



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

# **HOW WE PLAY THE GAME!**

**YOUTH SPORTS PARENT GUIDE  
YMCA OF GREATER OMAHA**



Updated 06/2019

## **WELCOME PARENTS AND PARTICIPANTS!**

Thank you for choosing the YMCA for your child's youth sports experience! Our goal is for all youth sports participants, both parents and children, to have an enjoyable experience.

Skill development is the main component of all YMCA Youth Sports. Each child will play an equal amount in every game as the team roster allows. A fun and friendly environment is the hallmark of all YMCA programs.

Our program is made possible by the dedication of our volunteer coaches. They put in many hours of work to make the league a success, investing their time and energy into the lives of young people in our community. If you are interested in future volunteer opportunities, please contact us.

We hope you will take an active role in your child's experience this season. Please support your child by participating with them during the practices and games. Time spent with your child at home developing sports skills builds confidence and strengthens parent-child relationships. We look forward to serving you and your child in our youth sports program.

**Youth Sports Staff Team**  
**YMCA of Greater Omaha**  
**[metroymca.org](http://metroymca.org)**

**The YMCA: We're for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.**



## **Table of Contents**

The YMCA Mission, Our Philosophy and Our Core Values	Page 4
The Seven Pillars of Youth Sports	Page 5
Registration	Page 6
Youth Sports Refund Policy	Page 6
League Creation	Page 6
Team Formation	Page 6
Financial Assistance	Page 6
Jerseys	Page 6
Equipment	Page 7
Practice and Games	Page 7
Team Travel	Page 7
Coaches	Page 7
Facility Rules	Page 8
YMCA Staff	Page 8
Inclement Weather	Page 9
Playerspace Information	Page 9
Parent/Fan Code of Conduct	Page 10

## **YMCA MISSION**

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

All of our programs are centered around our mission and our four core values of character development: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Your child will learn about these core values and how they apply to their lives on and off the field. We hope you will take time at home to reinforce the values and their importance.

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

Our philosophy for youth sports is simple: athletes first, winning second. We ask that you make decisions based first on what is best for our young athletes and second on what may improve the athletes' or team's chances of winning. It does not mean that winning or striving to win is unimportant. We believe that winning should take a back seat to what is in the best interests of our young participants who are here to have fun and build their self-confidence.

## **OUR CORE VALUES**

### **Caring**

*A choice to care without conditions or limitations.*

Listen and treat all players equally.

### **Honesty**

*Truthfulness and genuineness with yourself and others.*

Make the right call, even when the cost is high.

### **Respect**

*Honor toward others; humility.*

Treat players, opponents, officials, and parents as you would wish to be treated. Put-downs, name calling, and yelling set a bad example.

### **Responsibility**

*Trustworthiness; the ability to be depended on.*

Know the important principles of the sport. Strive to improve your own performance as a coach, official, or spectator.



## **THE YMCA SEVEN PILLARS OF YOUTH SPORTS**

### **1: Everyone Plays**

We do not hold tryouts; nor do we cut kids from our teams. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays at least half of every game.

### **2: Safety First**

Although some children may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer. We ask you to take time to check that the equipment and facilities are safe and only teach the sport as instructed by your coach, so that the skills taught are appropriate for each child's developmental level. Players should increase their fitness levels gradually so they are conditioned for the sport. We rely on parents to supervise their players and stop any unsafe activities.

### **3: Fair Play**

Fair play is about more than playing by the rules. It's about other players showing respect for everyone involved in youth sports. It's about being a role model of good sportsmanship and guiding your players to do the same. We're more interested in developing children's character through sports than in developing a few highly skilled players.

### **4: Positive Competition**

We believe competition is positive when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. Winning isn't everything. Learning to compete is important for children, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential life skill. The "right perspective" means adults make decisions that put the best interests of the children above winning the game. These are the lessons we want to teach through youth sports.

### **5: Family Involvement**

We encourage parents to be involved appropriately along with their child. 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.

### **6: Sports for All**

We strive to make this is an inclusive sports program. That means that children with different abilities and skill levels are included in participation. We ask our adult leaders to support and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the children and other parents to do the same. We do not forfeit games; instead, we share players and proceed with planned games.

### **7: Sports for Fun**

Sports are naturally fun for most children. They love the challenge of mastering the skills of the game, playing with their friends, and competing with their peers. As parents, we all have a role to play in keeping the focus on having fun and providing a positive, supportive environment. The important thing is that everyone enjoys playing.

## **Registration**

All sport seasons will have a set registration period. Refer to the [sports calendar](#) to see the specific dates/times of each season. Each branch will accept registrations after the deadline depending on availability and with an additional processing fee.

## **Youth Sports Refund Policy**

Any cancellation made prior to the registration deadline will receive a 100% refund. Cancellations received after the registration deadline will be subject to a \$15.00 fee. No refunds will be issued for cancellations after the 2<sup>nd</sup> scheduled game or lesson.

