

# TRC

## Turner Recreation Commission Coach's Manual

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you so much for participating with us. This department oversees the organization and administration of a wide variety of athletic events for the Turner community, including, but not limited to: recreation youth wrestling, soccer, basketball, softball, baseball, machine pitch, tee ball, and volleyball. We have a tremendous opportunity to reach and impact the lives of so many youths in our area. With this opportunity comes the expectation of providing the best athletic experience to every participant. The reward is knowing you are part of something special, and for that, we extend our sincerest appreciation.

### **Philosophy**

The Turner Recreation Commission's Youth Athletic Programs are designed to allow participants an opportunity to have fun, learn an athletic skill and learn the values of teamwork and sportsmanship in a recreational environment. The Turner Recreation Commission recognizes that youth athletic programs provide: Development of Character, Commitment, Leadership and Attitude.

Furthermore, TRC's Board of Commissioners have determined it to be in the best interest of the citizens of Turner, that *recreation* programs shall have priority use of facilities over outside programs. Also, Turner residents shall have priority for all programs, activities and use of facilities that are organized, scheduled and operated by this department.

### **National Standards for Youth Sports**

Turner Recreation Commission will endorse the National Standards for Youth Sports whenever possible. The purpose of these standards is to provide a framework by which youth sports programs are designed and executed. These standards place in motion a national policy for youth sports.

Participation in youth sports provides children with an opportunity to gain many valuable life skills and develop an appreciation for physical fitness, all of which can lead to a lifetime of healthy activity. This can only occur, though, when organized sports programs are designed and administered to ensure a safe, positive and fun environment for everyone. As a parent of a youngster involved in youth sports, you have a responsibility to make sure that your child is enrolled in a program that adheres to the following Standards. Prior to signing your child up for a sport it's important that you review the Standards so when you're looking at how the program operates you can be sure that it is a good fit for your child.

As a player, participating in organized sports programs is a truly special time in your young life. It's important that you – along with your parents or guardians – are aware that with your involvement in these programs you have rights. Among those are the right to a safe and fun experience and the opportunity to receive the same amount of playing time as your teammates, among many others. Along with your rights comes the responsibility for you to abide by team rules, follow your coach's instructions and, with the help of your parent or guardian, put forth every effort to get to practices and games on time. When coaches, parents and players work together – and do their best to follow the Standards – you'll enjoy participating in a positive environment that will increase the likelihood of you learning new skills, enhancing others and having a safe and fun-filled experience.

For a copy of the National Standards for Youth Sports please visit:

<https://www.nays.org/resources/nays-documents/national-standards-for-youth-sports/>

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Communication

Your first contact regarding any questions or comments you may have concerning the **program** is a Turner Recreation Commission Department Staff Member. Your first contact regarding **team matters** is always your coach

### *OPEN COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO POSITIVE COACH-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS*

Remember and remind yourself who this program is for.... the kids.

*Communication between yourself and your parents is a very important aspect of your season. This department understands that each of you are a volunteer; however, the experience of everyone involved with your team can be extremely positive if you have an open communication system. Bottom line is:*

- Hold a Parent/Guardian meeting before the season begins to go over various parts of your coaching philosophy, address playing time/practices/etc., and team expectations.
- Recognize the parents'/guardians' commitment.
- Make early, positive contact with your parents/guardians.
- Make sure the parents/guardians know that they are important to you and your team.
- Never put the parents/guardians in the middle of a child.
- Observe a cooling off period when a situation arises. Wait at least 24 hours to address a situation so you can gather your thoughts.

### Inclement Weather Policy

If inclement weather occurs, here are the means of communication used by Turner Recreation Commission's Sports Dept.: Whereas the TRC maintains athletic facilities for a variety of sports, and these sports facilities are operated and maintained daily with the following philosophy:

- 1) Player safety
- 2) Fair and even surfacing
- 3) The understanding that today's actions create tomorrow's problems
- 4) A pleasant and appealing appearance

### Sports Department Events:

The Sports Director, with/without assistance from Recreation, Grounds/Facility & Sport Staff, will decide if conditions are favorable for play and/or practice between 3:00 pm & 4:00 pm (M-F), 7:30 am & 8:00 am (Sat), & 10:30 am & 11:30 am (Sun). This does not preclude the right of the Department to cancel contests up to or at game time.

All available means shall be utilized to insure the public's knowledge and compliance with inclement weather decisions based upon criteria stated above. These include but not limited to: Social Media, website and/or Field Conditions Email.

Athletic personnel shall be responsible for staff knowledge of inclement weather decisions. This includes (as time allows) Administration, Office Personnel, and Athletic Field Maintenance workers.

It is the intention of this policy to eliminate misunderstandings between the Department and our customers concerning athletic cancellations. Decisions will be based on criteria stated in this policy and not public pressure or opinion.

