

# TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW



## *Coaches' Handbook*

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## **Definitions**

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**Recreation Department**- Municipal agency charged with planning, conducting and evaluating recreation, leisure and cultural activities for, and in the name of, the Town.

**Recreation Commission**- A volunteer board made up of five constituents who are residents of East Longmeadow who serve as advisory members and liaisons to the community.

**Recreation Director**- The Administrator who implements and oversees policies, programs, and budgets.

**Associations**- Adult support groups who work together with the Recreation Department in order to provide wholesome recreation programs for Town residents.

**Coach**- A person approved by the Recreation Department as certified leader who has completed their CORI background check, concussion test, carries their badge and agrees to follow recreation policy and reserve fields through our office.

**Spectator**- A person who watches the games for entertainment.

**Official**- A person on the field or court to administer the official rules.

**Organized event**- Any event where a coach or parent runs through drills or repetitions with 4 or more kids, some of which who are not their children, as a means for practice or game situations, with a coordinated time and duration.

**Impromptu event**- Any event where kids are playing on a field with their own rules and no adults present, or, a parent and their child(ren) having fun.

**Participant**- Any coach, player, spectator, official/staff personnel, or any other person involved in any way with any class, sporting or non-sporting event sponsored or co-sponsored by the Town of East Longmeadow Recreation Department. Name must be listed on the roster.

**Participation**- Any involvement in Town of East Longmeadow Recreation Department sponsored or co-sponsored activities such as spectating, officiating, playing, coaching, registering for classes, or attending a sporting or non-sporting event.

**Recreation Activities**- Any class or sporting or non-sporting event sponsored by the Town of East Longmeadow Recreation Department.

**Field Supervisor/League Director/Program Coordinator**- A town employee, paid or unpaid, in charge of the operation and staff of a scheduled game, match or event.

**Recreation Employee**- A paid or unpaid representative of the Recreation Department providing services to the events, fields, parks and courts.

**Law Enforcement Officer/Emergency Services**- Town of East Longmeadow Police or Fire Department, Hampden County Sheriff's Department, Massachusetts State Police, professional hired emergency attendants in the scope of employment or in emergency situations.

## **Department Philosophy Statement**

The East Longmeadow Recreation Department's objective is to offer a variety of programs for the youth of East Longmeadow. Programs are offered to provide a supervised activity that will stress the importance of sportsmanship, skill development, enhanced physiological and psychological development, and most of all, fun.

## **Recreation Commission Philosophy Statement**

It is the philosophy of the East Longmeadow Recreation Commission that all participants in recreation programs shall play in each and every game, regardless of their skill level. Maximum participation is the key to a successful program and is directly related to the positive attitude and enthusiasm level of its participants.

## **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.

### **Use of Sport Fields**

Town fields are available for recreational use by residents any time for impromptu freeplay; however, fields must be for organized sport or league play. Please contact the Recreation Department in order to request a permit for a gym or field for any scheduled sport or activity that is set-up by a coach.

**The Heritage Park Pavilion can be reserved by contacting the DPW directly at 525-5400.**

## 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.

## Parking Policy

This policy is based on two principals. The first principal is for safety with consideration of access of emergency vehicles, safe passage by incoming and outgoing pedestrian and vehicular staff. The second principal is to have respect for the site for which we are guests. The Recreation Department has limited field space that we oversee and it is with permission that we use some of these sites, below.

High School: Park in the front lot unless there is equipment to carry or issues of mobility. Never park on any grassy surfaces or in the fire lane. Obey all other parking signs.

Birchland Park: Guests must park in the designated spots in the lot. Parking in the entrance/exit loops off of Elmcrest or Hanward Hill is strictly prohibited.

Mapleshade: Park in the lot in front of the school. Avoid parking in the pick-up/drop-off lane.

Meadow Brook: Utilize the designated spots off of the Parker Road entrance as the Porter Road side is for buses during school hours.

Mountain View: Park in the large lot off of Somers Road or smaller lot on the Hampden Road side. Do not park on the fields or any grassy surface. Do not park along the driveway off Hampden Road entrance.

Lenox/American Saw: There is a designated parking lot for athletic events closest to Chestnut Street and furthest from the building. Parking along the entrance/exit driveway is prohibited.

Heritage Park: Do not park along the edge of the entrance/exit loop alongside the baseball fields. All parking must be within the designated spots. If needed, drop players off by the respective field and park in the lot closest to the dog park and walk over.

Center Field: Do not park in local businesses' spot during their business hours. Street parking is prohibited. There are limited spots in public parking nearest the Jaycees building or across Maple Street nearest the library.

Saint Michael's Community Center: Park in the designated spots, only. Do not park along Somers Road.

***Failure to comply with the above policy could result in a ticket, towing, or, for repeat offenders, suspension from attendance at recreation events.***

### **Roster Request Policy**

The Recreation Department realizes that many roster requests are for good reason, but roster requests can become difficult to accommodate. We hope that parents realize that not all requests can be met. When applicable, the Sport Associations will make sound decisions on all roster requests with the program's success in mind. It is understood that a child's placement on a team can affect a parent's decision to allow their child to participate. If your request was not accommodated and you have an issue, please contact the Recreation Department, rather than the volunteer coordinator or coach to express frustration. Once rosters are distributed, it is very difficult to make changes. Parents and coaches are urged to abide by the department policy that all roster requests go through our office; roster changes solely between the two are prohibited.

### **Photo & Internet Policy**

The Recreation Department reserves the right to photograph and film program participants for publicity purposes. Image or videos may be used for program flyers, newsprint, town website or social media. The participant or the participant's family will not receive any compensation for any use of the photographs, videos or images which may be taken by the Department. If for any reason you do not want photographs or videos to be taken of yourself or your child, please notify the Recreation Director or Program Instructor/Coordinator in writing. However, parents and guests are asked not to photograph or film program participants without their knowledge and consent. If you are taking pictures or videos of your child to post on social media, websites or other public postings online, please avoid capturing identifiable images of other children. Please do not post photos of other people's children online without their parent's consent.

### **Non-Resident Registration & Fees**

Some administrative and program costs of the East Longmeadow Recreation Department are covered by East Longmeadow tax dollars. Therefore, those who are not residents of the town will be assessed a surcharge for each program. The fee is \$15. Other restrictions may apply.

### **Cancellations**

If we are required to cancel a class or program, either a program credit or full refund will be granted. Individual programs may be cancelled due to unfavorable weather conditions. We reserve the right to postpone, reschedule or cancel programs, change locations, substitute staff or make other changes as necessary.

If you need to reschedule an event call the Recreation Department to select a new location and/or time.

### **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. The coach is NOT PERMITTED to drive the child to their residence; instead, the coach is required to call the police to have the child picked up and brought to the station.

### **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.

### **Scholarships**

The East Longmeadow Recreation Department program fees may place an economic hardship on some individuals so that they are unable to participate. For that reason, the Recreation Department is pleased to announce that residents can apply to receive a scholarship with a

program fee reduced. Certain restrictions apply. Scholarships are supplemented with the help of the ELHS Athletic Hall of Fame Committee.

### **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. Failure to do so will undermine the referee's authority and has the potential of creating a hostile environment for the players, the referee, and all other participants and spectators.
- No one is to speak to the referee during or after the game. This policy also includes players, who are subject to discipline if arguing with or showing disrespect to the referee. 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).
- Any coach/player receiving a technical foul is subject to a one game suspension.

### **No Violence Policy**

Coaches and players will be expected to show good sportsmanship at all times, this means being enthusiastic about participating and abiding by the rules and accepting victory or defeats graciously. There is no tolerance for violence of any kind. (See also codes of conduct.)

## **Emergency Action Plans**

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### **Natural Disasters**

#### **Thunder & Lightning Storms**

Thunder occurs as a result of lightning. If thunder can be heard then the presence of lightning is real even though it may not be immediately observed. According to the National Weather Service, a thunder storm is considered ended when there has been no sounding of thunder or sighting of lightning within the last 30 minutes and the sky is no longer dark and threatening. Unless there are evident signs of clearing, the storm should not be considered over.



All participants, patrons, spectators and staff should be cleared from the field or facility and the surrounding area immediately at the first sounding of thunder or the first sighting of lightning. Because lightning is attracted to the tallest object in the area, patrons and facility staff should not be allowed to congregate under trees, umbrellas, or other tall objects. Everyone should leave the field or facility, go indoors, or stay in their automobiles until the storm passes.

