches are those who affect the behavior of players in a positive way, and have taught the most valuable lessons. Success depends on the social and moral lessons, which the players have acquired. **“POOR COACHES ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN WINNING GAMES.”** Good coaches are interested in winning games, but they also strive to have their players come out of the athletic experience as better persons. A coach should not sacrifice team rules or the spirit of fair play, just to win a game.

COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

Coaches are expected to adhere to the program’s philosophy, which is mentioned in the beginning of this manual, and the following Code of Ethics:

- Coaches shall not, at any time, lay a hand upon, shove, or threaten to strike an official.
- Coaches shall abide by the official’s decisions and/or by Coon Rapids Athletic Association.
- Coaches shall not knowingly play ineligible players.
- Coaches shall not teach unnecessary rough tactics against opposing players.
- Coaches shall not use profane, or vulgar language towards players, officials, or spectators.
- Coaches shall not appear on the field or practice under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs.
- Coaches shall not use tobacco products at anytime.

NOTE: Any coach violating the program’s philosophy, rules, policies and/or Code of Ethics may be suspended from coaching for an indefinite period of time, and could result in

permanent removal from CRAA. The decision will be rendered by CRAA after reviewing all pertinent information.

Again, if a coach is ejected twice during the same sports season, the result will be a suspension for the rest of the current sports season.

APPEAL PROCESS

- If a coach wishes to appeal the decision regarding any disciplinary action that has been taken, a “Coach’s Appeal of Disciplinary Action” form must be submitted to CRAA office within 72 hours of the disciplinary action.
- The CRAA President has the final authority in the matter. All persons involved will be informed of the decision(s).


GENERAL PLAYING RULES

- All players must be listed on an “Official Roster”, which must be on file with CRAA before taking part in a league game. All rosters will become official on the 2nd Saturday of the scheduled league games.
- After being assigned to a team, players may not re-register through another community. The only exception will be if a player changes residence.
- Players may not be registered on more than one roster. **A player can only play on one team. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Coaches playing ineligible players will forfeit all games in which the player played. The CRAA board will render this decision after all pertinent information is reviewed.

NOTE: Questions regarding the eligibility of players may be raised verbally at any time by a coach to CRAA staff.

- Coaches not playing the required substitutes will forfeit the game. Questions regarding participation of substitutes must be lodged by opposing coaches no later than one hour after the conclusion of the game.
- Coaches may discipline a player, suspending them from a game, but must do so through the CRAA staff. The head official for that game must also be notified prior to the start of the game, and it must be noted on the score sheet that the player is out for disciplinary reasons.
- Coaches willfully failing to contact certain players or taking other actions to prevent any player from participating will forfeit affected games and be subject to suspension.
- A player in good standing who has already played may substitute for an injured, or ill player. A player who has already played may also replace players ejected from the game after substitutions have been made.

AWARDS



All House League players will receive a participation award. Winners of the season tournament will receive a Championship Award instead of a Participation Award.

OFFICIAL JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLE

CRAA will hire and train officials for all games. Officials receive classroom and game experiences as part of their training. CRAA is responsible for scheduling, training, observing, and evaluating all officials.

After completion of certification, officials are assigned games according to their experience. CRAA staff in charge will also observe officials.

Job Responsibility

Attributes of a CRAA referee or official

Good attitude

Desire to improve

Ability to get along with people

Public Relations

Project City image

Follow league dress code

Clean and well groomed

Conduct will never cause discredit to the City

Relationship with volunteer coaches

Realize that volunteer coaches are the essential element of the program.

Treat coaches with respect at all times.

Explain rules and situations to coaches if asked in a proper manner.

Do not fraternize with coaches on or near the field.

Relationship with players and spectators

Give clear and precise signals

Treat all players/spectators with respect

Do not fraternize with players/spectators

Answer questions if presented at proper times.

CODE OF CONDUCT

MAXIMIZE PLAYING TIME – Know the CRAA playing time requirement and adhere to it. Understand that in order to develop as a player, players must gain experience.

RESPECT THE AUTHORITY OF THE REFEREES – Disputing, challenging, or excessively arguing a referee’s decision is strictly prohibited. Ask questions or seek clarification if you need to, but do it in a calm manner. Set the right tone for your team by never arguing a call or disparaging an official. Do not blame a loss on the officials. Never confront a referee before, during or after a game. If you have a significant issue, contact CRAA staff member.

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP – Your players and parents will learn from your example. Control your emotions. Avoid actions, language and gestures that may be interpreted as hostile or humiliating. Teach players how to behave after a win or a loss. Teach your players to respect the game officials and their authority.

FOCUS ON THE FUNDAMENTALS – CRAA policy on Player Development has a strong foundation in the development of fundamental skills. Wins and losses come and go, but you only get one chance to develop a player’s fundamental skills.

UNDERSTAND THE RULES – Get a rulebook and read it. Identify any special rules or policies of your league.

BE EVERYONE’S COACH - All players deserve your coaching at practice and games. Make the team experience good for all players by letting everyone contribute. If you coach your child, don’t shine the light on them too much or too little. Treat everyone as equals.

TAKE CARE OF THE FACILITY – Know the building use rules and regulations and make sure the players and spectators follow them. Assign a team parent this responsibility during home games.

MAKE A COPY OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT – Give to the parents on your team. Inform them at the end of the season, they will be asked by CRAA to evaluate your coaching based on the points listed here.



Notes

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