## **Guidelines for Athletic Facilities Usage**

### **Program Objectives**

*It shall be the objectives of the Turner Recreation Commission and Sports Department to provide facilities, leadership, motivation, knowledge, and opportunities for both youth and adult citizens to participate in a variety of competitive and recreational athletic activities. These activities are designed to develop skills and promote fun, exercise, fellowship, team spirit, community pride, and sportsmanship.*

### **Facility Guidelines**

**Tobacco and Alcohol Rule:** NO SMOKING INSIDE THE COMPLEXES OR AROUND ATHLETIC COMPLEXES. If there are no fences to designate a complex, the boundaries shall be determined by parking lots or streets. NO SMOKELESS TOBACCO in playing field, dugouts, bleachers, areas within 30 yards of playing or viewing areas and concession stands or restrooms

**Use Trash Cans:** These are your fields, please help keep them clean. By putting trash in designated cans and policing the fields and dugouts, we can minimize this cost and continue to appropriate your tax dollars for other important projects.

**No Pets Allowed within Athletic Complexes or Athletic Playing areas:** If there are no fences to designate an athletic complex, the boundaries shall be determined by parking lots or streets.

**No Climbing on Fences or Gates:** Fence gates are installed at our athletic fields for pedestrian and maintenance traffic to use. The climbing of fences may result in many unnecessary injuries and damages to existing fence materials.

**No Soft Toss or Batting Practice Against Fences or Backstops:** Although a very popular way to work with batters, this drill is very damaging to our facilities. As participants continue to hit balls against the fence or backstop, the fence fabric will lose its tension and begin to buckle. Not only is this an eyesore that cannot be fixed until new fabric is purchased, but also the ridged area at the bottom of the fence fabric will become exposed; creating a very dangerous situation for players and coaches.

**Warm Up in Safe Areas Only:** One of the great things about athletic events is the amount of people who come to our parks to watch the games. Many of these people are young children. Throwing or kicking balls in areas with large amounts of pedestrian traffic can cause many unfortunate injuries. Make sure that our participant's warm -up in areas that are a safe distance from bleachers, backstops, sidelines, etc.

**Do Not Practice in Same Area of Field Every Time:** Although this guideline is targeted for football and soccer fields, it could apply to baseball/softball facilities as well. Continuous practicing in one area (midfield, end zone, goal box, center field, etc.) is very harmful to athletic turf and can cause unsafe playing conditions as well. It can increase the number of field cancellations due to wet fields. Remember, athletic turf needs rest, water, and food (fertilizer) just as our young athletes do.

**Keep Spectators Away from Sidelines:** As with any event, spectators want to get as close to the action as possible, but this can create very dangerous playing situations for the players and fans. It is our department's policy that spectators remain behind fences or at least ten yards from the playing field sidelines to allow a safe area for players, coaches, and officials. Please, keep all fans behind barriers or lines marking barriers when fences are not used.

**Do Not Park in Front of Facility Gates or in Handicap Parking:** These areas are restricted for a reason. There are many people who come to our athletic facilities that are physically handicapped or have special needs and having adequate parking spaces set aside for these individuals is a priority in this department. Emergency vehicles and maintenance vehicles must have access to the facility to handle any situations that need immediate attention.

**Do Not Climb or Hang on Soccer Goals:** Soccer goals can be very dangerous to participants if they climb or hang on the crossbar or netting. Soccer goals are usually extremely heavy. If a person is hanging on the crossbar, the goal can fall forward and land on top of the individual causing serious injuries.

## **PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR POLICY**

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BOTH THE PARTICIPANT AND SERVICE PROVIDER THAT EVERY PARTICIPANT IS AWARE OF THIS POLICY.

The Turner Recreation Commission will enforce the following policy for all participants in any TRC event, program or other event on any town facility. Participants include players, all coaches, parents, spectators, league administrators, volunteers and all officials who are on and off the field and involved in all programs, including, but not limited to: recreation, athletic, special events; taking place on TRC and/or TUSD#202 facilities or any athletic and/or recreational event or special event sponsored by the TRC, and/or any organization sponsored by or bonded by service provider with the Turner Recreation Commission.

## **UNRULY BEHAVIOR**

Turner Recreation Commission defines **unruly behavior** to be any Offensive language; verbally taunting players, officials, coaches, staff, league administrators, spectators; publicly berating players, officials, coaches, staff, league administrators, spectators; repeatedly yelling out instructions from the sidelines against coaches and/or officials wishes; any other action deemed unruly by any staff or official of the Turner Recreation Commission.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Unruly behavior occurring on the playing field between players and coaches will be dealt with by verbal warnings by on field officials (however, warnings are optional if official feels behavior of participant warrants immediate ejection). Warning of a participant includes all participants (listed above). Warnings will not be issued to individual participants. If unruly behavior continues following warning, guilty participant will be ejected from the event.

