



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®**  
**FOR HEALTHY LIVING**  
**FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

# **TEACHING TEAMWORK**

**Youth Sports Coach Guide**  
**GATEWAY REGION YMCA**



# Y Mission & Impact

## Our Cause Defines Us

We know that lasting personal and social change comes about when we all work together. That's why, at the Y, strengthening community is our cause. Every day, we work side-by-side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

## Our strength is in community. The Y...

- Is a nonprofit like no other. That's because in 10,000 neighborhoods across the nation, we have the presence and partnerships to not just promise, but deliver, positive change.
- Is community centered. For over 175 years, we've been listening and responding to our communities.
- Brings people together. We connect people of all ages and backgrounds to bridge the gaps in community needs.
- Nurtures potential. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.
- Has local presence and global reach. We mobilize local communities to effect lasting, meaningful change.

## Our Impact is Felt Every Day

With a mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all, our impact is felt when an individual makes a healthy choice, when a mentor inspires a child and when a community comes together for the common good.

# YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE

We encourage players, coaches, and parents to recite this pledge prior to the beginning of each youth sports game!

*"I pledge to play the game the best I can, to be a team player, to respect my opponents and to improve myself in spirit, mind, and body."*

# YMCA CORE VALUES

We encourage all coaches and parents to incorporate the core values of the YMCA into practices, games, and at home. We are not just teaching our children how to play sports, but how to be good people and adults.

**Caring**

**Honesty**

**Respect**

**Responsibility**

## OUR AREAS OF FOCUS

The Y is a cause-driven organization that is for youth development, for healthy living and for social responsibility. That's because a strong community can only be achieved when we invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors.

Our programs are all driven by our Cause, within those our areas of focus shine bright. Young people need safe and enriching environments to try new things, develop skills, meet new people and show their abilities. Achieving and maintaining health in spirit, mind and body makes for a richer life and giving back to neighbors and others in need is our responsibility as neighbors, colleagues and citizens.

- Youth Development
- Healthy Living
- Social Responsibility

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

The Y is for everyone. Our programs, services and initiatives: enable kids to realize their potential, offer ways for families to have fun together, empower people to be healthier in spirit, mind, and body. And that's just the beginning. If you would like more information, visit [www.gwrymca.org](http://www.gwrymca.org).

## PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

YMCA Youth Sports is the development of Christian values through a progressive youth sports program stressing skill development, fun, physical fitness, and friendly competition. All children have an opportunity to play and families are encouraged to participate.

The objectives include:

1. Develop self-confidence and self-respect in each participant by helping them to develop an appreciation of their worth as an individual.
2. Develop respect for opponents, team members, coaches, officials, and others involved.
3. Encourage an understanding that each player is important to the group's ability to work together. Full participation as a team member is emphasized rather than winning.
4. Increase the physical fitness of the individual and expand related skills according to the individual's ability.
5. Develop positive experiences that can be shared by all participating.
6. Grant recognition on the basis of anticipation and sportsmanship rather than individual achievement.
7. Develop an awareness of value and importance of other individuals.
8. Provide opportunities to improve social skills.
9. Provide opportunities for personal growth through a value-enriched environment.

# COACH EXPECTATIONS

As a coach, it is essential that you understand the philosophy and mission of the YMCA as well as the responsibilities mentioned earlier. The YMCA doesn't intend to develop future professionals, but instead wishes to develop fitness, character development, sportsmanship, and safe play. You, as a coach, will have a great influence on the youth you coach. They will notice your actions, how you talk, act, and carry yourself.

Specific expectations are as follows:

- Communicate with administrative staff as needed
- Encourage individual growth and participation of every child
- Improve player skills
- Respect and support all referees, coaches and YMCA staff
- Foster a love of the game
- Promote good sportsmanship
- Treat all players with respect
- Play all players at least 50% of the time
- Provide the opportunity for players to develop skills at all positions
- Be on time!
- Teach players how to win and lose gracefully
- Provide all players with the opportunity to start in a game
- Emphasize team development
- Lead by example
- Provide your team with the best opportunity to succeed
- Communicate effectively and regularly with parents
- A genuine interest in the welfare of children, and a desire to make the team experience worthwhile
- Exercising self-restraint and tactfulness with all persons involved in or watching the game
- Basic understanding of the sport and thorough understanding of the rules provided to you
- Positively reinforce all players
- Clearly outline team rules and consequences; emphasize no bullying!