### Tornados

- A **tornado watch** is issued by the National Weather Service when tornadoes are possible in the area. Coaches should keep abreast of the weather notifications and consider cancelling if the watch is during the practice or game.
- A **tornado warning** is issued when a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar in the area. Coaches are required to cancel/reschedule practices that fall within 1 hour prior and following the start/end time of the warning.

Sheltering during a storm if inside a building:

- Go to the basement or to an inside hallway at the lowest level of the building.
- Avoid places with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums, theater style rooms, cafeterias, large hallways, or gymnasiums.
- Stay away from exterior windows and doors as well as display cases, shelving, or wall mounted audio visual equipment that could collapse on top of you.
- Get under a piece of sturdy furniture (if available) such as a workbench, heavy table, or desk, and hold on to it.
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

Sheltering during a storm if outdoors, in a vehicle:

- Stay in the car with the seat belt on.
- Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat, or other cushion if possible.
- If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway.
- Avoid seeking shelter under a bridge.

### Winter Storms/Ice

The major dangers of winter storms are intense cold, power outages and breakdown of transportation due to poor visibility and road conditions.

Check ABC 40, [www.eastlongmeadowma.gov](http://www.eastlongmeadowma.gov), [www.leaguelineup.com/elrecbball](http://www.leaguelineup.com/elrecbball) and the East Longmeadow Recreation Facebook page for closings and cancellations.

## Earthquakes

### Response Actions:

- Take cover immediately.
- Direct others to get under a desk, chair or table for shelter.
- Seek shelter between seating rows in a lecture hall or against a corridor wall if in a hallway.
- If outside, move to an open area, away from buildings.
- Be alert for aftershocks, do not use elevators and evacuate carefully.
- Await instructions from first responders and do not reenter buildings until they are examined.

### **Severe Allergic Reaction**

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sometimes life-threatening allergic reaction that can develop within an hour, sometimes within minutes or even seconds, after exposure to an allergen. Symptoms vary but can include:

- Flushing
- Watery, itchy, red, swollen eyes
- Itching, hives
- Nasal congestion
- Wheezing
- Difficulty breathing, and swelling of the throat and tongue
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Blood pressure may drop quickly and anaphylaxis can cause fainting, shock and even death. A person with an allergy should carry two epinephrine auto injector devices (EpiPen/Twinject), in case one malfunctions or a second dose is needed, at all times.

Below is the procedure to inject epinephrine into an unresponsive person, if they are conscious assist them through this process instead of doing it yourself.

As a coach, make yourself aware of how to use the specific epinephrine injector that your player has.

Here's how to inject epinephrine:

- Call 911, or ask someone else to make the call, to report the allergic reaction.

- If possible, have her lie down before using the epinephrine injector, but don't delay if this isn't an option.
- Grasp the device firmly around its center with your writing hand, making a fist.
- Remove the safety cap with your other hand.
- Rest the needle on the outer thigh, and push it in hard until it clicks. The needle is designed to go through clothes, so don't waste time removing garments.
- Leave the device in place for a count of 10. Remove it and check to see that the container has emptied. Massage the injected area for 10 seconds.. Put the injector back into its case, needle end first, and take it to the hospital for disposal.
- Be prepared to use the second device if she doesn't get relief within 20 minutes, or if there's a delay in getting to an emergency room and symptoms recur.
- Have her lie down and elevate her legs if she feels weak or dizzy. Sitting up may prevent blood from reaching her heart and brain.

Even if the injection relieves the symptoms, get to the emergency room as soon as possible. In about 20 percent of people with anaphylaxis, symptoms return (usually within eight hours) after the original reaction has subsided. Depending on the severity of the reaction, treatment with oxygen, a breathing tube, intravenous fluids and various medications may be needed.

## **Heat Injuries**

### **Heat Cramps**

An involuntary contraction of muscle or a muscle group that is repetitive and rapid in nature.

Care – rest, drink water, and stretching.

### **Heat Exhaustion**

Surface temperature approximately normal, skin pale and clammy, profuse perspiration, tired, and weak, headache, perhaps cramps, nausea, dizziness, possible vomiting and possible fainting (the player will most likely regain consciousness as the head is lowered).

Immediate Care – move to a cool area, air-conditioning best, have the player lie down with feet elevated, remove restrictive apparel as appropriate, cool with wet cloths or by fanning, if alert water may be given (1/2 glass per 15 minutes), if player vomits take to hospital immediately and always refer to physician for further diagnosis, treatment and return to activity.

### **Heat Stroke**

Body temperature is high, skin is hot, red and dry, sweating mechanism is blocked, pulse is rapid and strong, player may lose consciousness.

Immediate Care – seek immediate medical care (Call 911), while waiting; treat as above for heat exhaustion keeping in mind that if you reduce the body temperature too rapidly it can cause internal bleeding.

### **Hazardous Material Spill/Release**

All bodily fluids should be treated as bio-hazardous including:

- Blood
- Saliva
- Semen
- Sweat
- Tears
- Vomit
- Feces
- Urine

All human blood and body substances must be treated as if known to be infectious.

### **Blood Spill Management**

While risk of one athlete infecting another with HIV/AIDs during competition is close to non-existent, there is a remote risk that other blood borne infectious diseases can be transmitted. For example, Hepatitis B can be present in blood as well as in other body fluids. Procedures for reducing the potential for transmission of these infectious agents should include, but not limited to, the following:

- Use gloves or other precautions to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids is anticipated.
- The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound covered and if there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform it must be changed before the athlete may participate.
- Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces if contaminated with blood and other bodily fluids. Wash hands immediately after even if gloves were worn. .
- Clean all blood contaminated surfaces and equipment with a solution made from a proper dilution of household bleach or other disinfectants or devices.
- Practice proper disposal procedures to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels and other sharp instruments or devices.
- Although saliva has not been implicated in HIV transmission, to minimize the need for emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, or other ventilation devices should be available for use.
- Athletic trainers/coaches with bleeding or oozing skin conditions should refrain from all direct athletic care until the condition resolves.

- Contaminated towels should be properly disposed of/disinfected.
- Follow acceptable guidelines in the immediate control of bleeding and when handling bloody dressings, mouth guards and other articles containing bodily fluids.

### **Fire**

In the event of a fire, a safe and speedy response is of the utmost importance. Employees need to be prepared for any and all emergencies. Please follow these guidelines in the event of a fire:

- Call 911. Give them your name, the facility name, the address, and state the problem. If a supervisor is in the building they should be notified of the situation immediately.
- If you have been trained in the use of a portable fire extinguisher and are able to safely extinguish the fire, you may do so. Be sure you have a safe exit from the area and leave if one extinguisher does not put out the fire.
- Touch closed doors. Do not open them if they are hot.
- If there is no danger to the employee, a recreation employee must walk through the facility to make sure the building is clear, checking all areas of the building. Make sure all doors and windows are closed.
- Another recreation employee should meet the Fire Department when they arrive so information can be given.
- Contact the Recreation Director.

### **Suspicious Package**

A suspicious package might include the following:

- Excessive postage
- Handwritten or poorly typed address
- Incorrect title
- Title without name
- Misspelling of common words
- Oily stain, discoloration, or odor
- No return address
- Excessive weight
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil
- Excessive security material such as masking tape, string, etc.
- Visual distractions
- Ticking sound
- Restrictive endorsements, such as "personal" or "confidential"
- City or state in the postmark that does not match the return address

Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package. Place any suspicious envelope or package in a plastic bag or other type of container to prevent the contents from leaking. If you do not have a container, cover the envelope or package with anything (clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover. Leave the room and close the door or section off the area to prevent others from entering (keep others away). Wash your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any substance to your face. Report the incident to the Recreation Director and notify your building officials or an available supervisor. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area when the envelope or package arrived. Give this list to responding authorities.

### **Active Threat/Violence**

Call 911 immediately.

**Perpetrator(s) Inside the Building:** If it is possible to flee the area safely and avoid danger, do so. If flight is impossible, lock (or barricade) all doors and secure yourself in a safe area.