- If guilty participant cannot be determined, the Head Coach will be ejected from the game. If unruly behavior continues, and guilty participant can still not be determined, Assistant Coaches will be ejected. If there are no Assistant Coaches, the participant at the top of team lineup will be ejected and so on until game becomes forfeit.
- If a team forfeits the game due to mass number of ejections, then the entire team is suspended until the entire teams meets with an appropriate TRC staff member and the TRC discipline committee.
- The Participant who is ejected will not be allowed back onto TRC and/or TUSD#202 facilities until he/she meets with an appropriate TRC staff member and the TRC discipline committee. Meetings must be set up between the hours of 9am and 5pm, Monday through Friday. Consequences will be set forth at this meeting. Consequences will be based upon eyewitness accounts from officials, coaches, spectators, or any other participant who witnessed the situation.

The Participant who is ejected must sign a Code of Conduct. Any participant ejected (for any reason) will be placed on six months' probation. Any unruly behavior or ejection during this probation period will cause for additional suspension for a length of time determined by the TRC. Suspension could include dismissal from any and/or all TRC and/or TUSD#202 facilities for any event. Persistent ejections or suspensions over any length of time will/can result in an indefinite suspension for a time set forth by the Turner Recreation Commission.

A participant may apply for reinstatement into a program or event by filing a report/request with the Turner Recreation Commission. This report will then be forwarded to the Director of Turner Recreation Commission for review. At no time may a participant participate in an event or program during an appeal of a suspension. The Director will then decide to reinstate participant, uphold suspension, or extend suspension under the guidelines set forth by the Turner Recreation Commission.

- Staff, league administrators, officials, and/or organization providing a service with the Turner Recreation Commission for unruly behavior can suspend any participant.
- Unruly behavior in defense of unruly behavior warrants the same punishment if determined by the Turner Recreation Commission. Remain calm in reaction to an unruly participant and encourage staff and/or league administrators to intervene.
- It is the duty of all game officials (umpires, referees, scorekeepers), league administrators, staff, and any Turner Recreation Commission officials to react to a participant displaying unruly behavior. TRC staff will determine consequences for these acts or react to any consequences rendered by a service provider.

# TRC

## Sportsmanship Program



## PLAY FAIR - PLAY HARD - PLAY WITH INTEGRITY

The Turner Recreation Commission has developed a new sportsmanship initiative within our sports, called the TRC's Sportsmanship Program. This new initiative strives to educate participants (players, coaches, parents/guardians, officials, Athletic Staff members, etc.) about the many important values of sportsmanship, as well as reward those who demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship in our programs.

The Complete Athlete Sportsmanship Program is geared around the principles of integrity, respect and teamwork while stressing the importance of **PLAYING FAIR, PLAYING HARD, AND PLAYING WITH INTEGRITY.** We all want to win but educating our youth to win and lose with integrity will benefit them more than a trophy.

### Play Fair

- "It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game that counts"
- Always Obey the rules of the game, even if you know you will not get caught.
- Be fair in your treatment of others.
- Be open minded.
- 81% (of 5,300 high school athletes polled) said "playing the game fairly and being honorable are more important than winning."

### Play Hard

- Strive to win but leave it on the field/court.
- Respect the game and the athletic program.
- **DO YOUR BEST.**

### Play with Integrity

- Doing what is right, not just when it's convenient, but consistently and always, simply because it's the right thing to do, and you know it. If in doubt, figure it out, and adjust accordingly.



## Tips for Teaching Sportsmanship

While youngsters participate in sports, they develop behavioral attitudes that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Parents/guardians have a responsibility to emphasize the importance of good sportsmanship to all their players.

- Take the time to point out examples of good sportsmanship by professional athletes and discuss their behavior.
- Reward ethical behavior and good sportsmanship. Make this an important reward and not just a consolation prize. Develop a system of points to be accumulated where awards are received for demonstrating fair play and good sportsmanship.
- Teach your son/daughter to be responsible for their own behavior.
- Support officials and field directors in their efforts to control the games and stop any game is out of control.
- Educate your son/daughter about the rules and the spirit of the rules.
- Stress fair play, civility, and common decency toward opponents and officials.
- Control problems early and let your son/daughter know that there are consequences for unacceptable behavior.
- Let your son/daughter know that there will be mistakes made and that losing as well as winning is a part of the game.
- Define winning as doing their best and trying.
- Teach your son/daughter the importance of being gracious in both victory and defeat.
- Never allow yourself or anyone else to discriminate against or make fun of athletes based on their race, gender, body type, ability, disability, nationality, religion, accent, ethnic origin, appearance, economic level, or parental affiliations.
- Permit and encourage co-ed play when competencies are similar but insist on separate but equal treatment for girls when opportunities for play are unequal.

