



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# Hastings YMCA Youth Sports Handbook

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# ABOUT THE Y

The Hastings Family YMCA has been an essential part of the community for more than 150 years. As a diverse, non-profit organization, all members, volunteers, staff, contributors, supporters, and participants are joined together by the shared commitment to nurturing the potential of every child, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

The Y strives to provide safe, affordable and quality programs to meet your family's needs and well-being.

We believe that all kids deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. That's why, through youth sports programs, in particular, we provide a wholesome, values-oriented atmosphere that provides developmentally appropriate, values-based instruction designed not only to help children develop sports skills but social skills in an environment that emphasizes and rewards character as much physical development. This goal ensures opportunities to learn, grow, and develop.

As a leader in offering such programs, the Y discourages winning at all costs and instead encourages fun, skill development, fitness, teamwork, fair play, and family involvement. The purpose of YMCA sports is not only to teach skills more effectively but also to teach young people to become more effective adults. Hundreds of youth play soccer, flag football, volleyball, basketball, and other sports each year through the Y.

## YMCA MISSION

**To put Christian principles into practice that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.**

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

### YMCA Core Values

The YMCA's core values are the pinnacle to the goal of what we strive for in each and every program. The YMCA believes that the community can be impacted when we work together to accomplish our goals. Parents should model these values at home and relate them to the field/court.

- Caring
- Honesty
- Respect
- Responsibility

### Seven Pillars of YMCA Youth Sports

1. Everyone Plays - equal opportunities for all, no tryouts
2. Safety First - rules are modified to ensure safety
3. Fair Play - sports are more about character than the rules
4. Positive Competition - emphasis is on sportsmanship, not winning
5. Family Involvement - parent involvement & interest is encouraged
6. Sport For All - no one is left out, all are respected and valued
7. Sport For Fun - program goals are for fun, not win at all costs

## Goals of YMCA Sports and Programs

1. To build self-esteem
2. To teach social skills, values, communication, & teamwork
3. To teach physical skills, fitness, and health
4. To develop responsibility and decision making skills
5. To enhance leadership skills in youth and adults
6. To build relationships among peers, and parent & child
7. To support and strengthen family life
8. To create fun experiences for coaches, children & families

## Code of Good Sportsmanship

A significant piece of Y programs is learning and exemplifying good sportsmanship. All coaches, players, parents, fans, and officials are expected to conduct themselves with great sportsmanship. Should any parent/coach/fan/participant fail to comply, they will be asked to leave the facility/premises. Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct include, but not limited to, intimidating officials, players, and/or coaches, arguing, taunting, swearing, pushing, or fighting. The following is the code of good sportsmanship:

1. Teach the Proper Perspective on Winning  
Don't apply pressure to win but place the emphasis on being a team player and developing character.
2. Provide Performance Feedback with Style  
If mistakes are made and something needs to be said, do so in private and respect. Correct mistakes with positivity.
3. Show Only Positive Emotions  
Don't embarrass yourself or child by losing your emotions and yelling. Cheer to contribute to a fun environment.
4. Show Respect for All  
Respect coaches and their strategy, treat other teams with respect and let the officials call the game.
5. Be a Good Winner and a Good Loser  
Be humble in victory and respectful in defeat. There is always an opportunity to develop character, win or lose.

## LEAGUE INFORMATION & POLICIES

### Weather Cancellations/Make-up Games

The Y believes in providing a safe experience for all participants. Every weather decision will be made while having the participant's safety in mind. In all situations, parents/guardians have the right for the athlete(s) to not participate. Weather notices will be posted on the Y website, Facebook page, YMCA app, and via email. It is expected that coaches inform their teams on notices **immediately**. Cancellations/postponements/delay decisions will be made by the YMCA Sports Director with what is most logical and doable for all involved. Refer to the **Sports Weather Policy** for criteria in decision-making and complete details.

### Practices

Practice is a vital part of the YMCA sports experience and league. It is where children learn and develop skills. It is important for teams to practice and needs to be emphasized. A typical practice

lasts about an hour. Coaches are expected to develop plans and coach practices (or find a parent replacement); parents are encouraged to help the coach. Practice plans and team resources are made available to coaches through the YMCA.

