

Town of Zebulon
Parks & Recreation
Youth Athletics Coaches
& Parents Manual



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Mission: To connect all people and the community through quality parks, facilities, and programs.

Vision: To create recreational and cultural opportunities that enhance quality of life and connect our residents through positive impacts on health and wellness, social interaction, economic growth, and environmental stewardship.

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I. Introduction

The goal of this manual is to help provide a safe and enjoyable program that enhances skills, improves physical fitness and teaches positive values through sports.

Volunteer coaches are critical to the success of the program. Without your unselfish dedication, children would not be able to participate. We hope this manual will give you some basic guides concerning coaching and help you become a better coach. In addition to this manual, it is highly encouraged that all coaches take advantage of other clinics and training opportunities offered by the Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department. While clinics and training opportunities will vary from sport to sport, all coaches will have the opportunity to become a certified youth sports coach through the National Alliance for Youth Sports and National Youth Sports Coaches Association. Training through the NAYS covers both a general coaching guidelines, as well as sport specific tips and practice plans. Certification through the NAYS will be provided at no cost to all coaches and certifications last up to a year.

II. Current Athletic Programs

- o Youth Soccer – COED, 4-11 year olds
- o Youth Softball – Girls, 7-15 year olds
- o Youth Baseball – Boys, 7-15 year olds
- o Youth Basketball – COED, Boys & Girls, 5-17 years old
- o Youth T-Ball – COED, 4-6 year olds

III. Schedules

Specific scheduling details will vary from sport to sport, however there are a few general guidelines that apply to all sports.

- All practice and game schedules will be available online at www.QuickScores.com/Zebulon. All schedules should be posted no more than one week before the projected start date. In some cases, practices schedules will be posted before game schedules. In these situations, game schedules will be posted at least one week before the first game.
- Certain leagues require travel for away games. Directions to these facilities, as well as local facilities, will be available on quickscores.com/zebulon.
- Game/practice cancellations due to inclement weather will be posted on quickscores.com/zebulon under the “Rain Out Information” link around 3PM on weekdays and 8am on Saturdays. In some situations cancellations or postponement may take place at game/practice site.
- Practice/games will be rescheduled will possible. It is not a guarantee however that all cancellations will be rescheduled. Rescheduled games/practices may be assigned to any day, facility and/or time.
- In most cases, school closings will necessitate cancellations.

IV.. Uniforms

For each sport, players will be provided with at least a uniform shirt. Some sports may also offer shorts or sock, but it will vary from sport to sport and season to season. Baseball caps will be provided for all t-ball, coach pitch and baseball leagues.

V. Equipment

Each sport will require different equipment. Below is a list of equipment you will be provided for each sport you may be coaching. All equipment must be returned within a week of the final game.

- Soccer
 - Each coach will have access to a bag of balls for each practice and game.
 - Cones will be available for use during practices.
- Basketball
 - Balls will be available at all gyms and facilities for games and practices. It is asked that no players or coaches bring their own balls with them for games or practices.
 - Pennies for scrimmages will be available at all gyms and facilities for use during practices.
- Baseball/Softball
 - All teams will be provided with an equipment bag with a set of catchers equipment, two bats and a bucket of balls.
 - All players must provide their own glove, cleats and batting helmets.
 - It is highly encouraged that all softball players have a fielding mask. Players will provide these on their own.
- Basic first aid kits and instant ice packs will be available at all fields, gyms and facilities. It is encouraged that all coaches carry their own first aid kits as well.

VI. Rosters

All players must be registered through the Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department and on the official roster. Coaches are not allowed to add players or trade players among themselves. Any roster changes will be made through the Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department.

- Coaches will receive their roster through email within a few days of the draft or coaches meeting. Each roster will have player's name, parent's name, phone number(s), parent's email address and uniform shirt size. If a phone number or email address does not work, please contact the Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department.
- Coaches are to call all players within 2 days of receiving their roster. During that phone call coaches should provide each team member with the following:
- Coaches name, phone number and email address
- Date time and location of first practice (providing parents with a description of what you, the coach, will be wearing the first day of practice is also helpful to help players and parents identify you).
- Verify each player uniform shirt size

VII. Coaches Responsibilities

- All coaches are subject to the Town of Zebulon's Volunteer Policies and Procedures. As such, background checks are required for all volunteers looking to coach each season.