**Remember that the essence of competition is the mutual quest for excellence through challenge and that the playing field must be even for both teams**

## **T.E.A.M.**

### **T – Teach**

- Let players know that their character counts, that enduring happiness depends on who you are, not on what you have or what you can do.
- Show that people of character know the difference between right and wrong because ethical values guide them.
- Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

### **E – Enforce**

- Reward good behavior and impose fair, consistent consequences that prove you are serious about character.
- Demonstrate courage and firmness of will by enforcing core values when it is difficult to do so.
- Discourage all instances of bad behavior.

### **A – Advocate**

- Continually encourage others to live up to the Six Pillars.
- Be an advocate for character.
- Don't be neutral about the importance of character or casual about improper conduct.
- Be clear and uncompromising that you expect young athletes to demonstrate the Six Pillars.

### **M – Model**

- Set a good example in what you say and do.
- Always Honor the Six Pillars.
- Be sure your actions reinforce your lessons about doing the right thing even when it is hard to do so.
- When you slip, act the way you would prefer young people do when they behave improperly. Be accountable, apologize sincerely – AND DO BETTER!

## **PLANNING FOR THE SEASON**

Planning the season can be overwhelming, yet fun and rewarding. Planning ahead can help make the most of the time you have, while allowing the season to run as smoothly as possible. This will ultimately lead to more time during practice, and free time for you to enjoy. Here are just a few pointers to steer you in the right direction during the upcoming season.

### **Parent Meeting**

All coaches are encouraged to hold an initial parents/participant meeting before your first practice. This will establish lines of communication that will be an extremely useful tool during the season. You may hold this meeting in a casual location or at a big event for your team. Whatever the location, the following will help format your discussions.

### **Purpose of a Parent Meeting**

- Allows parents to see your overall coaching philosophy.
- Allows the opportunity for everyone to meet each other in a more personable environment.
- Address practices, league guidelines, your coaching philosophy, program's philosophy and expectations, communication, etc.
- Give your coaching background and your expectations of every player and parent.
- Ask for help by gaining parental support.

### **Points to Cover at Parents' Meeting**

#### *1. Coaching Philosophy*

- Discuss your core values that you wish each player to learn.
- Discuss the value of playing sports and the many benefits they create.
- Discuss how you plan to implement your philosophy as it relates to that age group.
- Discuss the importance of FUN and learning an ATHLETIC SKILL.
- Discuss your team rules (playing time, game time, etc.).
- Discuss your value of equal playing time for EVERYONE.

#### *2. Team Rules*

- Equipment and Safety issues (type of shoes, attire, etc.)
- Your practice schedule.
- Game schedule.
- League timeline.
- Respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, etc.
- Brief discussion of the game rules.

#### *3. Coach Responsibilities*

- To demonstrate integrity, respect, leadership and fairness.
- Organize practices, games, etc.
- Provide a safe playing environment.
- Will show up to practice early and will stay until each child has been picked up.
- Provide effective communication throughout the season.
- Always demonstrate sportsmanship.

#### *4. Parents Responsibilities*

- Let the coach coach.
- Cheer on your son or daughter in a positive manner.
- Respect the game, coaches, players, opponents, spectators, officials, etc.
- Make sure your child is on time to practices and games.

## **Code of Conduct**

Everyone- whether as player, parent, coach, official, spectator, Athletic Staff member, etc.- has a responsibility to conduct him/herself in an appropriate and positive manner. Playing sports should be a privilege, and privileges can be taken away. Your actions very well reflect on the program, and ultimately on the Turner Recreation Commission. The Turner Recreation Commission has expectations of everyone involved in our athletic programs.

## **As a Coach**

As a coach or coaching staff member, you have the paramount task of providing the core values of the sport in which you are involved in. Whether you choose to or not, you are a role model for everyone on your team, and this organization expects every coach to take this role with great care. You are expected to lead by example, and teach values such as respect, integrity, accountability, responsibility, etc.

*As a coach in our programs, you are expected to:*

- Place the emotional and physical well-being of your players ahead of winning or losing.
- Treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- Do your best to provide a safe playing situation for your players.
- Review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of your players.
- Organize practices that are fun and challenging for all your players.
- Lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all your players.
- Provide a sports environment for your team that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and you will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- Be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that you coach and teach these rules to your players.
- Use the coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that you teach.
- Remember that you are a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children- NOT ADULTS.

## **As a Parent/Guardian/Spectator**

Participation in youth sports provides children with an opportunity to gain many valuable life skills and develop an appreciation for physical fitness, all of which can lead to a lifetime of healthy activity. This can only occur, though, when organized sports programs are designed and administered to ensure a safe, positive and fun environment for everyone. You have the task of ensuring these things while you always foster a positive and encouraging environment.

*As a parent/guardian of a youth in our program, you are expected to:*

- Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.
- Place the emotional and physical well-being of your child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- Insist that your child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- Support coaches and officials working with your child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- Demand a sports environment for your child that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and you will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- Remember that the game is for youth- NOT ADULTS.
- Do your very best to make youth sports fun for your child.
- Ask your child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect, regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.

