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Town of East Longmeadow

Coaches’ Handbook



**Mission Statement\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

The East Longmeadow Recreation Department connects generations of residents by providing enriching programs and experiences that inspire healthier living, increased social engagement, and the love of our community.

Fun Happens Here.

**Recreation Department Policies\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Insurance & Liability Waivers**

The Town of East Longmeadow does not carry insurance to cover the cost of hospitalization and/or medical costs of persons injured during the course of participation and/or as a spectator at any of the Recreation Department programs. All participants play at their own risk. All spectators attending events do so at their own risk. All participants agree to multiple releases and waivers upon registration.

**School Building Rules**

1. The use of any tobacco products in school buildings or on school grounds at any time by any person is prohibited. Anyone who violates this policy will be disciplined in accordance with published regulations. Members of the public who violate this policy and fail to stop on request of staff or police will be directed to leave school property immediately. Those failing to obey direction will be considered trespassing.
2. Food and drinks are prohibited in all areas.
3. Individuals whose language and/or behavior are deemed inappropriate will be asked to leave the program.
4. Persons doing physical damage to the facility will be held financially responsible.
5. Children will not be allowed to attend programs unsupervised, nor should they wait unattended outside the activity.
6. Follow direction on all posted signage and verbal directions from Hall Monitors and Custodial Staff.
7. Concerns and problems relating to the program, staff and/or facilities should be directed to the Recreation Director immediately.

**Program Notes – Adult Supervision**

Participants should not arrive more than ten minutes prior to the scheduled start of an activity, unless instructed by the coach/instructor. Parents cannot drop off participants at an activity without first checking in with the coach; they should make sure that there is an adult supervision before leaving. Non-registered participants are not the responsibility of the coach (i.e. siblings); therefore, parents are not permitted to drop off siblings to a site and then leave. From time to time, due to any number of circumstances beyond our control or that of the instructor, arrival of the instructor at the site may be delayed. If an instructor does not show within fifteen minutes of the schedule starting time, we request that parents take their children home and the class will be rescheduled, if possible. At the close of practice or games, the coach is required to stay with the child for 15 minutes. At that time, the coach is required to call the parents and emergency contacts of the child.

**Special Needs/Non-Discriminatory Policy**

The East Longmeadow Recreation Department provides its services, programs, and activities to all children families of East Longmeadow without regards to race or color, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, religion, ancestry or national origin. The town provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with special needs upon request.

**Zero Tolerance Policy**

This policy is designed to foster good sportsmanship, provide a friendly and safe environment, and support referees.

* All individuals responsible for a team and all spectators shall support the referee.
* No one is to speak to the referee during or after the game. Exceptions: coaches may ask questions about before the game, call substitutions and point out emergencies during the game, or respond to the referee if addressed.
* Absolutely no disputing calls, during or after the game, no remarks to referee to watch certain players or attend to rough play. No yelling at the referee, and no criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, or feedback of any kind during or after the game.
* Violators may be ejected and are subject to disciplinary hearing and action (including suspension).

**Code of Conduct for Participants, Coaches & Spectators\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Abuse of Official**

No participant shall at any time lay a hand upon, shove, strike, or threaten an official, coach, player, or spectator. Officials are required to suspend any player who violates this rule immediately from play and report players to the Recreation Department. Such players shall remain suspended for the maximum penalty period or until reinstated by the Recreation Department.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension from two league games, placed probation for the remainder of the season.

Maximum Penalty: Suspension from all recreational activities for one year and placed on probation the following year.

**Interaction with Officials**

No participant or spectator shall discuss with an official in any manner the decision reached by an official. The coach or team captain is exempt from this rule. The degree of infraction of this principal of good sportsmanship shall, in the official’s judgment, draw the following:

Minimum Penalty: Warning by official.

Maximum Penalty: Removal from the game.

**Official’s Decisions**

No participant shall refuse to abide by an official’s decision. Officials are required to suspend any player violating this rule immediately from further play and report such player to the Recreation Department. Such player shall remain suspended for the maximum penalty period or until reinstated by the Recreation Department.