## KEYS TO BEING A GOOD COACH

**Have Fun** – Make sure that smiles are your main focus. If each of your participants walk away every day excited about coming back, you know you accomplished your goal.

**Be a Role Model** – Your players will have a tendency to copy your actions and moods. Show the players how to act and carry themselves in the proper manor, at all times.

**Be Positive** – Stress everyone's good points. It will also help to make each situation, whether positive or negative, a learning experience.

**Be a Friend** – Give encouragement; take the time to talk and listen to the kids.

**Everyone Plays** – Every player must play at least one half of every game. Do not let your beginners sit on the sidelines.

# THE COACH'S ROLE IN YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMS

1. **Teach the skills and tactics of the sport.** We want you to teach your players the physical skills and tactics to play the sports to the best of their ability. Not all children have the same ability to learn, so we ask that you help them be the best they can be.
2. **Help your players learn the rules and good sportsmanship.** We want you to teach your players the rules of the sport. They learn the basic skills through non-competitive games. Sportsmanship includes courtesy towards the opponent, officials, and coaches, being positive winners and losers, and recognizing all good plays, regardless of who makes the play.
3. **Help your players become fit and to value fitness for a lifetime.** We want you to help your players be fit so they can play sports safely and successfully for a lifetime. We don't want you to make them do push-ups or run laps for punishment, but make it fun to be fit for a lifetime.
4. **Help young people develop character.** Coaches are to teach the players the core values: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
5. **Ensure the safety of your players.** Coaches are responsible for supervising every aspect of your players' participation in the sport. Make sure the field is clear of hazardous objects and the kids do not engage in activities that might injure themselves or others.
6. **Help each child develop a positive sense of self-worth.** Coaches are to help children gain a strong, positive sense of their worth as human beings. Teach the players in a way that helps them grow to respect themselves and others.
7. **Make it fun.** Make learning the game a fantastic, positive experience so your players will want to continue playing for many years to come.

## ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNICATION

YMCA sports coaches serve as the go-between for the YMCA and the program participants. This necessitates some administrative duties. To succeed administratively as a YMCA volunteer coach, it is **very** important to recruit helpers. Any additional coaches or volunteers must complete a background check and Child Abuse Prevention training.

At the coaches meeting, each coach is given a roster with phone numbers. It is the coaches' responsibility to contact each player 3 days after the coaches meeting (within 72 hours) and set up a team meeting and/or their first practice.

All coaches are responsible for parent communication. Before the meeting/practice, the coach should be prepared with the following (but not limited to):

- Copies of game schedule and directions to all venues.
- Practice day/times and location (if applies).

- A potential assistant coach/team manager/team parent (all volunteers must meet Y requirements)
- The coaches' expectations of players and parents.
- Rules of the game for parents.
- Answering any questions or concerns.

At the team meeting/first practice, the coach should share the YMCA complaint, suggestions and inappropriate behavior procedure with the parents.

Recruitment of an assistant/helper/manager and delegation of most or all of the administrative functions will go a long way to making the season a success.

Parent communication is best via phone calls and through PlayerSpace. Should you encounter any problems with parents please notify the director. As your administrative staff, we are here to help/assist in any way possible. Please feel free to use us as a resource at any time.

Please make sure that all parent communication occurs in a timely fashion. When you initially receive your roster, you must contact each player/parents 3 days (72 hours) after the coaches meeting.

**When making contact with parents, please confirm that each parent has been reached. Sometimes, emails may bounce back.** Please initially contact each parent by telephone and confirm that they have everything set up in PlayerSpace. Please let the Director know if there are any issues regarding PlayerSpace so we can address it in a timely manner. If you plan to email to distribute information, please make sure that you send it to your own email and that all other addresses go in the "BCC" line to protect privacy of all participants.