## **As a Player**

Participation in organized sports programs is a truly special time in your young life. It's important that you – along with your parents or guardians – are aware that with your involvement in these programs you have rights. Among these rights are the right to a safe and fun experience and the opportunity to receive the same amount

of playing time as your teammates, among many others. Along with your rights comes the responsibility for you to abide by team rules, follow your coach's instructions and, with the help of your parent or guardian, put forth every effort to get to practices and games on time.

*As a player in our program, you are expected to:*

- Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.
- Insist that you play in a safe and healthy environment.
- Support coaches and officials working with you, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- Demand a sports environment that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and you will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- Remember that the game is for you- NOT ADULTS.
- Do your very best to make youth sports fun.
- Treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect, regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.

### **As a Referee/Umpire/Official**

You are responsible for the safety of every child in every game you officiate. You must have all the knowledge necessary to perform your duties with accuracy and efficiency and fairly. You must show respect for all spectators, players, coaches, etc. and you should expect the same from each one of them.

*As a referee, umpire or official in our program, you are expected to:*

- Always Maintain respect for the game.
- Always Insure teamwork with other officials/umpires/referees.
- Maintain the proper training necessary for every sport.
- Be fair.
- Control the game by controlling the coaches, players and spectators, while being courteous and respectful.
- Always Conduct yourself with integrity and respect.

### **Coaches Equipment**

You should prepare yourself efficiently at every practice and game. There may be some additional items that you may wish to get, such as:

- Equipment Bag (if not provided)
- Medical Forms for every player
- Medical Kits (ice packs, sterile pads, band aides, adhesive tape, elastic wraps, etc. No ointments or medications. You never know who might have allergies)
- Water (have water available at every practice and game. You may even have a team player/parent assigned to provide water at each game/practice)

### **EXPECTATIONS OF YOUR COACH**

You are one of the most important people in our program. Participation in our programs – whether as a player or parent/guardian – should be a fun and rewarding experience. You should have high expectations of the experience you have. One of the many expectations should be that of your coach. Your coach is tasked with the important job of providing you with a safe, fun and educational experience. Your coach should provide you with an opportunity to **HAVE FUN, LEARN AN ATHLETIC SKILL AND LEARN THE VALUES OF TEAMWORK AND SPORTSMANSHIP**. The Turner Recreation Commission also has expectations of your coach, which include, but are not limited to:

### **Coaches Job Description**

#### **1. Uphold the TRC's Youth Sports Philosophy:**

Allow an opportunity for **each participant** to:

- Have fun.
- Learn an Athletic Skill
- Learn the values of Teamwork and Sportsmanship

## 2. Model and Teach the Players to Honor the Game

- Always do your best.
- Always abide by league and game rules.
- Respect the game, opponents, officials, program.

## 3. Redefine What it Means to be a Winner

- Play Hard. Reward effort, not just good outcomes.
- Learn and bounce back from your mistakes.
- Always Show sportsmanship.
- If these are followed, then they won at something, no matter what the scoreboard says.

## 4. Motivate and Encourage the Players

- Use encouragement and positive reinforcement as your primary method of motivating.
- 5 positive reinforcements to 1 criticism/correction (5:1 Ratio).
- Think of at least one thing each player did correctly at every practice/game.

## 5. Have conversations during Team Meetings with Players and Parents at Every Practice and Every Game

- Review the concepts of honoring the game.
- Remind often.
- Ask questions and encourage players to speak and contribute.
- This provides positive and effective communication.

At the end of the season, we will send you a survey of your coach and how he/she did at implementing these guidelines. We will share the results with your coach. Thank you for everything you do!

## CHILDREN AND SPORTS

There have been numerous studies about the concepts that youth athletes view as important. Of the many studies that were conducted, there are four key components in youth sports that young athletes view as the reasons why they choose to participate in sports.

1. **Fun** – having fun is pivotal in youth sports. If something is not fun, then why do it? Allowing an atmosphere where every participant has fun is the most important function a coach has. By doing this, you can help ensure to maximize every child's sports experience.
2. **Skill Development** – learning an athletic skill is also very important in a child's sports experience. Even professional athletes will attest that skill development is far more rewarding and important than winning or losing.
3. **Intrinsic Rewards** – learning something new about yourself or gaining a sudden surge of confidence is extremely rewarding for any athlete, far beyond that of victory or the "limelight".
4. **Self-Knowledge** – simply understanding or learning about yourself. This is one of the most brilliant rewards.

## AGE GUIDELINES

A wide variety of youth sports experiences are available today. Historically, many programs have been modeled after adult-oriented programs using rules, skill expectations and competitive requirements replicated from high school, college and professional levels. Today, programs must be designed and administered so that every child, regardless of his or her abilities, has an opportunity to positively benefit from participation.

