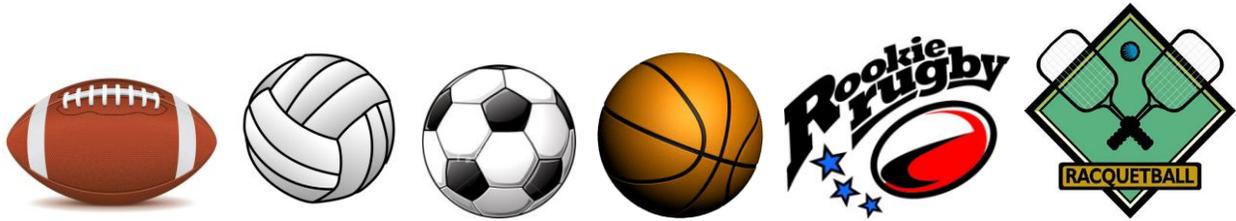




FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# Kearney Family YMCA

## Youth Sports Parent Handbook



**CARING**

**HONESTY**

**RESPECT**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

## **KEARNEY FAMILY YMCA PARENT/COACH INFORMATION LETTER**

Thank you for enrolling your child in the Kearney Family YMCA youth sports program. We are looking forward to a fun and educational season. To help you fully understand our program policies, procedures, and philosophy, the following has been prepared for you.

### **PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE**

The YMCA is a unique organization in which life long skills are emphasized through our youth programs. Our youth sports program encourages sportsmanship, teamwork, values, and respect, as well as teaching the fundamental skills of the sport. We focus on healthy competition, participation and fun. To help insure our philosophy, certain rules are followed:

- No tryouts or cuts
- Equal playing time is guaranteed
- Emphasis is on the participation, not winning
- The child comes first
- No league standings are kept and each child is rewarded equally

The goals of our youth sports programs are to: have fun and enjoy playing, build self-esteem, teach social skills, physical skills, fitness and health. Additionally, our youth sports programs help to develop responsibility, decision making, and leadership skills, build relationships, support family life, and create a fun and rewarding experience for the children and their families.

### **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

We at the YMCA are committed to quality programs that enhance the spirit, mind, and body. Through the delivery of these programs, we strive to incorporate and enhance the character values of **CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT** and **RESPONSIBILITY**. We believe that good character makes a better family member, program leader, community member and person.

Coaches are strongly encouraged to work with the children in developing these four character values by providing an environment in which these values are fostered. Parents and coaches are all role models and their behavior should be conducive with these values. EVERYONE involved with the team at every practice and every game should demonstrate caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Y Staff and Officials have the authority to ask any spectator or coach who does not display conduct consistent with the YMCA philosophy to leave the game area. Inappropriate conduct includes, but is not limited to, rude remarks to officials, staff, or other participants.

### **YOUTH FIRST, SPORTS SECOND**

These words are the essence of the YMCA sports program. The emphasis is on the individual and personal concern for each child, rather than merely teaching the sport. In attempting to meet the individual needs for the youth, the rules of a particular sport are molded and sometimes modified from the actual rules of the sport.

### **THE CHILD AND THE SPORT**

1. We are building attitudes, character, and leadership through the use of sports.
2. The child is the most important part of the program, not the sport, or the teaching of the sport.
3. We are not using the sport for recreation sake only. The YMCA uses the sports' program as a tool, under the guidance of mature leaders, to help a child become a better person who:
  - A. Respects others for whom and what they are.
  - B. Gets along with others.
  - C. Has a sense of self-worth and self-confidence.
  - D. Has these attitudes embodied within them, which makes their lives and the lives of others, more worthwhile.

### **TEAM ASSIGNMENTS**

Your child will be placed on a team immediately after the registration deadline. The coaches will receive their rosters the week following the deadline and will contact you the week before practice begins. Please do not call the YMCA unless you have not heard from a coach. Special requests will be matched when possible, on first come, first served basis. Please register early, but remember, **NO SPECIAL REQUEST IS EVER GUARANTEED!**

## **COACHES**

All or most team coaches are YMCA volunteers. They are individuals who take their personal time to instruct and coach your child. Without their efforts, this program would not be possible. Please contact the YMCA as soon as possible if you are interested in coaching.

Always inform your coach if your child is unable to make a practice or a game. If a child misses a practice, they will still be able to play in the game. If the coaches cannot be at a practice or game he should ask his assistant coach or a parent to take his place in his absence. If the coach cannot find someone to take his place, the YMCA site coordinator will work with the team that day.

## **OFFICIALS**

Youth Sports officials are usually parents, other coaches, high school or college students. Most of these people are learning how to officiate through practical experience. Officials do receive training from the YMCA but they improve as officials by officiating! Coaches and parents should try to be sympathetic rather than critical of the official's role. We want to maintain a positive playing environment and cutting down officials on the court is not positive.

## **OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Team parents are always needed. They can assist the coaches by making important phone calls, planning snack schedules, and planning end of the season celebrations.

Occasionally, we need volunteer officials at your child's game. Let the YMCA or your coach know if you can volunteer as an official in a pinch.