- Conduct a Parent Meeting – meet with the parents at the first practice. Go over the teams goals, policies, schedule, communication plan, etc.
- Take advantage of any training opportunities made available by the Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department.
- Arrive on time and ensure your team is on time and ready to play.
- Turn in rosters to scorers table 10 MINS prior to game time.
- Become familiar with the sport you are coaching.
- **KNOW THE RULES AND ABIDE BY THEM.**
- **FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES FOR YOUR SPORT CONCERNING PLAYER PARTICIPATION IN GAMES. REMEMBER EVERYONE SHOULD PLAY, THAT’S WHAT WE’RE HERE FOR!**
- Communicate important information with all parents and players throughout the season. This could include game cancelations, schedule changes, rule changes, etc.

Coaches should also remember the following when working with the participants on their teams:

- Realize that as a coach you wear many hats and have many responsibilities. You are first and foremost a **ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR PLAYERS**. They will follow your lead concerning appropriate behavior on and off the field.
- **HAVE FUN**. Lack of fun is the leading reason for dropping sports participation.
- Use positive coaching techniques.
- Be responsible about each of your player’s time, energy, ability, performance and enthusiasm.
- Treat other teams, coaches, spectators and **OFFICIALS** as you would like to be treated. Avoid running up the score or having excessive celebration.

Helpful tips for successful coaching:

- Learn all of your player’s names. Also show interest in their life outside of sports.
- Ask parents to be involved with practices.
- Reiterate schedules and quickscores.com/zebulon throughout the season. Know your schedule and make sure your players and parents know it as well.
- Encourage parents to be prompt when arriving for games and practices.
- Recruit a team mom or dad.
- Have fun at practices. Look for ideas to keep all player involved.
- End each practice and game with a team cheer.

II. Working with Parents

Coaches should develop a good working relationship with parents. Effective communication is often the key. Helpful tips for dealing with parents include:

- Always listen to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement.
- Express appreciation for their interest and concerns. This will make them more open and at ease with you.
- Make copies of rules, schedules and other important information and hand them out at first practice parent meeting.

- Be fair and treat all players equally. Be consistent. if a change to a rule or philosophy arises during the season, make sure you inform all the parents immediately.
- Handle confrontation one-on-one and not in a crowded situation. Try not to be defensive or argue with a parent. Listen to their viewpoint and thank them.
- Discussion of individual players with other parents is not allowed.
- Do not blame players for their parents' actions.
- Encourage parents to cheer and support all teams in a positive way.

HINT: Focus on the kids! This is their team, not their parent's team.

IX. Team Pictures

Every season team pictures are taken. These pictures are optional to purchase and are not included in the price of the program. You will be made aware of the date, time and location of your team pictures once that information becomes available. Pictures will usually be mid season. Please ensure all players are present for the team pictures. Even if they are not going to purchase any of their own, it is important they are in the "team picture."

X. Trophies/Awards

Individual participation trophies will not be provided by the Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department. In leagues for 8 year olds and younger, Zebulon Parks and Recreation participation certificates will be provided. If teams would like to purchase their own trophies at the end of the season they are encouraged to do so. Please check with each parent about mid season and make sure they are all on board with ordering trophies. Once all parents are on board with paying for trophies, they can be ordered by the coach, team parent or other team representative from any trophy shop. For leagues that have a post season tournament, the tournament champions and runner ups will be awarded with medals.

XI. Participation

Each league and age group has different rules on player participation. All players should play as much as possible. Equal playing time for all participants is strongly recommended. All leagues are recreational and based on fun. It is not fun when one or two players are playing the whole game. It is your job as a coach to know the participation rules and abide by them. Participation rules will be strictly enforced and coaches that do not abide by these rules will be reprimanded. Violation of participation rules can result in forfeit of game(s) and/or loss of coaching privileges.

REMEMBER EVERYONE SHOULD PLAY, THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR!

XII. First Aid

- There will be a Facility Supervisor at all games and practices that is certified in First Aid and CPR.
- All facilities will have a basic first aid kit and ice packs.
- A 'hands off' policy when you are with participants is highly suggested unless the child is in danger to themselves or others.
- All accidents involving program participants should be recorded on an Accident Report form and the on-site Facility Supervisor should be made aware of the accident.
- In cases of minor cuts, bumps etc., ice or band aids may be given out.
- In cases of more extreme injuries, 911 should be called.

- If a participant falls on their head or back **DO NOT MOVE THEM**. Find parents and call for help if needed.
- If a participant has a possible broken or dislocated bone, **DO NOT MOVE THEM**. Find the parents can call for help if needed.
- **NEVER** move a participant that is unconscious, call for help and try and help them regain consciousness. Stay with the participant and find out what happened and the location of any pain.
- When I doubt. **CALL 911**.
- Parents should be notified of all injuries, no matter how minor.