*According to the National Standards for Youth Sports, leagues should organize programs using the following guidelines as it pertains to age level:*

### 1. 6 Years and Younger – Developmental Programs

- Informal teams
- Focus on motor skill development
- Scores and/or standings not emphasized
- Roster size, rules, equipment and fields modified
- Post-season tournament or All-Star competition highly discouraged
- No travel
- Coaches permitted on playing surface
- Encourage boys and girls to participate together whenever possible

## **2. 7 to 8 Year Olds – Instructional Sports Programs**

- Focus on skill development and rules of the game
- Score and standings not emphasized
- Roster size, rules, equipment and fields modified
- Encourage a variety of position and situational play
- Post-season tournament or All-Star competition discouraged
- Encourage boys and girls to participate together whenever possible
- Travel discouraged
- Coaches permitted on playing surface

## **3. 9 to 10 Year Olds – Organizational Programs**

- Scores kept but standings de-emphasized
- Roster sizes, rules, equipment and fields modified when necessary
- Encourage a variety of position and situational play
- No national tournament participation

## **4. 11 Year Olds and Above – Skill Enhancement and Enrichment Programs**

- Scores and standings start to be emphasized
- Proper grouping and selection procedures to ensure fair and equitable teams
- Encourage a variety of position and situational play

### **Organizing a Practice**

In order to perform to your best – which is exactly what you expect from your players – you must plan properly. If you are not well prepared, then you are cheating them out of an awesome experience. There is a lot more involved than just throwing a ball around and running around.

The game is not for coaching and learning. The game is for doing what was practiced. Practice is just that – practicing what you do in a game. So, if you think that the kids will learn the skills during game time, you are sorely mistaken. Practice is a time for making the skills needed to perform well in a game an instinct. The less one must think about what to do at game time, the better the outcome usually is.

In order to maximize time, you have at practice, you must be thorough and organized. Arrive at your practice before your players do. This way, you can get everything in order without the distractions of questions and keeping an eye on the kids. You should be able to move from one exercise to the other with minimal stopping and reorganizing. Observe what the players are doing, and if you see that you are losing your focus – improvise. Improvisation is a critical key to running an effective practice. You want your players to learn what you are trying to teach them, but if you cannot keep their focus, then you have lost them anyway. So, in order to run a successful practice, you need to have as little downtime as possible, without running them into the ground. Activities to keep players' focus could be as simple as asking questions while in line, having them help you shag balls, etc. It does not have to be physical activity to keep one's focus.

Some things to also focus on while organizing your practice is keeping activities age appropriate. Make sure your players – at the particular age group – have the skill development to perform them. Finally, keep in mind these things when planning your activities. It will certainly help maximize your practice time.

- Fun Activities that are age appropriate
- Organized activities with a clear objective
- Keep all players involved
- Perform activities that encourage creativity, improvisation and decision making
- Make sure you have the appropriate space needed to do the activity
- Provide appropriate feedback that is clear, concise and positive

## **GAME DAY TIPS**

As we said before, the game just that – a game. Before the game, you should be fully prepared and ready. During the game, you should take notes of things to work on. The game is not the time for practicing. That is what practice is for. The game is when the players put into play what they have learned in practice. You may get some new ideas on drills or what to work on during the game. After the game is time for reflection on what they learned, what came up that they need to work on, and to reward them for what they did right. This is a great time for you to boost morale, especially if you did not win the game. Remember the ratio of 5:1 – work on finding five good things that happened to every criticism or suggestion for improvement. It is extremely important to have a post-game meeting with all players and all parents. You can talk about what worked, what didn't work and need to change, and what went well. Above all, this creates a stronger sense of TEAM.

## **GAME PREPERATION**

The day before the game is the best time to think about the game. Make out the lineup and playing schedule. Remember that it is very important that each kid should be able to: 1) play different positions; 2) be the captain; 3) start and finish the game. These are very important to each child at every level.

### **Day of the Game**

Bring your equipment and lineup and playing schedule.

### **Warmups**

It is extremely important that each player stretches, properly warms up, and cools down afterwards. Proper warmups should get the blood and heart going but should not wear down their endurance. A simple jog around the field should suffice. Flexibility exercises are also very important to keep from pulling muscles or putting strain on the joints.

### **Know the Rules**

It is very crucial that you know the rules of the game. Every league across the nation uses some variation of rules, so it is very important that you know all the rules specific for your age group. Ask the official or umpire if there are any rules that you should be aware of and get a general idea of how he or she is going to control the game.

## **COACHING THE GAME**

As noted, before the game is not the time for practicing or full instruction. If practices were run effectively, the players should know what is expected of them during the game. It is crucial that you exercise patience and understanding. Remember, this is just a game. Simple, easy encouragement from the sidelines is enough instruction for your players during the game. Make sure that you are on the same page as the assistant coaches. You do not want anyone else to contradict what you are instructing.