**Perpetrator(s) Outside the Building:** Close and lock (or barricade) all doors and windows. If you can do so safely, get all students and staff on the floor and out of the line of fire.

Remain in place until an all clear is given by an authorized person or law enforcement official.

Observe and make notes of the following if this can be done safely:

- Descriptions of the people involved in the act
- Vehicle(s) description
- Types and number of weapons
- Statements and other pertinent information

### **Criminal Behavior/Violent Behavior**

If you witness a criminal act or notice person(s) acting suspiciously, immediately notify the supervisor and the police.

If you are the victim of, or are involved in, any violation of the law such as assault, robbery, theft, overt sexual behavior, etc., do not take any unnecessary risk.

### **Theft**

When a theft occurs, it is important to determine the approximate value of the stolen property. Depending upon the value of the stolen property, the Police may need to be contacted. A general rule of thumb is if the value is perceived to be over \$50, it should be reported to the police.

Get as much information as possible concerning the theft. Include specifics, such as: location of the theft, description and value of all stolen articles, and addresses and phone numbers of all parties involved. Report to Recreation Director following the police report.

### **Explosion**

If there is an explosion:

- Take cover under sturdy furniture, or leave the building if directed to do so by emergency responders.
- Stay away from windows.
- Do not light matches.
- Move well away from the site of the hazard to a safe location.
- Use stairs only; do not use elevators.
- Call 911.

### **Bomb Threat**

Bomb threat may be received by phone, mail, person-to-person, e-mail, etc. In most cases, however, the threat will be made by phone.

The First person that becomes knowledgeable of a bomb threat shall record all information received in its entirety. This will include all bomb threats received by any communication. If the threat is made by phone, the call taker should record the information on the Bomb Threat Checklist provided by the MA State Police Bomb Squad. If possible, a second person should be instructed to listen in on the conversation. A threat by any kind of communication will be investigated and prosecuted accordingly. Treat written bomb threats in the same manner and protect from excessive handling to preserve evidence.

In the event of a bomb threat, the following guidelines are in effect:

- The person receiving message should adhere to the MA State Police Bomb Squad Checklist (See below).
- Immediately call 911 emergency services and report that a bomb threat has been received and that the building is being evacuated.
- Upon hanging up with 911, the supervisor should be notified.
- Inform all persons in the building that there is an emergency situation and that they need to leave, meeting in the front parking lot.
- Encourage patrons/staff to remain calm and exit in an orderly fashion.
- All patrons and staff are to leave the building except the supervisor and one other staff person.

- The staff will make a swift circuit of the building to ensure all patrons have exited, then staff will vacate after all patrons have cleared the building.
- The facility will reopen when the Fire and Police Departments announce that it is safe.
- Staff may not leave unless directed to do so by the Superintendent.

#### MA State Police Bomb Squad Checklist

- Exact time of caller
- Exact words of caller
- When is the bomb going to explode?
- Where is the bomb?
- What does it look like?
- What kind of bomb is it?
- What will cause it to explode?
- Did you place the bomb?
- Why?
- Where are you calling from?
- What is your address?
- What is your name?
- Callers voice (calm, angry, normal, excited,etc)
- If the voice is familiar, whom did it sound like?
- Were there any background noises?
- Remarks:
- Person receiving call
- Telephone number call received at
- Date

#### Utility Failure/Interruption

Utility interruptions include:

- Natural gas leaks
  - Evacuate the area immediately.
  - Do not switch on lights or any other electrical equipment. Do not smoke in the area.
  - Account for all building personnel once outside.
- Electrical power interruptions
  - Report the outage to the supervisor or Recreation Director.
  - Help co-workers in darkened areas move to safer locations.
- Water main breaks



- Sewer system leaks
- Telephone system problems
- Chill water system
- Steam pipe breaks

Immediately report utility failures to the supervisor or Recreation Director.

## **Facility**

### **Pools**

- Train pool attendants in inspections and maintenance procedures.
- Keep chemicals and pool equipment locked and secured from unauthorized individuals, especially children.
- Test water daily and record chemical use.
- Keep pool decks, stairs, walks, ladders, and platforms clear and clean of all algae and other substances.
- Ensure that all nonslip surfaces are in fact functional and not worn or affected by soap, algae, or other substances.
- Check pool furniture, floats, diving boards, and other equipment for loose connections, jagged edges, and other defects.
- Prohibit the use of glass containers or other breakable materials in all pool areas.
- No food in the pool area.
- Provide adequate numbers of lifeguards for pool use.
- Ensure that all guards meet standards through independent and periodic testing.
- 

## **Legal**

### **Duty to Act**

The staff has a duty to act when an emergency occurs. It is the expectation that staff members shall keep the safety of all customers paramount, preventing injuries from occurring and responding to people in need.

### **Standard of Care**

Customers expect a reasonable standard of care from the staff that oversees their well being. This standard of care is based on agencies such as the American Red Cross, American College of Exercise and Sport Medicine, National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association and other guidelines provided by professional associations, state, and local agencies.

## Negligence

Negligence is the failure to do what a reasonably careful and prudent person would have done under the same circumstances. In other words, negligence is failure to exercise reasonable or ordinary care.

## Good Samaritan Laws

The “Good Samaritan” law provides certain protection from lawsuits to people who give first aid or other emergency care or treatment to someone suffering an injury or sudden illness. The care or treatment must be given at the scene of an emergency outside of a hospital, doctor’s office, or other medical facility. The law protects volunteers who help when someone becomes ill or is injured in places such as on the street or highway, in parks, restaurants, businesses, even private residences. If someone is already at a hospital or other medical facility, the law does not apply. The law does not protect against lawsuits or criminal charges for “willful or wanton” (intentional or malicious) misconduct. Examples of willful or wanton misconduct would include stealing from an accident victim or inappropriate sexual touching. If the person providing the emergency care or treatment is paid or expects to get paid for giving the care or treatment, whether by the victim or someone on behalf of the victim (such as an insurance company), the Good Samaritan law does not provide protection. This is because a person who is paid generally is not considered a volunteer, and the Good Samaritan law is intended to protect those who volunteer in emergencies.

## Informed/Implied Consent

It is the right of a victim to grant his/her informed consent for care. Someone who is unconscious, confused, or seriously ill or injured may not be able to grant consent. In these cases, the law assumes the victim would give consent if he/she were able to do so. This is called implied consent. Also, when a parent or guardian is not present, one can assume implied consent for minors who need emergency assistance.

## Refusal of Care

Some ill or injured persons may refuse the care offered. Even if a person seems injured, one must honor this refusal of care. Request that the person at least allow someone more highly trained, such as EMS personnel, to evaluate the situation. Be clear that the staff is not refusing to care for the victim or abandoning the victim. Request another person present to witness the person’s refusal and document it on an accident form. If the patron initially refuses care, but later loses consciousness, the “implied consent” guidelines go into affect (see above).

## **Media**

### **Media Statement**

All media statements must come from the Recreation Director.

- All staff must refer to the Recreation Director; he/she assumes responsibility for issuing statements in an emergency.
- The Recreation Director may prepare a statement to be issued to the media.
- Update the media regularly. Do not say, “No comment,” unless instructed to do so by Town Manager.
- Do not argue with the media.
- Maintain a log of all telephone inquiries and respond using script for inquiries.

### **Media Response**

“We are following organizational protocol. Due to the emergency, we do not have time to discuss it with you. Please contact the Recreation Director for more information.”

## **Concussion**

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### **The Facts**

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in any sport.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

### **What is a Concussion?**

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost.

The potential for concussions is greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common. Concussions can occur, however, in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity.

As many as 3.8 million sports and recreation related concussions occur in the United States each year.

### **Recognizing a Possible Concussion**

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your athletes:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
2. Any change in the athlete’s behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.

