



YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PHILOSOPHY

Over the past few years, the YMCA has noticed some alarming trends in youth sports programs: the pressure for more rigorous competition and higher achievement. These trends come from adult-oriented attitudes and the misconception that youth sports programs are scaled-down versions of professional sports. This is not only false, but also dangerous.

The YMCA stresses child-oriented attitudes by keeping winning in perspective, having fun, improving physical fitness, and working with the whole child. The YMCA wants the quality of play to improve in order to meet the needs of all participants whatever their ability and skills.

The YMCA accomplishes this by training adult volunteers in clinics and workshops. **The YMCA believes that the child is first and winning is second.**

The YMCA does not encourage the elimination of competition or winning. Winning is essential to enjoyable competition. However, it is the "striving to win" that yields the joy of sports.

The key for parents and coaches is to keep winning in perspective. It is this key that holds the YMCA Youth Sports program together. Competition will happen in youth sports without any external pressures. **It is important to keep competition at a level appropriate for the athlete.**

The YMCA would not be whole without its commitment to a Christian emphasis. The goal of the Youth Sports program is to help the child grow to his/her fullest potential in mind, body, and spirit: activity helps the body grow; thinking advances the mind; and belief makes our spirit grow.



The Mission of the YMCA is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

Throw-Ins: If the ball leaves the playing field along the sidelines, a throw in will be awarded in all Divisions. Players will be given one chance to perform a throw-in. Incorrect throw-ins will result in a change of possession and throw-in for the opposing team.

Free Kicks: Free kicks will be awarded to the opposing team if a player intentionally pushes, kicks, trips, or hits another player. Free kicks will also be awarded if a player commits a "dangerous" play, or obstructs an opponent. A referee may award a player a free penalty shot on the goal. Free kicks will be defined as direct or indirect by the referee. Direct kicks may be shot directly into the goal, while indirect kicks must touch another player (may or may not be on the same team) before the ball goes into the goal. Corner kicks, goal kicks, and penalty shots are to be treated as direct, while the kick-off should be treated as an indirect kick.

Corner Flags:

During a corner kick, flags may not be removed. Players should position the ball and themselves to kick around the flag.

Offside: The offside rule will be enforced.

A player is offside if he or she is nearer to the opponent's goal line than the ball at the time the ball is played unless:

1. The player is on his or her own half of the field.
2. There are two opponents nearer their goal line.
3. The ball was last touched or played by an opponent.
4. The ball is received directly from a goal kick, corner kick, throw-in, or drop by referee.

Handball: The referee will judge the intent of the player when the ball comes in contact with the arm or hand. A penalty will be called when the player intentionally touches the ball, or accidentally redirects the ball to his team's advantage. Accidental contact with the ball is not necessarily a penalty.

Heading: Players in this division and younger shall not engage in heading, either in practice or in games. ***When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.***

Slide Tackles:

Any slide tackle from the back or side will be penalized as a dangerous play. In addition, any player approaching another with the sole of the shoe higher than the ball will be penalized for a dangerous play.

Coaches on the Field:

No coaches will be allowed on the field during game-play. Coaches are restricted to their sideline and should not come within 3 yards of the midfield line. No coaches and or parents may be behind the goal or seated directly on the goal line. **Only one coach and one assistant coach** will be permitted to be on the sideline with their team. Parents should be seated on the sideline opposite the team.

Protecting the Goalkeeper:

The referee will make every effort to protect the goalie in dangerous situations. No body contact is allowed with the goalie in the goal box. Players may not attempt to kick the ball when the goalie's hands are touching the ball in any manner. This rule will be strictly enforced. The goalkeeper should not play more than one half of the game unless no alternative can be found and the child wishes to continue in goal.

Safety: All players are required to wear shin guards and socks at all times. Those without the appropriate gear will not be permitted to play.

Playing time:

Every player in attendance **MUST BE ALLOWED TO PLAY** at least one half of each game and **MUST BE ALLOWED TO START** at least half of the games throughout the season. Coaches should make every effort to play each child equally.

Delays/Forfeits:

If one team does not have the designated number of players at the beginning of the game, a 10 minute grace period will be allowed. If after the 10 minute grace period has elapsed a team still does not have the designated number of players present, the game will be forfeited. The game will then be played with both teams playing with an **equal** number of players for the remainder of the allotted time.

****When the referee is ready to begin to play, you should start at that time. The referee may ask the coach to find a volunteer parent to help watch the sidelines during play.**

Scoring: Teams will receive 3 pts for a win, 2 pts for a draw and 1 pt for a loss. An extra point will also be given for a team that keeps a clean sheet.

G/D: Goal difference will count up to 3 goals per game. Additional goals will be recorded and used only if there is a tie between two teams.



SEVERE WEATHER:

- The YMCA will decide by 8:00am, the day of the game, if any cancellations are necessary.
- If severe weather occurs during play, a decision will be made by the onsite referee in regards to game cancellations.
- A full season consists of at least seven games. If additional cancellations occur, games will be rescheduled. If at least half a game has been played, that game will not be rescheduled.
- Any delays/cancellations will be posted on Playerspace, as well as the YMCA youth sports webpages.

YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE:

At the start of each game, all players, coaches, and referees will meet at the center circle to recite the Youth Sports Pledge and address any rule clarifications.

YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE

**I PLEDGE TO PLAY THE GAME,
THE BEST THAT I CAN,
TO BE A TEAM PLAYER,
TO RESPECT MY OPPONENTS,
THE RULES AND OFFICIALS,
AND IMPROVE MYSELF IN MIND,
BODY, AND SPIRIT.**

Please remember that by volunteering to be a coach, you have chosen to be a role model for all participating children, and that you represent yourself and the YMCA at all games and practices throughout the year.