### **Things to Avoid**

It is very distracting when, as a coach – or spectator for that matter -, you shout instructions over and over again. If you keep giving the same instruction over and over, it is quite apparent that you did not iron that situation out in practice. The game is not the time for this. Shouting instructions are very distracting, in that the situation has already moved on to a new one, and what you are trying to instruct has already passed.

It is even more distracting when you have assistant coaches giving the same instructions from a different area. This is twice as distracting. Again, practice is the time for full instruction.

Do not let your parents or spectators' coach from the sideline or bleacher area. This often contradicts how you are trying to teach the kids. Remember that you are the coach, and the parents should respect how you coach, especially if it was mentioned at the Parents/Guardians' Meeting – and it should have been!

### **Good Ideas**

Coaching, including you and your assistants, should be limited during games – we have covered this above. Make mental notes or write down the things that did not work during the game, and make sure you cover these things at your next practice. This will keep it fresh on your mind, and the players should be able to remember how it went during the game. This could boost their learning big time. During the game, you want the players to make as many decisions for themselves as possible. This creates the ultimate chance for learning.

Watch the other team. See what they are doing, and if it works well for them, tell your substitutes or the team between halves, quarters, innings, etc. You can use this to your advantage.

***REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE THE COACH- THE SUPPORTER. THIS IS THE KIDS' SHOW!!!!!!***



## **Parental/Guardian Behavior**

As a parent/guardian, you are expected to represent the Turner Recreation Commission the same as any employee. You have the responsibility of promoting a fun and positive environment for all children. It is extremely important that you know of what is expected of you. As a parent, you are expected to:

- Cheer in a positive and encouraging way- for both teams!
- Allow the coaches to coach.
- Respect the authority of the coaches and officials/umpires.
- Always Stay off the field/court, unless you are given permission by the official/umpire.
- Do your very best to make youth sports fun for your child.
- Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.
- Place the emotional and physical well-being of your child ahead of a personal desire to win.

## **Substitutions**

You must keep in mind that every child wants to play. Their desire to win does not even come close to their desire to play – if you instruct them properly about what is truly important in the game. If you stress that winning is *the* most important thing in sports, then yes, they may seem a little nervous and reserved about playing. If you stress that if they do their best, they can never truly be a loser, then they will want to play rather than sit the bench every time.

One of the coach's main duties, besides the safety of their players, is to keep track of playing time and who should play when and where. Make sure to prepare a fair substitution schedule that is free of personal bias. Every sport may have specific minimum playing time requirements, *but it is HIGHLY recommended* that each kid plays the same amount of time as everyone else.

## **During Halftime**

- Move away from the field and the opponents in a shady area.
- Make sure everyone drinks plenty of water. Kids usually do not drink enough water anyway.
- Give positive feedback about how the game is going. NEVER criticize individual players!
- Think of two or three points to work on for the rest of the game. Period. This is enough with the game going on.
- Ask everyone if they have any questions.

## **After the Game**

- Applaud both teams. ALWAYS!
- Shake hands with your opponents, no matter if they do not wish to.
- Thank the referee.
- Have healthy refreshments.
- Gather everyone together for a post-game meeting. This should be stressed in your Parents/Guardians' Meeting that you will have a post-game meeting after EVERY game. If someone must rush away after the game and cannot make it, stress to every parent that they must inform you before the game. This could crush morale.
- Do not worry about the scoreboard. Give positive encouragement.
- Recap the game without criticizing and remember the 5:1 ratio – 5 positives to 1 suggestion for improvement.
- Clean up around you.
- Remind everyone of the next practice.

## **Referee Relations**

Always thank the officials/umpires. They have a very tough job to do, usually are underpaid, and are usually there to provide a fun opportunity for the kids. **THEY WILL MAKE WRONG CALLS OR MISTAKES.** Move on and do not linger on them.

Set the example and always show them respect and insist that your son/daughter does the same. As a player/spectator, you are always expected to remain calm when dealing with officials/umpires. There will be some calls you disagree with. Nobody will criticize your teaching philosophy or abilities, so you should not criticize the job of the officials/umpires. The official/umpire is the authority on the field/court, and whatever he or she says will be the rule. Remain calm and simply have fun.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

You are responsible for the care and control of someone else's child this season. You have the responsibility of keeping all risks to a minimum. This includes the prevention of accidents and injuries.

### **Coach Liability and Player Safety**

**Provide adequate supervision** – Never leave practice or a game until every player is with his or her parent/guardian.

**Provide a safe playing environment** – This includes the equipment you use, the field/court you play on, etc. Make sure that you are not putting them in harm's way.