Minimum Penalty: Placed on probation for the remainder of the season.

Maximum Penalty: Suspension from all recreational activities for one year and placed on probation the following year.

**Obscene Gestures**

No participant shall use obscene gestures or objectionable demonstrations of dissent concerning an official’s decision. The degree of infraction of this principal of good sportsmanship shall, in the official’s judgment, draw the following:

Minimum Penalty: Immediate removal from the game.

Maximum Penalty: Suspension from all recreational activities for one year and placed on probation the following year.

**Unnecessary Roughness**

No participant shall use unnecessary roughness in the play of a game against an opposing player. Officials are required to suspend a player who violates this rule immediately from further play and report such players to the Recreation Department. Such player shall remain suspended for the maximum penalty period or until reinstated by the Recreation Department.

Minimum Penalty: Placed on probation for the remainder of the season.

Maximum Penalty: Suspended from all recreational activities for one year and placed on probation the following year.

**Fighting**

No participant shall fight, physically attack as an aggressor upon any player, coach, official, or spectator. Officials are required to suspend a player who violates this rule immediately from further play and report this player to the Recreation Department. Such player shall remain suspended for the maximum penalty period or until reinstated by the Recreation Department.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension from two league games, placed on probation for the remainder of the season.

Maximum Penalty: Suspension from all town recreational activities for an indefinite period of time. Referred to town attorney for possible criminal complaints.

**Abusive Language**

No participant shall use abusive language or verbally attack another player, coach, official, or spectator. Officials are required to suspend any player who violates this rule immediately from further play and report such player to the Recreation Department. Such player shall remain suspended for the maximum penalty period or until reinstated by the Recreation Department.

Minimum Penalty: Removal from game.

Maximum Penalty: Suspension from all recreational activities for one year and placed on probation the following year.

**Three Strikes**

No participant shall be in violation of any three of the above conduct rules. Three violations in any class, sporting or non-sporting event sponsored or co-sponsored by the Town of East Longmeadow Recreation Department will result in the following:

Minimum Penalty: Suspension from any Town of East Longmeadow Recreation sponsored/co-sponsored events or activities for one full year with the following two years with probation.

Maximum Penalty: Suspension from any Town of East Longmeadow Recreation sponsored/co-sponsored events or activities for an indefinite period of time.

**Coaches’ Code of Conduct**

1. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of my personal desire to win.
2. I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
3. I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
4. I will promise to review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
5. I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
6. I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players, as well as, refraining from the use profane language and the harassment players, coaches, or officials.
7. I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use prior to and at all youth sports events.
8. I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
9. I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.
10. I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.

**Player’s Code of Conduct**

1. I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials and parents at every game and practice by demonstrating good sportsmanship.
2. I will attend every practice and game that I can, and will notify my coach if I cannot.
3. I will expect to receive a fair and equal amount of playing time.
4. I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
5. I will treat my coaches, other players, officials and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or abilities and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
6. I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert parents or coaches if it stops being fun.
7. I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
8. I will remember that sports are an opportunity to learn and have fun.

**Spectators’ Code of Conduct**

1. Remember that children play organized sports for their own fun. They are not there to entertain you, and they are not miniature pro athletes.
2. Be on your best behavior. Do not use profane language or harass players, coaches, officials, or fellow spectators.
3. Applaud good plays by your own team and the visiting team.
4. Show respect for your team’s opponents. Without them, there would be no game.
5. Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during competition.
6. Respect the official’s decisions and refrain from communicating with officials.
7. Support coaching tactics and do not coach your child from the sideline.
8. Encourage players to always play according to the rules.
9. Support the concept of sports environments that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and refrain from the use of them at all youth sports events.

It is the responsibility of the coaches of a contest to notify the League Director, Association President, as well as the Recreation Department, in writing, of all infractions within 24 hours of the infraction. This includes, but is not limited to, infractions brought to the attention of the coaches by the game official or umpire.