### **Heads Up Online Training Course**

All East Longmeadow coaches are required to have a certificate from the CDC for completing the Heads Up Online Training Course. Without a certificate you will be unable to coach for East Longmeadow. The website to complete the course is:

<https://headsup.cdc.gov/>

### **Signs and Symptoms**

<b>SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF OR OFFICIAL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Appears dazed or stunned</li><li>▪ Is confused about assignment or position</li><li>▪ Forgets sports plays</li><li>▪ Is unsure of game, score, or opponent</li><li>▪ Moves clumsily</li><li>▪ Answers questions slowly</li><li>▪ Loses consciousness (even briefly)</li><li>▪ Shows behavior or personality changes</li><li>▪ Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall</li><li>▪ Can’t recall events after hit or fall</li></ul>
<b>SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Headache or “pressure” in head</li><li>▪ Nausea or vomiting</li><li>▪ Balance problems or dizziness</li><li>▪ Double or blurry vision</li><li>▪ Sensitivity to light</li><li>▪ Sensitivity to noise</li></ul>

- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

Athletes who experience any of these signs or symptoms after a bump or blow to the head should be kept from play until given permission to return to play by a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussions. Signs and symptoms of a concussion can last from several minutes to days, weeks, months, or even longer in some cases.

Remember, you can't see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. If you have any suspicion that your athlete has a concussion, you should keep the athlete out of the game or practice.

### **Prevention and Preparation**

As a coach, you can play a key role in preventing concussions and responding to them properly when they occur. Here are some steps you can take to ensure the best outcome for your athletes and the team:

- **Educate athletes and parents about concussion.** Talk with athletes and their parents about the dangers and potential long-term consequences of concussions. Explain your concerns about concussion and your expectations of safe play to athletes, parents, and assistant coaches. Ask if players have ever had a concussion before.
- **Insist that safety comes first.**
  - Teach athletes safe playing techniques and encourage them to follow the rules of play.
  - Make sure athletes wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- **Teach athletes and parents that it's not smart to play with a concussion.** Sometimes players and parents wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let athletes persuade you that they're “just fine” after they have sustained any bump or blow to the head.
- **Prevent long-term problems.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first, usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks), can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat

concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage, and even death. This more serious condition is called *second impact syndrome*. Keep athletes with a known or suspected concussion from play until they have been evaluated and given permission to return to play by a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion. Remind your athletes: “It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.”

### **What Should a Coach Do When a Concussion is Suspected?**

1. **Remove the athlete from play.** Look for the signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head. Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of a concussion should not be allowed to return to play. When in doubt, keep the athlete out.
2. **Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
  - Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head
  - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
  - Any memory loss immediately following the injury
  - Any seizures immediately following the injury
  - Number of previous concussions (if any)
3. **Inform the athlete’s parents or guardians about the possible concussion.** Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussions.
  - Any athlete with a witnessed loss of consciousness of any duration should be transported immediately to the nearest Emergency Department (ED) via ambulance.
  - Any athlete who has symptoms but stable (condition does not appear to be worsening or deteriorating) may be transported by their parent/guardian. The parent/guardian should be advised to contact the athlete’s health care provider or seek care at the nearest ED on the day of the injury. Even if you feel it is not necessary, always give the parent/guardian the option of emergency transportation.
4. **Fill out the *Report of Head Injury Form*.** Return to the Recreation Department the following business day.
5. **Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussions.** A repeat concussion that

occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. Prevent common long-term problems and the rare second impact syndrome by delaying the athlete's return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play.

### **Return to Play**

**1. The athlete must meet all of the following criteria in order to progress to activity:**

- Athlete has been symptom free for 24 hours.
- Athlete doesn't show symptoms at rest and exertion
- The *Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form* completed by their Health Care Provider (athlete must be cleared for progression to activity by a physician other than an Emergency Department physician) and returned to the Recreation Department.

**2. Once the above criteria are met, the student/athlete will be progressed back to full activity following the six day *Return to Play Protocol Following Concussion*.** During the stages of the protocol, the athlete must be monitored for any symptoms. The current activity must be discontinued if any symptoms appear. The following day, if symptoms have subsided, the athlete may resume activity at the last level that was completed without symptoms. An athlete with a prior history of concussion, one who has had an extended duration of symptoms, or one who is participating in a collision or contact sport should be progressed more slowly. When the athlete completes all six steps, they can be medically cleared to return to full activity.

**3. Return to Play Protocol Following Concussion**

- **Day 1:** Fast walk or light jog for 15 to 20 minutes.
- **Day 2:** Jogging or running for 20 minutes.
- **Day 3:** Non-contact sport related training drills and conditioning.
- **Day 4:** Full participation in practice without contact.
- **Day 5:** Full participation in practice.
- **Day 6:** Return to game play.

**4. Fill out the *Gradual Return to Play Protocol (RTP) Worksheet* as athlete completes the steps.** Return to Recreation Department once completed.

### **Compliance**

Any coach that disregards the safety and well being of a youth sport participant as it relates to concussions will be suspended from coaching. Additionally, any coach that misuses this policy

to prohibit an otherwise, healthy, fit, uninjured player from participating will be suspended from coaching. For more information on concussions visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website.

## **Code of Conduct for Participants, Coaches & Spectators**

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### **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.

### **Alcohol or Drug Use**

No participant shall appear on the court or field of play under influence of alcohol or drugs.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension from two league games, 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.

### **Smoking**

No participant shall smoke while in any facility or on school grounds used for town recreational programs or coming off or going on the field of play, or while on the field of play.

Minimum Penalty: Warning by the Official.

Maximum Penalty: Removal from the game or any penalties that might be associated with use of drugs on school property.

### **Open Container Law**

No participant shall be cited in violation of the Town of East Longmeadow's open container or other alcohol/drug laws on town property.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension from one league game, placed on probation for the remainder of the season and subject to any penalties associated with the town or state laws.

Maximum Penalty: Suspension from all town events and/or recreational activities for one year and 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.

**While on probation, any participant who violates any of the above conduct rules shall be subject to suspension for one to five years.**

**In any instance where there is a difference in these stated minimum penalties and a league or association's minimum penalties, the more stringent of the two would take precedent.**

### **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.
11. I will provide advanced notice for any changes to the practice or game schedule.

### **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 encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it's important to me.
9. I will do my very best at school.
10. 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. Condemn the use of violence in all forms.
10. 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 Supervisor of Officials, 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 field of play 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, Town Manager or Town Legal Department when appropriate.

## **Code of Ethics**

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### **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 Supervisor of Officials 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 Supervisor of Officials, 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.

### **Supervisor of Officials**

It is the responsibility of the Supervisors of Officials to compile the reports submitted by the official and coaches of any incident and forward those to the Recreation Department along with his/her own report on the incident. It is expected that the Supervisor of Officials will submit these reports of violations of the Code of Ethics within 48 hours of the incident.

### **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, Town Manager or Town Legal Department when appropriate.

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**

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### **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. Under no circumstances should a coach authorize the use of drugs, medications, or stimulants.
5. Never make demands on players that will interfere with the player’s opportunities for achieving academic success.
6. Stress sportsmanship, participation, fun and the basic developmental skills.
7. Become familiar with the objectives, philosophy and the rules of the game. You will strive to achieve these objectives and communicate them to your players and their parents.

8. Never use any physical means against players, spectators, parents, officials or other coaches.
9. Do not unduly criticize players in front of spectators, parents, or peers. Criticism is only good in constructive form.
10. Do not use profanity or harsh words of any nature.
11. 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.
12. Never appear in public under the influence of alcoholic beverages, at any time, while conducting the activities and duties of coaching. It is required that coaches refrain from smoking or chewing tobacco during practices and games. Coaches should be positive role models at all times.
13. Remember, you are a youth coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.
14. Abuse of equipment by players and coaches will not be tolerated.
15. 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.

### **Ethics for League Interaction**

#### **Scouting**

Although open interaction, spectatorship, and league involvement is encouraged, the documentation of opposing teams via written, video and/or other media, is strictly prohibited. Remember, the game is to develop skills, sportsmanship and fun amongst the players without total emphasis on winning or taking unfair advantage of these rules or opposing team. Time and energies should be concentrated on the teaching aspect of the game and not the scouting aspect.

#### **Administration**

Head Coaches are directly involved with the players and parents for their team. Thus the Head Coach will be directly responsible to see that all league administrative paperwork and duties that involve these people are executed accurately and promptly, to the best of his/her ability.

#### **Team Decorum**

The coach is the ultimate supervising and teaching role for players and the team. The coach has the ability to shape and control the attitude and actions of the players and team. Thus, the coach is responsible for the actions of his/her team, players, and parents. He/she at all times must support the concept of good sportsmanship under any circumstances.