**Player evaluation** – Make sure that they players can physically perform the duties you expect of them.

**Always provide proper first aid** – Have a first aid kit handy with you, no matter if the concession stand or facility has one. This way, you will know without a doubt that you are prepared if something should happen.

Always have your players medical information with you. If you know that one of your players has a peanut allergy, make sure that parents know not to bring peanut butter sandwiches as a refreshment.

**DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE FIRST AID ABOVE YOUR ABILITIES.** You are not a doctor. If something happens and you are not qualified to help, either get the parents/guardians or call an ambulance. Never give a kid medication (Tylenol, Advil, Aleve, etc.).

## **Care and Prevention of Injuries**

### **Care of Injuries**

The care of your child's injury should occur the moment it happens. Do not wait for something to come up or get worse. If your child complains of something hurting, treat it as if it is an injury. Keep these things in mind while dealing with injuries:

- Remain calm.
- Determine how the injury occurred.
- Question your child of the location and severity of the injury.
- If the injury is **DEFINITELY NOT** a life-threatening injury:
- Note the location of the injury.
- Look for swelling or any kind of bump or deformity.
- Compare with the opposite side.
- Do not move the injured body part.

Use the acronym **P.R.I.C.E.S.** for treatment of minor strains, sprains, contusions, etc.

**P** – Protection Protect the area that is affected by bracing up the body part.

**R** – Rest Keep the affected part immobile until seen by a doctor or physician.

**I** – Ice Apply ice to the body part for 20 – 30 minutes at a time, resting an hour between ice.

**C** – Compression Keep the area compressed with elastic wrap or a compression sleeve to keep from moving.

**E** – Elevation Keep the part of the body elevated above the heart. This will help to keep down swelling.

**S** – Support Use a crutch, other player, etc. if you need to move. This will keep all weight off the area.

### **Familiar Terms You Should Know**

**Sprain** – ligaments are bands of tissue that attach bone to bone and stabilize joints. A sprain is an injury to one or more ligaments.

**Strain** – a tearing injury to a muscle or a tendon (tendons attach muscle to bone).

**Contusion** – a blow to a muscle or tendon caused by an outside force, which causes hemorrhaging to surrounding tissue.

**Abrasion** – a loss of surface area of skin. The area should be cleaned and covered with a bandage.

## **Prevention of Injuries**

Injuries usually occur when there is either an outside force placed somewhere on your body or by repeated motion with your body. Here are a list of things that can lead to the prevention of injuries:

- Proper equipment
- Monitoring of playing surface
- Proper fitting shoes
- Water, water, water
- Weather forecast (do not schedule a practice when there is high humidity)
- Full rehabilitation of an injury before he or she can play

## **Heat Injuries You Should Know**

There are several forms of heat injury which are usually caused by exercise participation in extreme heat or lack of fluid intake (dehydration). The three main types of heat injuries are:

- Heat Cramps
- Heat Exhaustion
- Heat Stroke

**Heat Cramps** – Strong involuntary muscular contractions which are usually short lived and release on their own. They can be quite painful and occur most frequently in the calf and hamstrings. Gently stretching the muscle can help to relax a cramp. Rest and drink plenty of water. They can occur at rest or while in motion.

**Heat Exhaustion** (Exercise-Associated Collapse) – Heat exhaustion is now more correctly known as Exercise-Associated Collapse and is a form of heat injury, which is less severe than a heat stroke, but more severe than heat cramps. It usually occurs after the athlete has completed an event.

Exercise-Associated Collapse (heat exhaustion) happens when there is low blood pressure caused by pooling of the blood in the limbs, instead of being returned to the heart.

## **Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion**

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Fainting
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Paleness
- Excessive sweating

If left untreated and in high temperatures, exercise-associated collapse can progress and become heat stroke. This is a far more serious condition.

## **Treatment of Heat Exhaustion**

- Lay the individual on their back with the legs raised.
- Give the individual water.
- If no improvement after 10 minutes, call 9-1-1.

**Heat Stroke** – Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition which requires immediate medical attention. This basically happens when the player does not take in enough fluids and the body fails to cool down properly.

## **Symptoms of Heat Stroke**

- High body temperature
- High pulse rate
- High breathing rate
- Disorientation
- Confusion
- Seizure
- Unconsciousness

**Treatment of Heat Stroke**

- Call 9-1-1 Immediately
- Reduce body temperature as soon as possible.
- Put the individual in an ice bath for no longer than 5 – 10 minutes.
- Give plenty of water.
- Fan them.
- Emergency services will give intravenous fluids.

**Prevention of Heat Injuries**

- Drink plenty of fluids (non-sugary) before, during and after an athletic event. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU FEEL THIRSTY!**
- Wear lightweight, breathable, light colored materials to practice in.
- When practicing in hot weather, **AS SOON** as your child does not feel well, have them find a shaded area, lay down with the legs elevated, remove any additional clothing (catcher's gear, shoulder pads, etc.) and consume water.