## **GAME PLAN AND PREPARATION**

All YMCA coaches should be prepared with the following before every game:

1. Knowledge of any changes or adjustments to the game.
2. Player rotation system or list that is fair.
3. Knowledge of what court and bench the team will use.
4. Knowledge of the rules.
5. Knowledge of key dates (picture day, survey day, etc.)
6. Game strategy.

## **PRACTICE PLAN AND PREPARATION**

All YMCA coaches should realize the importance of *practicing*. Outcome of games, development of skills, development of team dynamics and relationships and inter-parent relationships are all forged at practice times. Having a solid plan will determine what kind of YMCA team coaches end up with.

All YMCA coaches should be prepared with the following before every practice:

1. A safe and practical location
2. Knowledge of the rules
3. Equipment and tools necessary for the practice

4. Any news or information for the practice
5. Knowledge of what components to work on
6. Positive attitude

All YMCA sports practices should include:

1. Stretching before and after practice
2. Some one-on-one interaction with every player
3. Various stations to keep players engaged at all times
4. Group game/scrimmage that is fun
5. Breaks
6. Skill set or focus for the week
7. Positive player reinforcement
8. A discussion of the weekly theme

The YMCA will provide a practice location. Our philosophy is 1 practice/week and 1 game/week.

## **SEASON IN REVIEW**

1. **Volunteers Meeting** - Coaches will receive their rosters, site directions, and rules.
2. **Practice Times** - Practice times will be decided by the Sports Director and the coaches.
3. **Optional Snack/Drink List** - Develop a list that states which family on which date should bring a snack or a drink. All drinks and snacks should be saved for after the game and should not be distributed in any gymnasiums.
4. **Phone/E-Mail List** - Review your team roster within Playerspace and ensure that communication is properly being distributed to families. Please confirm all phone/emails are valid, if there are any discrepancies on your roster, please notify the Sports Director.
5. **First Practice** - For your first practice, make sure you have enough copies of your game schedule, phone/email list, site directions, and snack/drink list. Hand out all lists directly to the parents. If you feel you are going to need help with coaching your team, the first practice is a perfect time to ask the parents if they are willing to help coach. You will most likely need an assistant coach to run practice and coach during a game and a Team Manager to keep score or handle the kids on the sideline during the game. Always have a practice plan before you show up for practice. Having an idea of what you want to work on will help the practice run smoothly. Practice ideas are included in the volunteer packet.
6. **First Game** - You will receive your jerseys before your first game. You will not have a choice of color: they will be handed out in random fashion. The coach is to be the first person at the game to get all of his players stretched and ready to play. Prior to the game, determine which position each player is going to play. If you have an extra player, make sure everybody sits out an equal amount of time.
7. **The Season** - Continue communication with the parents and players to make sure everybody is on the same page. Good communication between the parents and yourself will be crucial to a smooth running team. Remember, this is a positive competition league. Improving the players' fundamentals and skills is important, NOT winning.
8. **The Last Game** - This is your last opportunity to thank all the parents that have helped you out all season. Talk to your players. If you are coaching another sport or if you are going to coach next season let them know. This is a great way to build relationships with your players and their parents.

9. **Awards** – Awards will be handed to the coaches before the last game. It is up to the coaches' discretion on how he/she would like to hand out the medals. Remember to make it fun and memorable for the players.

## **COMPLAINT, SUGGESTION AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR PROCEDURES**

### Complaints:

- All complaints are to be brought to the site supervisor immediately.
- Problem is to be resolved on site if possible.
- If problems cannot be solved on site, bring it to the attention of a YMCA director
- Meetings to take place if necessary.
- Parents or coaches and all staff are to be notified of the decision.

### Suggestions:

- All suggestions are to be taken seriously.
- Suggestions can either be in writing or verbal and must be brought to the attention of a supervisor immediately, for further review with the Sports Director.