### **Guidelines for Physical Contact and Treatment of Children**

1. Do not initiate physical contact with a child. If the child initiates physical contact refrain from hugging the child and, as an alternative, give a gentle tap on the shoulder or head. Use a side hug or high five to let them know that you are happy to see them. Do not wrap your arms around them.
2. Do not allow children to sit on your lap or in between your legs when sitting in a chair or on the floor. Have the child sit beside you.
3. Do not physically restrain or pick a child up unless the child is a danger to themselves or others.
4. Avoid being alone with a child. Stay in groups with your group partner and other children.
5. Do not engage in a wrestling match with a child. This is not to say that you cannot be interactive with children, just that you must avoid physical contact whenever possible.
6. When speaking with a distressed child, kneel to their level and hold their hand for comfort versus picking them up.
7. Do not single out children for preferential treatment. No favorites.



8. Do not give any gifts to children. If you buy one child a gift, you must buy enough for every child.
9. Do not make negative comments that can lower a child's self esteem or comments that may be taken out of context and misinterpreted.
10. Do not discuss the topic of sex with children. This is up to their family and school to properly educate children on the issue.
11. Do not deprive children of a bathroom break, snack or water.
12. A staff person must accompany each child to the bathroom and check that there are no strangers or other adults in the restrooms. Men are not allowed to take girls to the restroom. Staff must remain outside the bathroom stall until the child is finished and ready to go back to the group.
13. When a child acts out inappropriately, do not subject them to group humiliation by discussing the problem in front of other children. Take the child aside and discuss the issue.
14. If you observe or a child tells you he/she has been abused physically, emotionally, mentally, or sexually, you must immediately report it to your supervisor. Do not hesitate or waste any time. Do not discuss the situation with co-workers.
15. As a childcare provider, you are mandated by law to report any form of child abuse whether it is obvious or just a possibility. Failure to do so may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

## **Coaches Youth Handbook**

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As a coach, you have many roles to play and numerous tasks to perform. None is more important than the tremendous responsibility of developing your athlete's sense of fair play. It is important for you, as a coach, to take time to consider your coaching philosophy and to determine how your actions and behavior can affect your athletes. You are one of the most influential people in a child's life. Your job is not only to teach how to throw or hit a ball, but also to teach how to win and lose graciously. You must also remind them that sport is meant to be fun. The athletic skills these young people learn from you may only be used for a few years. The attitudes they develop toward themselves and others will last a lifetime.

In order to perform your job in accordance with Recreation Department standards, we have developed this guide to help you through your upcoming season. This is intended as only a guide and you as the coach need to perform your duties independently and in the best interest of fun and fair play for each individual on your team.

## **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.

## **Expectations & Responsibilities of the Coach**

### Your Coaching Style

In order to coach effectively, you must develop your own personal coaching style.

You must first evaluate yourself and answer the questions:

1. Why do I want to be a coach in the youth sports program?
2. What personality traits would I look for if I were hiring a coach for a youth sports team?
3. Do I have any or all of those personality traits?

Second you must evaluate yourself in:

1. Your knowledge of the sport.
2. Your motivational skills.
3. Your ability to readily understand the thoughts, feeling, and emotions of your athletes and convey this to them.

Once you have completed this self evaluation, you will better understand what and how your involvement with these young athletes will affect them. You will realize your importance in their lives and the responsibilities you have in their development.

All people learn a great deal by watching and imitating others. This is particularly true for children who rely heavily on learning through observing. Thus your players will learn as much from what you do as from what you say. Recognize that your players look up to you because you occupy a leadership role in a very significant area of their lives. Your actions and the attitudes you express help to shape their view of the world and of themselves. For some children, you may be a more important influence than their parents during a formative period of their lives. And in some cases, the child may look to you as a substitute for a parent who is missing in either a

physical or a psychological sense. The way you deal with them and approach problem situations teaches them how to do likewise.

### **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.
- Discuss the philosophy of age appropriate activities.
- 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).
- Inherent risks.
- Medical insurance.
- Briefly discuss rules of the game.

### Team Management

- Select volunteers as assistant coaches.
- Appoint parents to assist with team duties (snack schedule if they want one).
- Phone trees with contact information and/or car-pooling system could be discussed.

### 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).
- Arrive at practice on time and remain until a parent picks up every child (see previous guidelines about timing).
- 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.
  - Bring proper equipment to each practice and game.
  - Maintain your equipment.
  - 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).

### Coaching Necessities

#### Organization of Practice

In order to have a successful season, you must organize successful practices. Your goal is simple- to have practices which are well organized, safe, fun, and enable your young athletes to learn and remember all that you teach. For each skill that you teach during this practice, you should have a performance objective. An example is: during the basketball practice lay-up drill, each player should make seven out of ten lay-ups with their non-dominant hand.

To effectively run a practice session, use this practice layout as a guideline:

#### Element- Time- Description

Early bird drill- Until practice starts- A fun drill for those who come to practice early

Pre-Practice Meeting- 5 minutes- Used to go over what will be covered today in practice

Warm-ups- 5 minutes- Stretching exercise to limber up

Old Skills- 15 minutes- Practice previously taught skills

New Skills- 15 minutes- Teach and practice new skills

Break- 5 minutes- Rest and fluid break

Fun time- 10 minutes- practice skills under some sort of competitive condition

Post-Practice Meeting- 5 minutes- Coach's comment on overall team performance and the next time you will be together

At the beginning of each practice have a team goal setting session and at the first practice define team rules regarding discipline and practices.

### The Parents Meeting

A short 10 minute parents meeting before or after the first practice can be kickoff to the season. Coaches have the opportunity to meet parents and vice versa, and coaches get to let everyone know what will be happening through the season.

Here are some guidelines to discuss at the parent's meeting:

1. Introduce yourself and your assistants.
2. Describe the objectives for this season from a program standpoint.
3. Describe your goals for the team.
4. Explain what you expect from the parent/spectators at games.
  - a. Encourage and support the players and the team.
  - b. Applaud and praise good-effort no matter what the outcome.
  - c. Don't harass the official- he/she is learning at the same time as your young athlete.
  - d. Express your appreciation for their interest and concern; but, if they want to tell you something, during the practice or game is not the time. Ask them to catch you after the practice or game.
5. Go over the laying rules.
6. Explain when game schedules will be handed out.
7. End on an up note.

## Conditioning and Exercise

The key for all athletes, in regards to conditioning and exercising is stretching. The coach of a young athlete should not use exercises that put increased tension on young athlete's joints and muscles. Stretching muscles is how young athletes, and all athletes, will become more aware of their body and its limits.

Conditioning recommended center around aerobic activities like jogging for warm-up and cool-down, running in place, and if the young athletes enjoy it, exercise to music. Exercises recommended are abdominal stretches; arms and chest stretches; ankles, toes and lower leg stretches, fingers, hands, wrists and forearm stretches, and trunk stretches.

## Medical History Forms

Coaches will be given a "Medical History Form" for each participant on his/her team. These forms contain information that may be vital in emergency situation or may contain medical information that you as a coach should be aware of, such as diabetes, etc. Keep these forms with coaching materials that you will be taking to every practice and game. Be sure, to pass this information to any of your assistant coaches, should you be absent from a practice or game.

## First Aid

Coaches only need to perform minimal first aid. The first aid kit is issued to you contains Band-Aids, ice packs, gauze and tape. Any major accidents should be turned over to emergency personnel. Rubber gloves must be used when dealing with any body fluids and are included in the kit. Also, in your kit, you have information concerning the prevention of AIDS. Please review and be aware of what you should do in emergency situations.

Any time a child is injured, no matter how minor, the coach needs to notify the parent and must fill out an Incident Report Form. Injuries, such as concussions, take longer to affect the child, and the coach needs to inform the parents of the incident, so that they can react quicker and with more knowledge of the incident.

If an injury is severe enough to require ice it also requires rest. The RICE method recommends rest, ice, compression and elevation. The injured player should sit out the rest of the practice/contest.

## Injury Treatment

Injury- Sprains, strains, or bruises

Treatment- The most important treatment for all types of sprains, strains, and bruises is the immediate application of a cold pack over a moist towel or elastic wrap to the injured area for at least 30 minutes. This will minimize the extent of the injury and help relieve the pain and reduce

swelling. Always inform the parent of any possible sprain, strain, or bruise so they may seek medical attention if needed.