## Character Development Worksheet

Part of YMCA programs is to develop character through our sports leagues. The YMCA provides a character development worksheet to coaches to lead through with their teams. The worksheet contains a number of topics the same length of the season. Each week has a topic and discussion questions for teams to huddle and learn how they can work on a specific character trait through sports. Coaches are instructed to lead a 5-10 minute discussion every practice/game and praise the team for exemplifying the specific behavior. Parents are encouraged to partner with coaches to reinforce the values with their children.

## Role of Parents/Guardians

Building strong kids begins in the home and parents/guardians are the primary prayers. The YMCA encourages parents to be actively and positively involved in their child's participation in our sports programs. Parents are encouraged to invest in their children to show love, interest, and build memories that last a lifetime. It is invaluable for parents to be enthusiastically involved in their children's activities. Coach their team, tell them how proud you are of them, encourage them, practice with them at home, help them learn the sport, all are examples of how you can be involved.

## Pictures

The YMCA provides teams and individuals the opportunity to have professional photos taken. Provident Photography, a locally owned business, organizes and takes all photos for those that purchase them. There is an additional cost for the photos as they are not required. However, a portion of the photo sales are donated back to the YMCA. Photos can be purchased at [www.providentphotos.com](http://www.providentphotos.com) during the season.

## Schedules, Rules, & League Specifics

The YMCA uses an online application called PLAYERSPACE where all program coaches and parents can find rosters, schedules, rules, and other things. Schedules can only be accessed via PLAYERSPACE, please follow the instructions sent via email. Automated notifications will be sent when games are unique to each participant. Please allow notifications. Other resources that are key to the success of YMCA programs will be available.

## Equipment & Uniforms

Participants are encouraged to bring their own balls, gloves, etc. to team practices. Below is an outline of the basic equipment needed for each sport and what will be provided to the coach.

### Flag Football

Each player will need athletic shoes or rubber cleats (no metal). Mouthguards are recommended. Team jerseys will be given to coaches before the first game. A bag of balls, flags, and cones will be provided to coaches before the season and must be returned after the season.

### Volleyball

Each player will need athletic shoes. Knee pads are recommended but not mandatory. Team jerseys will be given to coaches before the first game. Volleyballs will be provided for use during practices and games.

### Soccer

Each player will need athletic shoes or rubber cleats (no metal). Shin guards are recommended. A bag of balls and cones will be provided to coaches before the season and must be returned after the season. Jerseys may be purchased at either YMCA location for \$15 but are not required.

### Tee Ball

Each player will need a glove and athletic shoes or rubber cleats (no metal). Team jerseys will be given to coaches before the first game. A bag of equipment will be provided to coaches before the season and must be returned after the season. Baseball hats are optional for purchase at either YMCA location for \$10.

## TO THE COACH

Our volunteer coaches are vital to the success of our youth sports programs. We want to thank you for your time and talents to impact the area community! Throughout the years, committed and talented volunteers have impacted the lives of many children within our community through our youth programming. The Y appreciates every volunteer coach each season. Thank you!

## Coach's Meeting

At the coach's meeting, coaches will receive team roster, game schedules, league rules & information, equipment, sign up for practices, and everything else related to the program. Coaches are expected to attend the meeting.

## Steps to Take After Coach's Meeting

1. Contact entire team and introduce yourself. It is important to continue calling/texting/emailing until you get in touch with them. Do not wait for a callback.
2. Divide responsibilities, set practice times, and discuss season. Discuss best way of communication throughout the season. Recruit parents to assist with practices and games, manage player rotations for games, etc.
3. Schedule and plan for a parent meeting to discuss the season. Talk about YMCA values, your coaching philosophy, and expectations, the use of Playerspace (online software for schedules, etc.), and stress importance of practice. This can be held at the first practice.

## Volunteer Coach Responsibilities

- Follow the Y policies and procedures
- Have the best interest of the kids and families in mind
- To abide by the commitment that you made.
- To offer constructive criticism, seeking to understand before judging.
- To treat every participant, parent, official, and community member with kindness, regardless of age, income, ability, background, gender, or religion.
- To seek joy in your volunteer service. Having fun is an essential part of volunteering at the YMCA.