### Inappropriate Behavior – Players:

- Cursing, dangerous play, poor sportsmanship, and any form of violence or threats will not be tolerated and can result in suspension from the program.

### Inappropriate Behavior – Coaches and parents:

- Cursing, encouragement of unfair play, hassling referee and obnoxious behavior will not be tolerated and can result in suspension from the program.
- All of these offenses are punishable by warning, while making them aware that we will ask them to leave the site if they cannot have better control of themselves. Depending on severity, warning does not have to be given. Immediate dismissal can be issued.

## **KNOWLEDGE OF THE GAME**

Although you do not need to be a pro, general knowledge of the game is expected. Rules and regulations will be provided to you in your coach's packet. These will also be emailed to you. Please share these rules with your team and parents of your players.

Everyone will be expected to know and abide by the rules. Please review the rules specific to your age group. This knowledge needs to be relayed to your players. All players are expected to know and understand the rules.

If you are new to coaching, please utilize the additional resources provided in this guide. These include drill suggestions and techniques expected or each age group. Even if you are an experienced coach, these resources will be helpful to you. Also, if you are a new coach, please feel free to reach out to a more seasoned coach for guidance. If you would like us to put you in contact with a previous coach, let us know and we will put you in contact with one.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE**

In inclement weather conditions, sport activities may be cancelled if necessary. The following procedure is used for notifying participants of a cancellation:

1. YMCA staff will notify coaches at least one hour before game time. Coaches are responsible for canceling their own practice and notifying all players. The YMCA reserves the right to cancel any practice or games if the safety of the participants is compromised.
2. If Site Coordinator must cancel games after arriving at the site, teams scheduled to play will be notified as soon as possible. We appreciate your understating of this situation.
3. Every effort will be made to make-up canceled games and coaches will be notified of make-up dates as soon as possible. Due to scheduling of the fields/gyms, make-up games are not guaranteed.

## **GOALS TO EXPAND FUNDAMENTALS**

During the first week, we expect the focus of practice to be reintroducing (or introducing for the younger teams) basic skills. During the second week, we expect rules to be explained and understood by the players. By the final week, we expect players to have improved their individual skills.

We understand that some players improve faster than others. The goal of this program is that each player improves, not that each player develops equivalent skills. However, each player is expected to have certain skills based on their age level (Ex: fifth graders should not be double dribbling). If you notice that one player seems to be struggling more than others, please try to give this player more individualized attention to foster success.

All players should improve as the season progresses. If you notice that your team seems to plateau, please utilize us as a resource. We can provide you with different techniques or practice ideas. We are here to help!

The goal of this program is skill development and improvement while having fun! We hope that you will make this your goal as a coach. Please realize that you have the opportunity to help the players grow through your example. You are their role model. Through encouragement and healthy feedback, your players will blossom into excellent athletes and individuals.

## **SPORTS STAFF**

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to your specific branch sports staff team or visit [www.gwrymca.org/locations](http://www.gwrymca.org/locations) to locate your branch and its sports staff.

# ONLINE COACH'S TRAINING

The YMCA has developed some tremendous trainings to help you as a volunteer to be as successful as you can as a coach. These trainings are not mandatory, but highly recommended if you are new to coaching at the YMCA, new to coaching, or are new to coaching a specific sport. You work at your own pace on these trainings, so please enjoy!

Visit Website: <http://training.ymca.net/>

## *If you are a new coach to the YMCA or new to coaching:*

### #5 – Coaching YMCA Youth Sports (30 Minutes)

Provides the new or experienced coach an overview of coaching YMCA youth sports and how they as coaches influence the development of today's youth in sports.

## *Sport Specific Trainings:*

### **Basketball**

Coaching YMCA Basketball (45 Minutes)

Provides new and experienced coaches the tools, techniques, and skills to coach basketball to children from ages 3 on up.

### **Soccer**

Coaching YMCA Soccer (45 Minutes)

Provides the new and experienced coach the tools, techniques and skills to coach soccer to children from ages 3 on up.