Any participant suspended from a game is to immediately leave the facility or any area where the participant’s presence might in any way disrupt the remainder of the activity.

The Recreation Department will investigate all reported violations of the Code of Conduct. Review all reports, interview necessary parties, schedule necessary meetings, assess penalties and refer to their Associations.

**Code of Ethics\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Official**

It is the responsibility of the official to immediately implement the penalties set forth in the Code of Conduct up to and including suspensions. It is also the responsibility of the officials to inform the involved party and all of the coaches of the infraction and the minimum penalty that is being instituted. (If the coach is the offender they don’t need to be informed a second time).

When, in the opinion of the official, rules stated in this policy are violated, the official shall notify, in writing, the Recreation Department and the League Director or President of the nature of the infraction(s) and the minimum penalty(s) within 24 of the incident. Any participant suspended from a game is to immediately leave the field of play or any area where the participant’s presence might in any way disrupt the remainder of the activity.

**Coach**

It is the responsibility of the coaches of a contest to notify the League Director, President as well as the Recreation Department, in writing, of all infractions of the Code of Ethics within 24 hours of the infraction. This includes, but is not limited to, infractions brought to the attention of the coaches by the game official or umpire.

Any participant suspended from a game is to immediately leave the field of play or any area where the participant’s presence might in any way disrupt the remainder of the activity.

**Association Director/Presidents**

The Association is responsible to submit all reports of any incident involving the violation of the Code of Ethics to the Recreation Department within 48 hours of the incident. This is not limited to violations reported by officials.

**Recreation Department**

The Recreation Department will investigate all reported violations of the “Code of Conduct”. Reviewing all reports, interview necessary parties, schedule necessary meetings, assess penalties and refer to their Associations.

The time frames stated will be strictly adhered to. The participant involved will remain suspended from team activities until the incident has been reviewed and a decision rendered by the Recreation Department. The Recreation Department will not review any incident until it has received reports from officials, coaches, Supervisor of Officials and Association Directors/Presidents.

**Coaches Code of Ethics\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Ethics for Coaching**

1. Never place the value of a win above that of instilling the highest desirable ideals and character traits in your players. The emotional and physical well-being of your player should always be uppermost in your mind. Their safety and welfare must never be sacrificed for any personal prestige or selfish glory.
2. Abide by a doctor’s or parent’s decision in all matters of the player’s health, injuries, or ability to play. It is the coach’s duty to see that an injured player is given prompt and competent medical attention. If a player seeks medical attention, he/she must provide the Recreation Department with written permission to return to play.
3. The Recreation Department provides to each Coach a “Medical History” form for each participant. These contain information regarding restrictions and medications that your player may have. Please take the time to read these over and ask parent’s questions if you are not sure of any medical situation. Emergency numbers are part of these forms, should you need to seek medical attention when a parent is not present. Because of the importance of these forms, you should be in possession of them for any practice and/or game session. If you are the Coach and someone is taking your place, you must see that they have these forms.
4. Stress sportsmanship, participation, fun and the basic developmental skills.
5. Never use any physical means against players, spectators, parents, officials or other coaches.
6. Do not unduly criticize players in front of spectators, parents, or peers. Criticism is only good in constructive form.
7. Do not use profanity or harsh words of any nature.
8. Do not criticize the opposing team, coaches, fans, or officials by word of mouth or gesture. Also, realize that the opposing coaches are cohorts in providing instruction to children and the opportunity for them to have fun, just like you. Treat them with the same respect as you want them to treat you.
9. Remember, you are a youth coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.
10. A coach should not leave a participant unattended after a game and/or practice. If the child’s parents are more than 15 minutes late and they haven’t contacted you, the coaches are required to call the child’s emergency contact. If still no contact is made, coaches are to contact the police to have the child picked up and brought to the station. Coaches are forbidden from transporting the child in their own vehicle.