XIII. Complaints on Coaches

- If the department receives a complaint concerning any coach in the program from a parent or guardian of a player on his/her team regarding his/her disregard for the objectives of the program, the coach will be notified by email or phone, detailing the specifics of the allegation(s).
- The coach involved must then contact the Athletic Manager to respond to the accusations.
- The department will, to the best of its ability, attempt to determine the validity of the allegation(s) by randomly contacting other parents of the teams' participants.
- If the complaint is determined to be unfounded and/or not noted as severe enough for that coach to be removed at that present time, the coach may continue to participate in the season.
- If another complaint comes in, the coach must then meet in the office with the athletic manager and will continue to be under close watch unless removed at that point.
- If it is determined that the coach is in violation of the objectives of the program his/her involvement with the youth sports program may be terminated and that individual may be suspended according to the Town of Zebulon's adopted Suspension Policy.

XIV. ZPRD Staff

Zebulon Parks and Recreation part time staff will be present at all parks and recreation scheduled practices and games.

Practices:

For all practices staff will be present to allow access to the field/facility. In addition staff will:

- Unlock facilities
- Help guide participants to correct practice area
- Enforce practice times and schedules
- Provide equipment when applicable
- Have access to first aid kit and ice packs
- Assist in making decisions about inclement weather
- Lock facilities after practices are complete
- Games:

For all scheduled Zebulon Parks and Recreation games staff will:

- Keep official score and run scoreboard when applicable
- Unlock facilities
- Help guide participants to correct game area

- Enforce game times and schedules
- Provide equipment when applicable
- Have access to first aid kit and ice packs
- Assist in making decisions about inclement weather
- Lock facilities after games are complete

The Zebulon Parks and Recreation staff is there to assist you with issues, questions or concerns. Please use them when needed.

XV. Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, a decision will be made by 3pm on weekdays and 8 am on weekends on the day of the scheduled event when possible to determine if that event will be canceled or not. To find out the status of a facility or gym, please visit www.QuickScores.com/Zebulon. If no updated information is posted then practices and games are still on as scheduled. In circumstances where inclement weather occurs after 3pm on weekdays or 8am on weekends, decisions will be made case by case.

- Prior to the start of the game, the field supervisor or Recreation Department staff on duty will have sole authority to postpone or play the game. After the game begins, the officiating crew chief will have the sole authority to postpone or play the game.
- If possible, staff should keep check of the radar and any weather alerts on a mobile device.
- Please be as cautious as possible. It is better to stop a game or event and have everyone safely in their cars, than keep them on the field too long.

Lightning Policy

- Any staff member, parent, coach or spectator seeing lightning should report it to the Facility Supervisor or game official immediately.
- After lightning has been spotted, all activity must stop and ALL patrons must move to their cars. **NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO STAY AT THE FIELD, AROUND THE BLEACHERS, OR BY THE CONCESSIONS STAND.**
- There will be a 30 MINUTE waiting period before activity can resume after the last spotted lightning or heard clap of thunder.

XVI. Practice Tips

While all practice plans can vary, below are some tips that you can and should incorporate into each of your practices. The better planned you are for each practice, the better each practice will be.

- Plan each practice ahead of time.
- Tell players to arrive early. Most Parks and Recreation practices are limited on time, if all players arrive a bit early it will help you utilize the allotted practice time more effectively.
- Make sure each player brings water and the appropriate equipment.
- A successful practice will have the following components:
 - Warm Up – Stretching, running, light activity to get the body prepared for the practice
 - Review – What did we cover in the last practice? What do we need to work on and what did we do well? What are we going to cover in this practice?

- c. Individual – Starting the practice with some individual drills will keep each participant involved and teach each player individual skills. These drills can be done as a group, small groups or even strictly one on one.
 - d. Small Group
 - e. Large Group/Full team
 - f. Cool Down – This again could be similar to the warm up period, as well as the review portion of the practice.
 - g. Review/Home Work - What did we learn at this practice? What should we work on at home before our next practice or game?
- e. Ask for help! You will notice that one person would have a difficult time running a practice listed above. Ask for other parents help.
 - f. Get all players involved. Practices need to be fun and keep all players busy. The more that players are standing around the less they are learning. Develop practice plans that will keep each player engaged as much as possible.
 - g. Show up on time! When the coach is late to a practice it often leads to the rest of the team waiting around. As mentioned above, practice time is limited and every minute is important.