### **Summerball**

Coaching YMCA Baseball/Softball (45 Minutes)

Provides the new and experienced coach the tools, techniques and skills to coach baseball/softball to children from ages 3 on up.

### **Girls Volleyball**

Coaching YMCA Volleyball (45 Minutes)

Provides the new and experienced coach the tools, techniques and skills to coach volleyball to children from ages 3 on up.

### **Flag Football**

Coaching YMCA Flag Football (45 Minutes)

Provides the new and experienced coach the tools, techniques and skills to coach flag football to children from ages 3 on up.

# Y Coaching Contract

I understand that my responsibilities as a youth coach are of great importance and that my actions have the potential to significantly influence the young athletes I coach. Therefore, I promise to uphold the following rights of young athletes to the best of my ability:

1. Right to participate in sports
2. Right to participate at a level commensurate with each child's maturity and ability
3. Right to have qualified adult leadership
4. Right to play as a child and not as an adult
5. Right of children to share in the leadership and decision-making of their sport participation
6. Right to participate in safe and healthy environments
7. Right to proper preparation for participation in sports
8. Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success
9. Right to be treated with dignity
10. Right to have fun in sports

I also promise to conduct myself in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Coaches:

1. I will treat each athlete, coach, official, parent, and administrator with dignity, based on the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.
2. I will do my best to learn the fundamental skills, teaching and evaluation techniques, and strategies of my sport.
3. I will become thoroughly familiar with the rules of my sport.
4. I will become familiar with the objectives of the Y Youth Sports program with which I am affiliated. I will strive to achieve these objectives and communicate them to my athletes and their parents.
5. I will uphold the authority of officials who are assigned to the contests in which I coach, and I will assist them in every way to conduct fair and impartial competitive contests.
6. I will learn the strengths and weaknesses of my athlete so that I might place them in situations where they have a maximum opportunity to achieve success.
7. I will conduct my practices and contest so that all athletes have an opportunity to improve their skill level through active participation.
8. I will communicate to my athletes and their parents the rights and responsibilities of individuals on our team.
9. I will cooperate with the administrator of our organization in the enforcement of rules and regulations and in the evaluation process for coaches, and I will report any irregularities that violate sound competitive practices.
10. I will protect the health and safety of my athletes by insisting that all of the activities under my control are conducted for their psychological and physiological welfare, rather than for the vicarious interests of adults.

By registering as a YMCA coach, you have agreed to the above Code of Ethics for coaches.

# **VOLUNTEER MATTERS**

All volunteer coaches are required to register in Volunteer Matters, pass a Background check and complete SmarterNow trainings (Child Abuse Prevention). To register in Volunteer Matters, visit [gwrymca.org/volunteer](http://gwrymca.org/volunteer).

# **PLAYERSPACE.COM SPORTS SOFTWARE**

PlayerSpace.Com PlayerSpace is our league management system for youth sports. As a registered participant, you will have access to a personal account within PlayerSpace. Once your account is active, you will receive an email\* with your username and password as well as a link to access your PlayerSpace accounts. Benefits of PlayerSpace include:

## **Parent Functionality:**

- Access team game schedule and sync to personal calendar
- View updates posted by coach or other parents
- Message coach directly
- Post video and pictures of games

## **Coach Expectations:**

- Coaches will communicate with teams primarily through PlayerSpace email and text messaging
- Coaches will post updates about any practice changes (time, date, location) on PlayerSpace and send out notifications through the PlayerSpace communication system
- Coaches will monitor posts by team families and respond within a few days

## **Sports Director Communications**

- Email and text team alerts of game/practice cancellations due to weather
- Email and text team schedule changes.

\*Notifications from PlayerSpace will be sent to the email address that you provided at registration. Please add [noreply@playerspace.com](mailto:noreply@playerspace.com) to your safe sender list to ensure that you receive all notifications. If you have concerns about the email address that you provided a registration, please contact your YMCA Sports director.

# **THANK YOU!**