



JR. LOPER FLAG FOOTBALL



Coaching Manual

WELCOME

The Kearney Family YMCA welcomes you and thanks you for becoming a youth sport coach. This will be one of the most rewarding and fun experiences you will be involved with. As a youth sport coach, you have the opportunity to make a positive impact on a child's life...an impact that will last a lifetime.

Your team will probably consist of some fairly skilled players and some that are not so skilled. Your practices may not always go as planned, RELAX, HAVE FUN, and remember that the YMCA program is designed to provide a positive experience for both boys and girls through sports. Winning is not the most important aspect, having fun is the most important thing we want to teach our young players. We want them to leave your practice or game feeling good about themselves and looking forward to the next one!

YMCA Jr. Loper Sports Programs Goals:

- Build self-esteem
- Teach social skills-values, communication, team-work
- Teach physical skills- fitness and health
- Develop responsibility and decision making skills
- Enhance leadership skills-in youth and adults
- Build relationships among peers and between coach and child
- Support and strengthen family life
- AND to create a FUN experience for coaches, children and their families

Four Character Development Values are important:

- **RESPECT**-treat others as you would like them to treat you
- **HONESTY**-tell the truth and play by the rules
- **CARING**-putting others before yourself
- **RESPONSIBILITY**- do what you should do

*The Kearney Family YMCA incorporates Character Development Values in every program and sport.

Unique Characteristics of our Programs:

- Cooperation focused, not competition focused
- Age appropriate, modified games
- Family Involvement
- Leadership Development

YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE

At the start of each game, the coaches and players will recite the following sports pledge:

Win or lose, I pledge before God, to do my best, to be a team player, to respect my teammates, opponents and officials, and to improve myself in spirit, mind, and body.

PHILOSOPHIES

Everyone Plays

We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from YMCA Youth Sports. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays at least half of every game.

Safety First

Although kids may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. Coaches make sure the equipment and facilities are safe, and they teach the sport as we've prescribed so that the skills taught are appropriate for athletes' developmental levels. And coaches constantly supervise their players and stop any unsafe activities.

Fair Play

Fair play is about playing by the rules—and more. It's about coaches and players showing respect for all those involved in YMCA Youth Sports. It's about coaches being role models of good sporting behavior and guiding their players to do the same.

Positive Competition

We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. The right perspective is when adults make decisions that put the best interests of the players before winning the contest. Learning to compete is important for youngsters, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. Through YMCA Youth Sports we want to help kids learn these lessons.

Family Involvement

YMCA Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately in their child's sports programs. In addition to parents being helpful as volunteer coaches, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation.

Sport for All

YMCA Youth Sports is an "inclusive" sports program. We offer programs to all youngsters regardless of their race, gender, religious creed, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the kids and their parents to do the same.

Sport for Fun.

Sports are naturally fun for most kids. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sporting activities they over-organize and dominate the activities to the point that it destroys kids' enjoyment. If we take the fun out of sports for young athletes, we are in danger of young athletes taking themselves out of sports.

TEACHING PRINCIPLES

Positive attitude

Have a positive attitude and smile – you are the role model! Set a good example – encourage and compliment.

Sportsmanship

Stress team work and good sportsmanship above all else!

Safety

Emphasize injury prevention and safe behavior in practices. Teach appropriate skills for your age group. Be aware of potential hazards. Encourage water breaks and proper warm-up.

Caring

Create a supportive and caring environment for all players. Highlight the importance of taking care of each other as teammates.

Responsibility

Teach and model responsible behavior. Have players help in collecting equipment and cleaning up after practices. Encourage players to show up on time, attend all practices, and be an active participant.

Respect

Create a safe and welcoming environment for your players wherein all participants are treated with respect. Ensure players are respectful of each other, staff, refs, coaches, and parents.

Honesty

Model, encourage, and reward honest behavior.

Warm up

Always take time to warm up – there are lots of ways to make it fun, just use your imagination.

Skill Levels

Get to know your players different skill levels. Stress the importance of developing skills over winning.

Skill Instruction

Always demonstrate the drill or skill technique. Have participants help you with demonstrating whenever possible. Ask the kids if they understand the drill before continuing and make sure that each player is ready to begin. Demonstrate skills with both the right and the left hand. Use lots of repetition in explaining and demonstrating. Have kids sit down while explaining drills if needed. Match players of similar size and have each kid try every position. Implement the "IDEA" model for teaching each skill:

I – Introduce the drill

D – Demonstrate

E – Explain

A – Attend to each kid

Planning

Over plan your activities for the day. It is better to run out of time than things to do. Save a few minutes after practice to reflect with the kids on the learning for the day and talk about what to expect in the coming week.

Fun

Have a great time coaching! Remember that the most important thing is for everyone to have fun – so take the pressure off. Often the most rewarding practices are the ones where fun is given priority over skill development. Your kids will learn better in a fun environment and will be more likely to continue with the sport in the long-term.