- Prepare for practices and games and reside over the team. The coach is responsible for the team throughout the season.
- Communicate with players and parents on practice and game information on a regular basis.
- To teach character and values by following the character development worksheet every practice/game. See guide.

- Conduct warm-up & cool-down exercises each practice.
- Refer to practice plans if desired.
- Demonstrate drills and explain their purpose. Think of multiple ways to show specific skills.
- Have scrimmages in which players rotate positions.
- Provide positive feedback.
- Be enthusiastic and HAVE FUN!

## Goals of Coaching

- Develop individual skills, both basic and advanced as players learn the sport.
- Teach tactics and team skills to develop skills.
- Teach rules and traditions of the game as they learn the basics.
- Teach fitness by leading activities and provide tips related to fitness and training.
- Run effective practices
- Encourage your players, make it a habit, and keep your eyes open for these moments. Catch players doing something right, get to know your players and their needs, use positive motivators and not negative ones, and be caring.
- Develop athletes with character. Refer to the code of good sportsmanship on what we strive for.
- Spend time every practice and game talking about the topic of each week on the character development worksheet.

## 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 Enthusiastic: Kids know when you're going through the motions.
- Be Prepared: Come to practice ready to go and make the most of your time. Com
- Be A Role Model: Your players will have a tendency to copy your actions and moods. Show the players at all times how to act and carry themselves.
- Be Positive: Stress everyone's strengths and good points. It will also help to make each situation, whether positive or negative, a learning experience.

## Practices

Coaches are expected to develop and prepare for and coach every practice and game. Coaches are to pick a day of the week and time for practice (except for volleyball: coaches will sign up). If coaches are unable to be at a practice or game, it is important to ask a parent on the team to take your place and to communicate.

### Here are some tips for running an effective practice:

- Communicate with parents when and where practices will be held. Be consistent and do not cancel if possible.
- Get to practice early to be prepared and greet players.
- Learn everyone's name.
- Cross-check roster to the players that are present. Roster additions can only be made at the approval of the YMCA Sports Director.
- Explain team rules and expectations.
- Create team unity by talking with all players, encouraging high fives, and positive comments.

## Game Day

YMCA staff will be present during game day. We are here to assist coaches, players, spectators, and officials. YMCA staff will also:

- Ensure games run smoothly and on time.
- Ensure all patrons are in accordance to the Y philosophy, which includes inappropriate comments or actions.
- Evaluate and assist coaches and officials.
- Answer questions.
- Handle issues.
- Have limited first aid supplies available.

## Tips for Coaching on Game Day

Games are held to reward players for their hard work during practices and to compete against peers in a healthy environment.

### Before Games

- Arrive early and gather your team.
- Explain who will be playing each position and your plan for rotations and substitutions.
- Recruit volunteers to help monitor game time, help sub players in and out, and manage the bench if necessary.
- Remind team of character trait of the week.

### During Games

- Be enthusiastic.
- Be positive.
- Substitute players equally.
- When players come out, tell them something they did well and then encourage with something to work on.
- Encourage players on the bench to be supportive of teammates in the game and learn from them.
- Praise players who exemplify the character trait of the week during the game.

### After Games

- Always line up & congratulate opponents of a good game.
- Always display good sportsmanship.
- Talk to your team about positives and what to work on for next time.
- Remind parents and players when the next practice is.

## Sportsmanship: Winning & Losing

Coping with winning and losing is an essential part of playing sports. Ideally, kids first learn how to deal with victory and defeat from their parents. As a coach, it is up to you to reinforce the appropriate behavior of winning and losing.

### When They Win

Every player will say that it is more fun to win but as a coach, you should teach your team how to win with respect. If you witness one of your players taunting an opponent, sit the player next to you and explain the necessity of being humble in victory. It is very important for coaches to teach their teams to win with class.

Remember, doing one's best, being a good team player, and developing character are considered winning at the YMCA.

### **When They Lose**

Sometimes, a loss will be accompanied by tears of disappointment. As a coach, understand that for many players losing can be a painful experience. Console them and praise them for their efforts, but never embarrass them. Your job is to teach your team how losing can serve as motivation to practice and how to react with a good attitude. Dealing with a loss begins with the coach and good sportsmanship must be taught as players learn how to react to a defeat. Use the outcome as an opportunity to teach how to be good sports in defeat.