## **GAMES AND PRACTICES**

In most leagues, there will be one practice and one game per week. Please remember to pick up any refreshments, water bottles, or trash following the use of any facility. The YMCA will make every effort to reschedule any missed games or practices.

## **GAME/PRACTICE CANCELLATIONS DUE TO WEATHER**

*In the event of inclement weather, it is up to the coaches to cancel practices.*

The YMCA staff present will determine the cancellation of games. If the YMCA knows in advance that the games will not be played we will contact coaches, who will in turn contact you. **Please do not try to contact the YMCA**, as we have limited phone lines. Every effort will be made to make up lost games due to weather.

## **THE ROLE OF THE PARENT**

You can help your child enjoy sports by doing the following:

### **Developing a Winning Perspective**

Every decision parents make in guiding their children should be based first on what's best for the child and second on what may help the child win. Stated another way, this perspective places **Athletes First, Winning Second**. We're not saying winning is unimportant. Winning— or striving to win—is essential to enjoyable competition. Pursuing victory and achieving goals are sweet rewards of sport participation. But they can turn sour if, through losing, you or your children lose the proper perspective also. An obsession with winning often produces a fear of failure, resulting in below average performances and upset children.

### **Building Your Child's Self-Esteem**

Building self-esteem in your child is one of your most important parenting duties. It's not easy—and it's made even more difficult in sport by the prevailing attitude of "winning is everything." Athletes who find their self-worth through winning will go through tough times when they lose. Building self-esteem in your child takes more than encouragement. You need to show your child unconditional approval and love. Don't praise dishonestly; children can see through that. If your child strikes out three times and makes an error in a softball game, don't tell her she played well. Just show the same amount of love and approval for her—not for her performance— that you showed before the game.

### **Emphasizing Fun, Skill Development, and Striving to Win**

The reason you should emphasize fun is quite simple: without it, your child may not want to keep playing. Kids don't have fun when they stand around in practice or sit on the bench during games, when they feel pressure to win and don't improve or learn new skills. Conversely, they *do* have fun when practices are well organized, they get to play in games, they develop new skills, and the focus is on *striving* to win.

### **Helping Your Child Set Performance Goals**

Performance goals—which emphasize individual skill improvement—are much better than the outcome goal of winning for two reasons:

1. Performance goals are in the athlete's control.
2. Performance goals help the athlete improve.

Performance goals should be specific, and they should be challenging but not too difficult to achieve. Help your child focus on performance goals before a game; this focus will help sport be an enjoyable learning experience for your son or daughter.

### **Parents' Responsibilities**

All parents want their kids to do well and have fun in the activities they pursue. We want you to be actively involved in positive ways with your child's sport experiences in YMCA youth sports. To do that, you need to first understand your responsibilities as a parent of a child in YMCA youth sports:

1. Encourage your child to play sports, but don't pressure. Let your child choose to play—and to quit—if he or she wants.
2. Understand what your child wants from sports, and provide a supportive atmosphere for achieving these goals.
3. Set limits on your child's participation. Don't make sport everything in your child's life; make it a part of life.
4. Make sure the coach is qualified to guide your child through the sport experience.
5. Keep winning in perspective, and help your child do the same.
6. Help your child set challenging but realistic *performance* goals rather than focusing only on "winning the game."
7. Help your child understand the valuable lessons sport can teach.
8. Help your child meet responsibilities to the team and to the coach.
9. Turn your child over to the coach at practices and games— don't meddle or coach from the sidelines.
10. Supply the coach with information on any allergies or special health conditions your child has.

### **EQUIPMENT AND DRESS**

Basic equipment for most sports will be checked out to coaches for the season. If you bring your own equipment to practices or games please make sure it is clearly marked with your name and phone number. Below is the information on basic equipment participants need for each sport offered by the YMCA.

**Flag Football** - Each player needs to have tennis shoes or rubber cleats (no metal) and shorts or pants. Mouth guards are recommended. Other equipment as well as team shirts will be given to coaches to distribute to their players.

**Volleyball** - Each player needs to have non-marking tennis shoes and shorts or pants. Knee pads are recommended but not mandatory. The YMCA will provide shirts for games and volleyballs for coaches to use during practice.

**Basketball** – Each player needs to have non-marking tennis shoes and shorts. Jerseys will be given to coaches to distribute to their players.

**Racquetball**- Each player needs to have non-marking shoes and shorts or pants. Racquets and eyewear will be available for players.

**Soccer** - Each player needs to have shin guards, tennis shoes and shorts or pants. Other equipment as well as jerseys will be given to coaches to distribute to their players.

**Rugby**- Each player needs to have tennis shoes or rubber cleats (no metal) and shorts or pants. Mouth guards are recommended. Other equipment as well as team jersey will be given to coaches to distribute to their players.

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## YMCA PARENT'S CODE OF ETHICS

- 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 support the implementation of the YMCA's four character development values, caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.
- 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 from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all YMCA youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth – not for adults.
- I will do the very best to make the youth sports experience fun for my child.
- I will help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching, or providing transportation.
- I will teach my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.

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

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

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Child(ren) Name(s)

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Kearney Family YMCA  
YMCA Branch