**Ethics for Game Play**

Game Rules and Game Conduct

Never attempt to beat the rules of the game or take advantage of an opponent. You should set the example for winning without boasting, and losing without bitterness. Uphold the authority of the officials who are assigned to the contest that you are involved with. You will assist them in every way to conduct fair and impartial competitive contests. Verbal arguments or chastising will not be tolerated. Be familiar with the rules, objectives and philosophy of the game. You are responsible for understanding and having read any League Rules or By-Laws.

Player Participation

All players should play in each contest, regardless of their skill level or score.

Score Differential Review

In the event a winning point spread exceeds a normal score, the winning coach should be prepared to explain to the Recreation Commission the reasons for such a score differential and the rationale of effort to attempt to dissuade such a winning margin. If it is determined that a substantial effort was not made to attempt to hold down the winning margin, the Recreation Director may have to take disciplinary action up to and including discharge from coaching.

**Success in Youth Sports**

In professional and college sports, success is measured by the win/loss record. The outcome of the game is not even a factor in the success of youth sports.

Success in youth sports is:

1. Seeing each player develop physically, in knowledge of the game and application in fundamental playing skills.
2. Seeing each player develop psychologically in areas of self-esteem and self-worth.
3. Seeing each player develop social skills while relating to teammates.
4. Being aware of the vast differences in rates of physical, social and emotional development of your players.
5. Having fun.

**Preseason Meeting**

All Coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with the team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. This may take the form of a casual discussion in your living room, or it could be combined with a team outing or picnic. Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay dividends for all concerned throughout the season. If a meeting is impossible, then the following information could be put in a letter to parents/players. A face-to-face meeting is preferred.

Purpose of a Parent Orientation Meeting

* Enables parents to understand the objectives of the team.
* Allows parents to become acquainted with you, the coach.
* Inform parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport.
* Articulate your expectations of them and of their children.
* Enables you to address any parents’ concerns.
* Establishes clear lines of communication between you, parents, and players.
* Allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, etc.).

Things to Consider When Organizing the Meeting

* Hold it early in the season, preferably before the first team practice.
* Having the players present is optional. However, if they are not present then it is advisable to hold a meeting with your players and clearly explain to them what you explained to the parents.
* Be prepared and be organized to conduct the meeting efficiently.
* Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example:
	+ Team roster
	+ Schedule of practice and games
	+ Rules
	+ Team goals/rules
	+ Summary or outline of the meeting

Important Points to Cover

Coach Introduction

* Introduce yourself and assistant coaches (or ask for volunteers at this time).
* Give background information about yourself (why you are coaching, experience).
* Coaching philosophy
* Discuss the value of the sport and the health benefits to the children.
* State the importance you assign to having fun and developing technique.
* State how you evaluate player development through skills and not winning.
* Discuss any team rules and guidelines (e.g., must be there 15 min. before game).
* Let them know that all players will receive equal playing time.

Team Guidelines

* Specifics of the program (e.g. players must appear with proper shoes).
* Practice schedule (How many per week? How long?) Note: The length of your practice should be as long as your game. You should practice twice to every one game, if possible.
* Game schedule (How many? When do they begin?).
* Discuss how players must respect opponents, coaches, officials, and the game itself.
* Required equipment (shin guards, water bottle, glove).
* Briefly discuss rules of the game.

Coaches’ Responsibilities

* Demonstrate leadership, good sportsmanship, respect, and coach with humility.
* Treat each player fairly.
* Organize practices and teach the game through age appropriate activities/games.
* Provide a safe environment (i.e. Inspect playing surface).
* Contribute positively to the development of each player's self-esteem.
* Give regular feedback to players.
* Distribute a schedule of practices and games in a timely manner.
* Respect referees, know the rules, and conduct yourself respectfully on the field.
* Continue to seek coaching education.
* Define Player Responsibilities:
	+ Attend practices/games regularly, and arrive on time.
	+ Inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice or game.
	+ Try your best at each practice.
	+ Work toward good sportsmanship and teamwork.
	+ Respect the referees.
	+ Be supportive of teammates all of the time.