### **Communication**

Many situations and problems can be avoided simply by going above and beyond to communicate. Everyone perceives good communication differently so it is important to be clear and give reminders often.

### **Working With Parents**

From time to time, coaches may experience difficulty with parents. Here are some tips when dealing with parents:

- Always listen to ideas and encourage parents to communicate with you.
- Handle confrontations 1 to 1 without being defensive. Do not argue but be respectful.
- Do not try & please everyone. Listen to concerns & try & accommodate requests if reasonable and you're able to.
- Know what your objectives are and always do what you believe is the best interest of the kids and the team.
- Treat players equally and you will have their respect.

### **Working With Officials**

Youth sports are usually officiated by high school or college students. Most of the officials are learning how to officiate through practical experience. The officials are trained extensively and are instructed to introduce themselves before games, conduct a meeting with the coaches to discuss the game, follow the rules and adjust as necessary, and be a good communicator among other things. Coaches and parents should try and be sympathetic and understanding rather than critical of officials.

- It is inevitable that officials will make mistakes. Please be respectful and understanding.
- If you have a concern please wait until halftime, time for subs, or end of game to express your concerns.
- Most officials want to improve and appreciate constructive feedback when given in a positive and respectful way.
- Officials are at their best when they are constantly yelled at or criticized. Be a good communicator with officials.

### **Communication With Staff**

If there is an issue on site, please contact the site supervisor. The YMCA welcomes questions, comments, and feedback regarding the season. Issues can only be resolved when Y staff is told.

## **Injury & Emergency Procedures**

### **General Responsibilities**

- Be aware of any situation that may cause injury and take steps to prevent them from happening. Inspect safety of equipment and playing areas, provide proper sport

technique, & have a warm-up/cool down every practice and game.

- Keep team roster on hand at all times to contact child's parents in case of emergency.
- Know exact location and address of practices and games.
- Contact YMCA Sports Director to report serious injuries/accidents (402) 463-3139
- If unsure of a situation, contact the child's parents or 911 immediately - use best judgment

### **First Aid**

Limited first aid kits will be available at game sites.

### **Concussions**

All coaches are HIGHLY RECOMMENDED to complete the "Head's Up: Concussion in Youth Sports" online training. Coaches should become aware of the signs and symptoms of a concussion. Medical clearance MUST be given before participating again. The coach's equipment packet contains concussion protocols. *WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!*

### **Sprains and Strains: R.I.C.E**

Rest: No weight bearing.

Ice: Use a layer of material between ice and skin.

Compression: Wrap with elastic bandage to limit swelling.

Elevate: Injured part needs to be elevated to control swelling. It is most effective when the injured part is raised above the heart.

### **Injury Prevention**

Know the risk factors for specific activities that the children are participating in. Ensuring that all participants have the appropriate equipment will prevent injury. Inspect their equipment and teach them the proper way to use it.

### **Warm-Up and Cool Down**

It is important to teach the children the importance of a proper warm-up and cool down. Warm-up activities should include exercises to increase body temperature, heart rate, and respiration (high knees, short jog, stretching exercises, etc).

### **Supervision**

Your attention and supervision are required at all practices and games. Supervise all activities and teach your players to observe rules at all times. "Horsing around" is a common cause of injuries.

## **Child Abuse Prevention**

### **Strategies to Prevent Child Abuse**

1. The Y has in place a pre-employment screening procedure to screen out staff and volunteers not suited for working with children.
2. The Y will take any allegations or suspicion of child abuse seriously.
3. Staff & volunteers understand legal obligation to report abuse.
4. Coaches should monitor the release of participants on their teams to ensure a child is never left alone or picked up by a stranger.
5. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, and any other type of harassment is prohibited.

### **Reporting Child Abuse**

- When you suspect that a child has been abused, whether at or outside the Y, you must report the information immediately to the YMCA Sports Director.
- Do not discuss the situation with anyone but the YMCA Sports Director.
- You will be asked to write down the facts or assumptions you have made.
- The YMCA Sports Director will make the appropriate calls to the police department or social services.