Prevention- Warm up and stretch muscles before each game/practice to make them more elastic and flexible. Exercises that develop flexibility of the muscles will reduce the risk of muscle strain. Endurance training will further reduce the risk of injury and sore muscles by preventing the muscle from fatiguing easily.

Injury- Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke

Treatment- rest, replacement of fluids, and stretching the affected muscle will usually take care of heat cramps. Immediate medical care is critical for heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The American Medical Association advises to place the person suffering from heat exhaustion flat on his/her back in the shade with his/her head on the ground, level or lower than the body. Give him/her sips of water if conscious. Obtain medical care at once. Heat stroke is an emergency, obtain medical care at once. Delay in getting the victim to a hospital could be fatal. In the meantime, reduce the person's body temperature as fast as possible by spraying or sponging with cool water; give the victim fluids if he/she is conscious and raise the head and shoulders.

Prevention- Plenty of breaks and water intake on hot days will help minimize the possibilities of these injuries. Never withhold fluids from any player.

### Return to Play After Injury

From time to time children have been hurt participating in our programs and/or while participating in other outside activities. Some may require medical attention, while others do not. The following policy has been established to deal with those who have been under medical care.

- Notify the Recreation Department immediately. If the injury occurred while participating in our program, it is coaches' and parents' responsibility to file an Incident Form within 48 hours of the incident.
- The Recreation Department will follow up immediately on all cases requiring medical attention. This will serve a dual purpose:
  - To find out the actual extent of the injury,
  - To notify the parent that a release must be obtained and submitted to the Recreation Department prior to the participant being readmitted to the program.
- After obtaining the proper documentation, the coach will be notified by the director the participant can return to play.



## **How to Teach**

Knowing how to teach is almost as important as what you are teaching. These are four steps in teaching a sport skill effectively:

Introduce the skill:

- Get player's attention.
- Arrange them so all can see and hear.
- Name the skill and reason for learning it.

Demonstrate:

- Briefly explain the skill
- Perform the skill proficiently (both left-handed and right-handed)

Practice the skill

Provide feedback

- Observe and immediately give feedback on performance in a positive manner.

Use the KIS system: Keep It Simple, but keep it complete.

## **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. There are several factors that one should understand about children's behaviors in relation to this problem. First, they are not miniature adults. It is an unusual child who wants to sit still during a vigorous play activity. Second, children want clearly defined limits and structure. They don't like unpredictability and inconsistency.

Formulating rules is easier than dealing with violations of them. The most important thing is to be consistent and impartial in dealing with violations. When a violation occurs, don't express anger and a punitive attitude. Don't lecture or embarrass players. Focus on the fact that they've broken team policy without degrading them as people or making them feel belittled. Individually talk to the player who violated a rule or policy and simply remind the player that he/she violated a rule which they agreed to follow, and because of that (not because of you) they must automatically pay the penalty. This approach focuses the responsibility where it belongs, on the player, and helps build a sense of personal accountability and responsibility.

## Do

Maintain order by establishing clear expectations. Emphasize that during a game all members of the team are part of the game, even those on the bench. Use reward to strengthen team participation. In other words, try to prevent misbehavior from occurring by using the positive approach to strengthen their opposites.

## Don't

Get into the position of having to constantly nag or threaten players in order to prevent chaos. Don't be a drill sergeant. If a player refuses to cooperate, deprive him/her of something valued. Don't use physical measure (e.g. running laps). The idea is that if you establish clear behavior guidelines early and work to build team spirit in achieving them, you can avoid having to repeatedly keep control. Children want clear guidelines and expectations, but they don't want to be regimented. Try to achieve a healthy balance.

## **Relations with Parents**

The "Young Athletic Triangle" consisting of coach, child, and parent is an inevitable aspect of youth sports. And, because it is unavoidable, your role in dealing with parents is of considerable importance to the success of your team. Many parents will want to have varying degrees of involvement.

All parents identify with their children to some extent, and thus want them to do well. Unfortunately, for some parents, the identification process goes too far and the child literally becomes an extension of themselves. When this happens, they begin to define their own self-worth in terms of how successful their child is. They become winners or losers through their children, which creates excessive pressure. The child must succeed on their own self-image is threatened. For such parents, much more is at stake than just a game, and the child of such a parent carries a heavy burden.

As a coach, you may be able to counteract this tendency in two major ways:

1. By communicating to your players that the important thing is that they enjoy playing and develop their skills, not that they must win or be the star.
2. By communicating to parents that by placing excessive pressure on children, they can detract from the potential that youth sports can have for enjoyment and personal growth.

## **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.

## **Working in Youth Programs**

This policy defines the approved practices related in the prevention of and the reporting of incidents relating to child abuse cases.

### Procedures:

1. Reference checks will be made on all prospective employees and program volunteers. This will be documented and filed prior to employment.
2. Administrative staff supervising programs involving the care of children will make unannounced visits to each program site to assure that standards, policies, program quality and performance of staff are being maintained. Written reports on these visits will be completed and kept in the program files.
3. In order to protect Recreation Staff, volunteers and program participants, a program leader will avoid being alone with a single child, unobserved by other staff.
4. Young children must be supervised at all times, including trips to the bathroom, locker rooms and/or shower facilities.
5. Staff members and volunteers are not encouraged to socialize with program participants under the age of 18 outside of East Longmeadow Recreation Department programs.
6. Recreation Department staff or volunteers will not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care, such as food, water or shelter.
7. Recreation Department staff or volunteers will not verbally or emotionally (including any form of hazing or harassment) or punish children, in any way.
8. Staff and volunteers providing direct care for very young children should be identifiable by a badge/name tag or uniform that is familiar to the children with whom they work. Children will be instructed to avoid any person not so identified.

9. Staff and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of all children each time they report for a program and indicate, in writing, any signs of injury or suspected child abuse.
10. Recreation Department Staff will under no circumstances release children to anyone other than the authorized parents, guardians, or to an individual authorized by parents in writing. Attendance logs will be maintained on a daily basis and kept on file at the program site. At the end of the program period all records must be returned to the Recreation Department.
11. In the event, a report has been filed, against a staff person or volunteer, without exception, that person will be immediately suspended from all activities, involving the supervision of children.
12. Reinstatement of a staff person or volunteer will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the Recreation Department and Recreation Commission.
13. All staff and volunteers will be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of information relating to participants within an activity. All matters concerning suspected child abuse must only be discussed with the Recreation Director.
14. Staff and/or volunteers may not contact children or parents involved in an alleged child abuse incident without permission of the Recreation Director.
15. In cases where State Laws apply in specific programs, the state requirements will take precedence.

Some activities are not approved by the Recreation Department and are considered inappropriate or abusive:

- Benching less skilled athletes.
- Grabbing a player by the face mask.
- Wrapping a young athlete in plastic wrap to force weight loss to make a weight limit.
- Cursing, yelling, or put-downs that demean a child.
- Name calling.
- 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.

## **Helpful Coaching Tips & Websites**

**[elrec.recdesk.com](http://elrec.recdesk.com)**

**[www.nays.org](http://www.nays.org)**

**[www.coachtube.com](http://www.coachtube.com)**

**[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)**

**[www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training](http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training)**

**[www.allaccesscoaching.com](http://www.allaccesscoaching.com)**

## **Articles for Coaches**

### **10 Skills of Great Coaches**

October 22, 2010

By Stephen Walker, PhD

A memorable quote from an unknown source goes like this, “A year or two from now your players will not remember anything you taught them. But forever, they will remember how you made them feel.” Besides players’ parents, a child’s sports coach is often the most influential person in their life. Unfortunately, the impact that many youth sport coaches have on kids is a negative one.

One of the most common gripes in youth sports is “The coach stinks.” When kids do not perform up to their parents or their own expectations, it is common for players and parents to blame the child’s coach. Often, parents have unrealistic expectations of their child’s coach and they forget that sport success is difficult to achieve. On the other hand, parents often have a legitimate gripe. Many youth coaches are not adequately prepared to coach youth sports. Often, youth coaches do not have the communication skills or the positive outlook that enhance kid’s self-esteem. Youth sport leagues often provide sport-specific-skills clinics to help coaches’ knowledge of the sport but they fail to help coaches with the things that are most important – how to deal with youth so that kids have the positive experiences they should have.