COACH EXPECTATIONS

A. Specifics about your sport

- **As soon as you get your roster**, call your team to inform them about practice time, location and make sure parents know how to contact you: phone, email, etc.
- Introduce yourself to parents when the drop off their child for practice, or game. They can put a name with a face, improves interaction with parents and coaches.
- If you are unable to attend a practice or game, please find a replacement coach for that day. Ask parents about their experience with the sport and if they will be around to help coach during practices and games if needed.
- Read your rules carefully-especially those designed for your grade or age level.
- Safety First-set up strict rules about safety when organizing practice.
- Support other coaches/officials- they may be first time coaches or officials. Please keep in mind RESPECT and CARING values.
- Coaches are responsible for their own behavior, be a positive role model. Put the game in perspective (FUN).
- Incorporate Character Development discussion/activities
- YMCA philosophy is to give players equal playing time and a chance to play many positions. Give your players a well-rounded experience.

B. Parents:

- Introduce yourself and other coaches if applicable
- Discuss pertinent rules for your level of play
- Describe your coaching philosophy- how you will work with kids, your approach to games and practices, and issues like discipline and commitment
- Stress good sportsmanship for all people involved.

C. Practice Plans

1. Follow these principals for an effective practice:

- Plenty of activity
- Maximum use of time, facilities, and equipment
- Variety of activities/drills
- Progress from simple to complex
- Safe, successful, non-threatening environment.

2. When giving explanations, they should be

- Short
- Clear and concise
- Given with enthusiasm
- Directing attention to important cues

3. Good Demonstrations should be:

- Repeated several times
- Done from several angles
- Clearly seen by all players
- Technically correct (if possible)
- Focused on 1-2 key points
- Determine action: build on strengths, correct errors, or do nothing
- Invite questions and check for understanding

4. Feedback during practices & games

- Recognize what players are doing correctly
- Always be positive and genuine in your comments
- Try to state a compliment followed by a correction and then another compliment
- Always encourage your players to try their best and let them know how proud you are of them.
- Watch your players for signs of confusion and frustration
- Make sure you spread your attention around to all your players

YMCA Youth Sports Coach Training

To help you with your season, we've provided concise e-learning lessons that contain education on the philosophy of YMCA Youth Sports, basic coaching techniques that include practice plans, skills, drills, rules and tactics of the sport, and valuable volunteer resources.

As a volunteer at the YMCA, you help shape and support your community and we thank you for your commitment. We value your involvement in the Youth Sports Program and your impact in influencing positive growth and development for young people. I hope you will find these courses educational and helpful for you to be the best Coach that you can be.

The Games Approach

In traditional techniques for teaching sports too much emphasis is put on the individual skills and not enough on how to play skillfully. In the games approach, by contrast, you learn what to do first and then how to do it.

Play the game – Learn the tactics – Learn the skills

The games approach lets players discover what to do without you telling them. What you do as an effective coach is help them discover what they have experienced. It empowers players to solve problems that arise in the game. It also allows more kids to play right away and makes practice more fun!

See the YMCA volunteer/coaches website <http://training.ymca.net> for more information on the games approach and much more information.

Coaching YMCA Youth Sports

Coaching YMCA Flag Football

Head Up-Concussion in Youth Sports-*Required for all coaches*

SPORTSMANSHIP – Winning and Losing

Coping with winning and losing is, of course, an essential part of playing sports. Ideally kids first learn about how to deal with victories and defeats from their parents even before the youngster's lace up their first pair of sneakers. But as the coach, it is up to you to reinforce the appropriate behavior for winning and losing.

When They Win...

Every player will tell you that it is more fun to win than it is to lose. But as the coach you should strongly remind your team that "winning with class" is how you expect them to play. As such, if you spot one of your players taunting or humiliating an opponent when your team is way ahead in the game, simply call "time out" and have the player sit the bench next to you. Explain to him or her that such behavior will not be tolerated by you and unless they can learn to control themselves, they will not be allowed back into the game. Don't worry. The ultimate fun is in playing and the child will quickly modify their ways to get back into the action. If they do happen to repeat the offensive actions again, put them back on the bench until the lesson is learned. Make sure the parents are aware of why the child was on the bench and spend time in your next practice talking about appropriate behaviors with your team.

When They Lose...

Many times, especially for younger kids, a loss will be accompanied by tears of disappointment. As the coach, understand that losing is for many players a new and painful experience. Console them, praise them for their efforts, but never embarrass them. Tears are a normal reaction for young players who have just felt the sting of a defeat. Your job is to reassure them that today "Just wasn't our day," and that "We played well, but the other team played a little better." Those are the kind of thoughts you want your team to hear.

Kids are resilient and for most players the bitterness of a loss and the tears that go with it often disappear quickly. Within minutes they will bounce back and be asking about what their next activity for the day will be. The best guideline to follow is to always remember that good sportsmanship starts with you! Players quickly watch, monitor and copy their coach's behavior. How you handle and react to a loss or victory will affect how your team does the same.

COACHES TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

Discipline

It does not make sense to have a long list of rules. The best coaches make a few rules stand out. Make sure all the kids on the team understand not only the rule, but why it is important and the consequences for breaking it. Make sure that all discipline is positive and not degrading.