Parent Responsibilities

* Do not coach your child during games.
* Transport your child to and from practices and games on time.
* Be supportive of all the players (Criticism does not improve performance).
* Help your child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort.
* Focus on mastering skills and having fun, not winning.
* Avoid material rewards for your child (The reward is the fun of playing!).
* Attend games and cheer the team.
* Refrain from criticizing the opponents; be positive with all players.
* Respect the referees (They will make mistakes, but they are doing their best).

**Reacting to Player Behavior**

How you react to your players will determine how much your players will listen to and respect your coaching technique. Gaining your players’ respect will be an easy task and in turn will make your season much more enjoyable if you remember three keys to gaining respect:

1. Showing your players that you’re willing to make the effort to do so.
2. Being fair and a considerate leader by showing them that you care about them as individuals and that you’re glad to be coaching them.
3. Set a good example by showing respect for yourself, for them and for others, opponents, parents and officials.

Good Plays

Reward and do so immediately. Let the players know that you appreciate and value their efforts. Reward effort as much as you do results.

Mistakes

Encourage immediately after mistakes. That’s when the child needs encouragement the most. If you are sure the player knows how to correct the mistake, then encouragement alone is sufficient. When appropriate, give corrective instruction but always do so in an encouraging manner. Do this by emphasizing not the bad thing that just happened, but the good things that will happen if the player follows your instruction (the “why” of it).

Getting Positive Things to Happen

Establish your role as a teacher. Try to structure participation as a learning experience in which you’re going to help the players develop their abilities. Give instruction in a clear, concise manner and demonstrate how to do it correctly.

Encourage effort, don’t demand results. Use encouragement selectively so that it is meaningful. Concentrate on the game. Be “in” the game with the players. Set a good example for team utility.

**How to Deal with Discipline**

Some of the most frequent questions that youth sports coaches deal with relate to problems of preventing misbehavior during games and practices. This can indeed become a serious problem unless the coach deals with it effectively early in the season. If you have a difficult player, reach out to the recreation department for advice in correcting this behavior.

**The Game**

In youth sports programs, the game is not an end. It is a way to challenge each athlete’s newly acquired skills under a competitive condition. The outcome of the game is not important, but rather the player’s reaction to the outcome of the game.

The game can be divided into three segments:

1. Pre-Game
2. During the Game
3. Post-Game

Go over what you are trying to accomplish as a team; winning is not an accomplishment. Winning will take care of itself within the limits of your player’s talents. Warm up thoroughly; fire up emotionally.

During the Game

* Conduct- control your players. Let them encourage themselves and their teammates only.
* Officials- impress to the players that officials will not lose the game, but their reaction to them can.

A coach will not leave a participant unattended after a game or practice. If a participant is not picked up within 15 minutes of the conclusion of a game or practice, the coach will try to contact the parents and emergency contacts. If that is not successful, the ELPD will be called and transported to the police station. Coaches are not permitted to drive the player home.

* Not allowing a player to take a break or come out of a game when they need it.
* Depriving an athlete of water.
* Throwing equipment at a player.
* Grabbing or shaking a player in a fit of anger.
* Using racial slurs.
* Using sexual put-downs (for example, you’re playing like a girl).
* Stereotyping (worst player in right field, slowest player as goalie).
* Paying special attention to only the best players, casting aside the less talented.
* Cutting young athletes from the team.
* Hurtful comments and/or participation denial to persons with physical or mental disabilities.
* Teaching and expecting players to taunt, cheat, intimidate, demonstrate poor sportsmanship, fight, trash talk, disrespect or injure opponents, win at all cost.

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***In closing, the East Longmeadow Recreation Department wishes you a successful and enjoyable season!***

 **COACHES’ HANDBOOK AGREEMENT**

On this date, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I confirm that I have read and I understand the Town of East Longmeadow Recreation Department’s Coaches’ Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures listed within. I also understand that failure to do so would lead to disciplinary action and/or possible removal from coaching.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_