If youth sports organizations did a better job of developing their coaches' communication and confidence building skills towards youth, the coaching gripe would mostly disappear. Teaching youth game strategy and sports skills are necessary, but equally important is that adults learn to treat youth in a way that will have a positive impact on them forever. Sports organizations should teach their coaches the mindset that great coaches have. Following is a list of skills that great sport coaches possess.

Great sport coaches:

1. Commit to help every player on the team equally, not just their own child or the better players.
2. Have a good background in the sport or obtain sufficient knowledge of the sport to help players of that particular age level.
3. Are aware of the safety issues involved in the sport and always put the emotional and physical health of the players first.
4. Explain their coaching philosophy at the beginning of the season and remain true to the stated philosophy.
5. Have teams and individuals that are better players and people at the end of the season than at the beginning. This can be done by following these points which promote being a positive role model. Kids learn by observing adult's behavior.
6. Encourage and teach the fundamentals and strategy of sport with understanding and patience. Recognize the difference between effort and results and the difference between physical and mental mistakes.
7. Remain enthusiastic about the sport and coaching, and display this enthusiasm to players in good times and bad.
8. Do not ridicule individuals or team with negative words or gestures.
9. Demonstrate sportsmanship, fairness and leadership at all times and teach those attributes to players through words and example.
10. Always keep the lines of communication open among players, coaches and parents.

## Coaching the Parents

Parents are a vital part of youth sports. Without the parents, youth sport programs would find it difficult to exist. Parents are the volunteer work force that accomplishes essential tasks in support of youth sports programs. And, most importantly, they attend and support the performances and efforts of all children who play sports.

Unfortunately, recent cases of parents behaving badly at youth sports events have received the attention of the national media. Although these specific incidents are rare (e.g., the fatal fight between fathers after a youth hockey game), general problems with parents are not. Coaches and league administrators are seeking effective strategies to refocus the energies of parents. Inappropriate behavior by parents is detracting significantly from youth sport programs that exist to provide opportunities for children to play sports, have fun, develop skills, and enjoy the thrill of competition in a positive, non-threatening environment.

Local organizations have tried strategies such as Silent Sundays (where parents have their mouths symbolically taped shut or are given lollipops to suck on), restricting parents from competition facilities, providing mandatory parent education, and handing out cards at the entrances with the codes of conduct printed on them. Some national sport and professional groups are also initiating programs and strategies to encourage and reinforce positive parent behavior. This paper provides recommendations from the Youth Sport Coalition and Coaches Council on how to encourage appropriate parent behavior.

## Coach's Role

Although the primary role of the coach is to develop athletes, coaches must also accept the responsibility for educating the parents of athletes. Parents should learn how best to support their children's sport participation and the importance of appropriate behavior in the youth sport environment. Before the first practice of the season, coaches should hold a formal meeting with the coaching staff, athletes, and involved parents. There are many topics that could be discussed in this meeting. One consideration before setting the agenda is to include the parent(s) as well as the athletes in the meeting. This communication sets the standards for and the expectations of all parties concerning coaching style, team rules, practice goals, etc. The agenda should include:

- coaching philosophy
- coaching style
- general goals for the team
- typical practice session routines
- expectations for the athletes (e.g., athlete rights and responsibilities)
- expectations for the parents (e.g., parent rights and responsibilities)
- explanation of equipment requirements and needs
- discussion of the risks involved in the sport including a discussion of emergency medical procedures and guidelines
- season practice schedule and game schedule
- question and answer period for parents and athletes
- transportation issues



- communication procedures
- safety
- officiating
- sportsmanship

Depending on the sport you are coaching, there may be other topics that should be addressed. These include travel plans and bad weather contingency plans. In your discussion of your coaching style, you might want to include things such as how decisions are made (i.e., leadership style), the role of assistant coaches if you have any, how you teach, whether or not you use physical contact with the athletes when you coach, how parents can help their child with outside practice and conditioning, and/or information sharing with the coach. The key is to cover anything that might come up during the season. Be thorough. This reduces problems later in the year and gives the athletes and parents a feeling of confidence in you by demonstrating that you know what is needed to ensure the best possible experience for the athletes on your team.

Other strategies coaches should consider:

- Parent and child session/practice/scrimmage
- Hosting a preseason social activity such as a barbecue for the team members and their parents.
- Develop or adapt written contracts (e.g., codes of conduct) regarding appropriate behaviors for coaches, athletes, and parents and have these signed at the beginning of the season.

## **Parent, Put Fun First**

Checklist for parents in youth sports, on and off the field:

1. I maintain a “Fun is #1” attitude.
2. I treat officials, coaches, my kids, their teammates and their opponents with respect and avoid ridicule or sarcasm.
3. I praise my kids, their teammates and opponents just for participating, regardless of their athletic skills.
4. I remember to look for positives with my kids, their teammates and their opponents.
5. I remain calm when my kids or their teammates make a mistake and help them learn from their mistakes.
6. I remind my kids and their teammates not to get down on themselves when things don’t go well.
7. I try not to take myself too seriously when it comes to my involvement in youth sports, reminding myself that there is life beyond youth sports.
8. I remind myself and my kids to laugh and keep a sense of humor.

9. I emphasize teamwork in team sports with my kids, teaching them to think “we” instead of “me”.
10. I teach my kids by giving them a good example of good sportsmanship: winning without gloating and losing without complaining.

(Adapted from the Parent Checklist in Burnett’s “Youth Sports, & Self Esteem: A Guide for Parents, Masters Press)

## **Positive Coaching: A Behavior Checklist for Youth Sports Coaches**

by Dr. Darrell J. Burnett

When the UCLA Sports Laboratory surveyed children for the main reasons why they continue to participate in youth sports, the number one reason given was positive coach support. Research points to the benefits of getting kids to continue to participate in youth sports, noting that kids who stay in sports tend to stay in school, get better grades and have fewer behavioral problems.

It seems obvious that the key to a successful youth sports program where the kids keep coming back is positive support, which the kids feel from their coach.

It is extremely important that we, as coaches, remember that a successful youth coach is defined not in terms of a won-loss record, but in terms of how many kids decide to return to play again next year. As a helpful reminder here's a checklist of some behaviors connected with positive coaching. I praise my kids just for participating.

It's important for us, as coaches, to put youth sports in the proper perspective. Kids have lots of pressures growing up today and it seems silly for adults to add more pressure in an area which is supposed to be "fun and games." The first thing we need to do is to give the child credit for choosing to play a sport rather than hang out during free time.

We need to credit each player just for being there. The youngster chose to sign up, come to practice and come to the games. Even when the child is having a bad day at practice or the game, at least they are participating and not dropping out. We need to remind ourselves not to notice and praise kids only when they achieve. It's easy to praise the kids who do well in a sport. We also need to praise the youngsters who don't shine but who stay with a sport day in and day out, showing up for practice and games, even though their playing time is limited.

Youth Sports Coach Behavior Checklist:

- \_ I praise kids just for participating.
- \_ I look for positives, and make a big deal out of them.

- \_ I stay calm when my kids make mistakes, helping them learn from their mistakes.
- \_ I have reasonable and realistic expectations.
- \_ I treat my kids with respect, avoiding put-downs, sarcasm, and ridicule.
- \_ I remind my kids not to get down on themselves.
- \_ I remember not to take myself too seriously during the game.
- \_ I maintain a "Fun is #1" attitude, with lots of laughter and a sense of humor.
- \_ I emphasize teamwork, and help my kids think "we" instead of "me."
- \_ I am a role model of good sportsmanship:
  - (a) Winning without gloating
  - (b) Losing without complaining
  - (c) Treating opponents and officials with fairness, generosity, & courtesy.

I look for positives and make a big deal out of them. It is said that a major source of a child's self-view is what they hear about themselves from others, especially from adults. If we want to help promote a positive self-view in kids while they play sports we need to concentrate on looking for positives and then noticing them with animated praise.

Research shows that a healthy relationship has a 4 to 1 ratio of positives to negatives. That's a good rule of thumb for coaches. As we arrive for practice or games, we should be thinking of trying to keep a healthy ratio of positives to negatives.

Moreover, if we want kids to hear the positives, we have to be specific. "Nice try" and "good game" are too vague. Kids need something specific so they can visualize it and remember it (i.e., "I like the way you hit the cutoff man," "I like the way you kept hustling until the whistle blew.") Helping a youngster notice their specific progress are all ways of noticing positives.