XVII. Violent Related Emergencies

All locations will have a specific emergency action plan for violent related emergencies. The keys to remember for all locations is to provide for the safety of the youth participants first and foremost. Staff and coaches should try to remove all participants from immediate danger as soon as the threat has been realized. Coaches and staff should be aware of the principal of run, hide and fight when pertaining to emergencies.

XIII. Coaches Code of Conduct

Zebulon Parks and Recreation

Coaches' Code of Conduct

1. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.

Expected Behavior:

- Using appropriate language in appropriate tones when interacting with players, league officials, game officials, parents and spectators.
- Include all players in team activities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, body type, national origin, ancestry, disability, ability, or any other legally protected classification.
- Treat all players, league officials, game officials, parents and spectators with dignity and respect.
- Play all players according to the equal participation rules established by the league and the spirit of those rules.
- Encourage youth to participate in other sports and activities to promote all aspects of their development.
- Allow reasonable absences from practice.

2. I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.

Expected Behavior:

- Recognize the differences of each child and treating each player as an individual while demonstrating concern for their individual needs and well being.
- Encourage all players, regardless of skill level, to be included as a member of the team and to remain involved in sports.
- Recognize that some physical tasks, drills and demands are not appropriate for all youth.
- Recognize that youth may vary greatly in physical, social and emotional maturation and considering these factors when setting up competitions and when interacting with youth.

3. I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Maintain a high level of awareness of potentially unsafe conditions.
- Protect players from sexual molestation, assault and physical or emotional abuse.
- Correct and avoid unsafe practice or playing conditions.
- Using appropriate safety equipment necessary to protect all players.
- See that the players are provided with adequate adult supervision while under the coach's care.

4. I will promise to review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Keeping basic first aid supplies available in all practice and game situations.
- Recognize and administer proper first aid to an injured player.
- Demonstrate concern for an injured player, notifying parents and cooperating with medical authorities.
- Protect the players' well being by removing them from activity when injured and not returning them to activity if they are compromised by injury.

5. I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Establish practice plans that are interesting, varied and productive. Practices need to be aimed at improving all players' skills and individual abilities
- Devote appropriate time to the individual improvement of each player.
- Conduct practices of reasonable length and intensity appropriate for the age and conditioning of the players.

6. I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Adopt the position, teaching and demonstrating that it is our basic moral code to treat others, as we would like to be treated.
- Abide by and supporting the rules of the game as well as the spirit of the rules.
- Provide an environment conducive to fair and equitable competition.

- Using the influential position of youth coach as an opportunity to promote, teach and expect sportsmanship and fair play.

7. I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all Town of Zebulon youth sports events.

Expected Behavior:

- Be alcohol and drug free at all team activities or in the presence of players.
- Refrain from the use of any type of tobacco products at all team activities or in the presence of your players.
- Refrain from providing any type of alcohol, drug or tobacco products to any of your players.
- Encourage parents to refrain from the public use of tobacco products or alcohol at team activities.

8. I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Become knowledgeable, understanding and supportive of all applicable game rules, league rules, regulations and policies.
- Teaching and require compliance of these rules among players.

9. I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.

Expected behavior:

- Teaching techniques that reduce the risk of injury to both the coach's own players and their opponents.
- Discouraging illegal contact or intentional dangerous play and administering swift and equitable discipline to players involved in such activity.

10. I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.

Expected Behavior:

- Maintain a positive, helpful and supportive attitude.
- Exercise your authority/influence to control the behavior of the fans and spectators.
- Exhibit gracious acceptance of defeat or victory.
- Accept and adhere to all league rules and policies related to the participation of adults and youth.
- Fulfill the expected role of a youth coach to adopt a "children first" philosophy.
- Allow and encourage the players to listen, learn and play hard within the rules.
- Place the emphasis on fun and participation.

XIX. Parents and Spectators Code of Conduct

Town of Zebulon Parks and Recreation

Parents and Spectators Code of Conduct

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parents Code of Ethics Pledge.

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth– not adults.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
- I promise to help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectable fan, assisting with the coaching or providing transportation.
- I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sport coach and that the coach upholds the Coaches Code of Conduct.
- I will require that any spectators that join me at the game abide by the same code of ethics.

****ANY ETHICS CODE THAT IS BROKEN WILL BE CAUSE FOR ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE RECREATION STAFF****