The Ball Hog

Especially in younger teams there is occasionally the one player who likes to control the ball and take all the shots. If you sense this happening, have a chat with the player. Compliment their skills and encourage them to include all the players on the team. Give them a challenge like having everyone on the team touch the ball before a shot is taken. This approach recognizes the player's talent but it also suggests the fact that the team should come first.

Pre-Game Jitters

Young players can become nervous and anxious before a big game. Be careful to not become the source of the pre-game anxiety. Before the game, wear a smile and look relaxed, even if you are nervous! Players will be more prepared if they are relaxed and ready to have fun. Bring them together and have a quick meeting to remind them to have fun, relax and concentrate on what they have learned at practice.

Pushy Parents

What do you do when you have a parent who always wants to give you a piece of his or her mind? Give them 10 uninterrupted minutes to speak. Then look them in the eye, thank them for their feedback and respond to their suggestions and comments. If you have a parent with a bunch of ideas, or someone who thinks they can do it better than you, ask them to be an assistant coach. The invitation may get them to back off, or even better, you may have a new assistant and they will have to do everything they were asking you to do

CURRICULUM

In striving to provide life skills as well as Flag Football skills for our participants, the YMCA Jr. Loper Flag Football program focuses on the athlete first and winning second. This recreational program emphasizes basic skills, sportsmanship, life-skills and most of all – FUN! Rules and equipment are modified for age appropriateness to ensure a successful season. Below is a list of goals and skill sets we hope all players will acquire by the end of the season.

- Understanding to work as a team
- Good sportsmanship
- Communication with teammates
- YMCA Core Values- Honesty, Responsibility, Caring, Respect
- Respecting the role of the official/coach/players

Main fundamentals to teach on Offense include:

- The overall concept of moving the ball, getting first downs and scoring touchdowns
- Lining up correctly in the formation called
- Knowing their individual assignment
- How to carry the ball securely and run up-field, avoiding defenders
- How to run specific routes at the specific depths and catch the ball
- How to throw the ball correctly
- The concept of blocking and how to shadow block (no contact)
- How to handoff/pitch the ball correctly
- Understanding of the out- of-bounds line

Main fundamentals to teach on Defense include:

- The concept of stopping the opponent's offense to get the ball back
- The rules and regulations while on defense
- How to pull flags to stop the opponent's progress
- Understanding the difference between a man or zone defense
- Each player should know what defensive position they are and where to line up

***The number one reason kids drop out of programs is because they do not feel connected to the team. It is your job to create team unity and encourage new friendships from the start. Make sure the kids who know each other are separated and mixed with kids they do not know.*

The key to a good practice is **organization**. Know what you want to do and don't worry if you don't get through it all or have to deviate from the plan. If a drill is not going as you planned, ditch it and move on. Don't waste your time during your short practice.

How do I know when to CHANGE IT?

The first step is to play the game and observe player involvement and responses. When observing the game being played, and player involvement and responses, ask yourself the following questions:

- » Is the game safe?
- » Are all players having fun?
- » Are all players engaged in the game?
- » Is the game working?
- » Do all players understand the game?
- » Is the objective of the game being achieved?
- » Are all the players being included?
- » Is participation being maximized?
- » Is the game appropriate to the ability level of each player?
- » Are all players being challenged?

If the answer to any of the above questions is No, then CHANGE IT.

YMCA COACHING CONTRACT

I understand that my responsibilities as a youth coach are of great importance and that my actions have the potential to significantly influence the young athletes I coach. Therefore, I promise to conduct myself in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Coaches as given next:

- I will demonstrate the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility at all times during practice and games.
- I will ensure that activities serve as a foundation for life learning and are structured to help the athletes achieve their potential in spirit, mind and body.
- I will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy and maturity.
- I will treat each athlete, opposing coach, official, parent and administrator with respect and dignity.
- I will do my best to learn the fundamental skills, teaching and evaluation techniques, and strategies of my sport.
- I will become thoroughly familiar with the rules of my sport.
- I will become familiar with the objectives of the youth sport program with which I am affiliated. I will strive to achieve these objectives and communicate them to my athletes and their parents.
- I will uphold the authority of the officials who are assigned to the contests in which I coach, and I will assist them in every way to conduct fair and impartial competitive contests.
- I will learn the strengths and weaknesses of my athletes so that I might place them in situations where they have a maximum opportunity to achieve success.
- I will conduct my practices and contests so that all athletes have an opportunity to improve their skill level through active participation.
- I will communicate to my athletes and their parents the rights and responsibilities of individuals on our team.
- I will cooperate with the administrator of our organization in the enforcement of rules and regulations, and I will report any irregularities that violate sound competitive practices.
- I will protect the health and safety of my athletes by insisting that all of the activities under my control are conducted for their psychological and physiological welfare, rather than for the vicarious interests of adults.
- I will not use drugs, alcohol or tobacco while in contact with players or on any property that the YMCA is using. Any coach who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs during practices or games will be suspended from coaching.
- I will play each child equally as mandated by the YMCA, and I will rotate my players equally and fairly.

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for the children participating in youth sports by following this YMCA Coaching Contract.

Printed Name

Coach's Signature

Date