Finally, it's not enough simply to notice a positive. It's equally important to "make a big deal" out of it, to praise with animation. Why? Because kids hear, respond to and remember action. The bigger public commotion we make as a coach when a kid does something right, the better. In fact, a good motto is: "Praise in public and criticize in private."

I stay calm when kids make mistakes, helping them learn from their mistakes. The key to positive coach support is the art of interacting with a child after a mistake has been made. Ideally, youth sports offer kids great lessons in life: it's OK to make a mistake, mistakes are inevitable and mistakes are stepping stones for learning.

When a youngster makes a mistake in a sport, one of two things can occur: the youngster can learn from the mistake and try to improve the next time; or the youngster can become preoccupied with the fear of making another mistake.

If a coach stays calm and tries to instruct the child, there's a chance that the child will see the mistake as an opportunity to learn. If the coach stays calm there's a chance that the kid will stay calm, focus on the mistake and learn from it.

Unfortunately, as human beings, we often tend to have more animation in our reactions to negatives than in our reactions to positives. So it takes an extra effort on our part as coaches to remind ourselves to do all in our power to try to stay calm when mistakes occur.

I have reasonable and realistic expectations. A major frustration for kids, in sports or in life, is trying to live up to expectations of adults in their lives. At times, youngsters have a strong need for adult approval. If they don't get it, due to unrealistic expectations from adults, it can be a major source of low self-worth. Since a coach often plays a major role in the life of a youngster, it is important to keep expectations reasonable. A good coach's skill expectations are based on the knowledge that all youngsters in youth sports vary in their development of physical coordination skills, go through plateaus in their skill development and have growth spurts which can affect their coordination.

A good coach's motivation expectations are based on the awareness that there are three levels of motivation for kids in youth sports: some kids, especially the entry-level youngsters, are playing because their parents enrolled them, many youngster are playing because it's a social event allowing them to be with their friends, a smaller group of youngsters, beginning at about age 11 or 12, are playing because they enjoy sports for sports' sake.

A good coach's dedication expectations are based on the knowledge that the level of dedication to practice and mastery of skills depends upon the level of motivation in a youngster. A good coach also knows that dedication wanes when playing the sport is no longer fun.

I treat kids with respect, avoiding put-downs, sarcasm or ridicule. When a youngster signs up to play sports, they deserve to be treated with respect. This means no put-downs, no sarcasm and no ridiculing by the coach. Dr. Thomas Tutko, renowned author, lecturer and sports psychologist, notes that any youth sports coach who volunteers to take on the job of guiding kids in any given sport needs to be careful of how he/she comes across to the youngsters. He uses the words "potential child abuse" when describing the verbal and emotional harassment that sometimes takes place in the name of "coaching" in youth sports.

I remind kids not to get down on themselves. I once observed a brilliant piece of youth sports coaching at a basketball game. A youngster missed a lay-up on a fast break. The coach substituted for the youngster. He then said to him, "Son, I didn't take you out because of the missed lay-up. I took you out because after you missed the lay-up you hung your head, delayed

in getting back on defense and allowed your opponent to score an easy basket. If you get down on yourself after you make a mistake all it does is give your opponent an advantage. Now, get back in there, learn from your mistakes and quit beating yourself up!"

Youth is a time of mixed feelings. Kids can go from "cocky" to "unsure" in seconds. A steady reminder from the coach can help them to keep from falling apart when things aren't going well.

I remember not to take myself too seriously during the game. Cartoons have a way of reminding us about some of our weaknesses. In an obvious parody of the singing fat lady, a cartoon depicts a youngster coming off the playing field after a defeat. The parents are beckoning him to the car.

He responds, "Not yet mom and dad, the game's not over 'til the coach cries!" In yet another cartoon, as the scoreboard indicates a loss for the home team, a youngster has his hand on the coach's drooping shoulder, saying, "It's OK coach; it's just a Little League game!"

Although it's a volunteer position, some youth sports coaches seem to have made it their "life." The same person who appears so relaxed and easy going away from practice and the game takes on a whole new persona as "coach."

At times, there seems to be entirely too much ownership and identity tied in with the position. In youth sports involving a "draft" there seems to be the danger of a little too much ego involvement. In other words, it's as though the coach was thinking; "I drafted you kids. If you don't produce it makes me look bad."

I maintain a "Fun is #1" attitude, with lots of laughter and a sense of humor. Fun is the major motivator for kids in sports. In survey after survey, whenever youngsters are asked why they play sports, the number one reason is always the same, to have fun. Winning is on the list but it is last on the list. Kids like to compete, but it's the fun of competing, the excitement of competing, not just the winning.

Research shows that kids learn better when they're having fun. The effective coach is the coach who learns what's fun for the kids by getting into their shoes and seeing the world from their point of view, the world of fun. The effective coach knows that fun, laughter and humor are second nature to kids.

I emphasize teamwork and help kids think "we" instead of "me." One of the major cornerstones of self-esteem is developing a sense of belonging. We're social animals and we need to feel as though we belong to a group. Youth sports offer an automatic sense of belonging (team name, team uniforms, team photos, team picnics, etc.) However, a coach plays a central role in making the "team" concept become a reality. The coach makes sure that all kids on the team get recognized, not just the "stars." The coach does not allow teammates to criticize each other. The coach encourages parents to notice and compliment all the players on the team, not just their own kids, and not just the "stars."

I am a role model of good sportsmanship. In an age where sportsmanship is struggling to survive in professional, college and often in high school sports, the youth sports coach is the key role model of good sportsmanship. Youngsters are looking to the coach to show them the way in the three areas of sportsmanship; winning without gloating, losing without complaining and treating opponents and officials with fairness, generosity and courtesy.

The task of the positive coach is to teach youngsters to be in control of their emotions throughout the competitive contest and afterward in their interactions with opponents and officials.

## **Free Services**

### **Mouth Guards**

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association has ruled that mouth guards are required for contact sports including basketball, football, soccer, ice & field hockey, lacrosse, and wrestling. “Boil & Bite” or stock mouth guards are uncomfortable to wear and can present problems speaking and breathing. Custom fit mouth guards are proven to be not only the most comfortable, but the safest as well. Why should I wear a mouth guard?

- Mouth guard use prevents approximately 200,000 oral-facial injuries each year.
- Athletes are 60 times more likely to suffer damage to their mouth when not wearing a mouth guard.
- The cost to repair knocked out teeth can cost thousands of dollars, many times greater than the price of a mouth guard.

### **Dr. Kosiorek, Orthodontist**

Dr. Kosiorek, of East Longmeadow, knows the importance of protecting teeth. As a community service and in conjunction with National Facial Protection Month and the East Longmeadow Recreation Department, Dr. Kosiorek is offering sport mouth guards to team participants free of charge.

Call 413-567-1300 to schedule an appointment to pick up yours today. You must be present to receive your mouth guard.

### **R. Scott Smith, Orthodontics D.M.D. P.C.**

Dr. Scott Smith believes that cost should not stand in the way of keeping your child’s smile safe. Our office is offering you a complimentary mouth guard, custom fit to your child’s mouth. To take advantage of this priceless offer simply call one our three convenient locations to schedule an impression appointment. Your personal mouth guard will be ready for pick up the following week.

Each child is entitled to one custom fit mouth guard. Custom fit mouth guards are not recommended for wearing with braces. If your child is in active treatment, consult your orthodontist for a braces safe mouth guard.

**Springfield**

275 Bicentennial Highway  
Springfield, MA 01118  
413-783-1111

**Enfield**

115 Elm Street  
Enfield, CT 06082  
860-741-0753

**South Hadley**  
25 College Street  
South Hadley, MA 01075  
413-536-0847

**Official Spartan Youth Logos & Colors**

The official East Longmeadow colors are red, grey and white (Pantone Matching System, PMS#2347, PMS#429 and white, respectively). Uniforms should consist of only those three colors. Black is not to be used as a color in uniforms other than for numbers.

Approved East Longmeadow Recreation Department youth logos are featured below. If your team or group would like to add a logo to your gear, please contact the office for these files. No other Spartan logos should be placed on youth apparel.





*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: \_\_\_\_\_