## **League Creation**

After the registration deadline you can expect to receive an email with a time line of important meetings and when to expect to hear more information.

During the first two weeks after the deadline our youth sports directors will be working very hard on organizing teams and identifying volunteer coaches.

The third week after the deadline there will be a separate coaches and parents meeting. The date/time/location will be in an email.

After the coaches meetings Coaches will be contacting participants.

If your child is on a "need coach" team there will be a delay in hearing from a coach. We will continue recruiting parents to volunteer as the team's coach, once a coach is found we will put coach and parents in contact with each other.

Game schedules are released the week of the first practices.

## **Team Formation**

Player and coach request are encouraged and requests for team changes due to schedule conflicts with practice/game times will be considered. We try to keep team's roster size as balanced as possible, because of this we can't always guarantee the request.

## **Financial assistance**

Financial assistance is available. Please contact your local branch for more information.

## **Jerseys**

If you need a jersey we ask that you see your YMCA's Welcome Desk for information on how to purchase the jersey. All athletes should have or purchase the correct jersey for their sport. Athletic or sport-appropriate shoes and shorts and/or sweats should be worn in addition to the jersey.

## **What jersey to wear on game day?**

Home is the lighter colored jersey and away is the darker colored jersey. A best practice would be to bring BOTH jerseys to each game.

## Equipment

**Baseball** – Players should bring a glove and water in spill-proof, non-breakable container. Optional equipment is their own bat, helmet and ball. Pre K-2 players use a softcore ball. Grade 3-8 boys use a regulation baseball. Grade 3-6 girls use an 11-inch regulation softball. Grade 7-8 girls use a 12-inch regulation softball.

**Soccer** - Players should bring water in spill-proof, non-breakable container. Shin guards are required. Cleats are highly recommended (no metal cleats allowed). Optional equipment is their own ball. Pre K-2 players use a size 3 ball. Grades 3-6 use a size 4 ball. Grades 7-8 use a size 5 ball.

**Flag Football** - Players should bring water in spill-proof, non-breakable container. Mouth guards are required to play. Cleats are highly recommended (no metal cleats allowed). Optional equipment is their own ball. Grades Pre K-2 use a pee wee ball. Grades 3-6 use a junior ball. Grades 7-8 use a youth ball.

**Volleyball** - Players should bring water in spill-proof, non-breakable container. We recommend that they wear knee pads. Optional equipment is their own ball. Grades 1-6 use a Volley Lite. Grade 7-8 use a regulation ball. 5-8 advance use a regulation ball.

**Basketball** - Players should bring water in spill-proof, non-breakable container. Optional equipment is their own ball. Pre K-2 players use a 27.5-inch junior ball. Grade 3-6 use a 28.5-inch intermediate. Grade 7-12 girls use a 28.5-inch intermediate. Grade 7-12 Boys use a 29.5-inch official ball.

## Practices and Games

Pre-K through Kindergarten will practice for 20-30mins and then finish out the hour with a 20-30min game on their scheduled game time for the week. 1<sup>st</sup> grade and up will have one practice of at least 60 minutes a week. The YMCA does not guarantee a specific practice time or location. Coaches are welcome to find a location for practice and the YMCA will try to accommodate a practice for each team. Coaches are responsible for picking the time that best fits their schedule and that of their team. Games are held at the location determined by the game schedule you receive at the beginning of the season.

## Will my team have to travel?

Teams may have away games at other YMCA locations. We limit travel as much as possible and make it fair for all teams in the league. In order to create full leagues and allow all kids the opportunity to play, some travel may be required.

## Coaches

All coaches at the YMCA participate on a volunteer basis. They must complete volunteer training and are subject to a criminal background check. We do not take your children's safety lightly and take steps to ensure that our youth sports programs provide a safe environment. On the first day of practice, your coach will be introduced and will provide you with their contact information.

### **Cooperating with your coach**

Remember your coach is a Volunteer that might have years of coaching experience or this might be their first time coaching. Help set your coach up to be successful by introducing yourself and communicating with them on any questions you might have. Just as you can't expect a child to be an all-star athlete right off the bat you can't expect your coach to be a pro either. Coaching is just like learning the skills of a sport it takes practice and development. It takes time to develop into a great coach. Make sure you tell your coach "thanks" and let them know they are doing a good job. We encourage you to help your coach in any way you can.

### **Interested in Coaching?**

If you are interested in coaching let us know and we will invite you to a future coaches meeting/training and help provide you with the tools to get you started.

### **Facility Rules for Games and Practices**

- Please dispose of all trash in the proper receptacles.
- Only water or Gatorade allowed in gyms for participants
- Please encourage children to respect private property.
- Stay off the floor/field after games have concluded as other games need to get started.
- Remind parents to drive slowly inside the parking lot and to remember they may not be able to park right by the front doors. Do not park on grass areas or on the curves of the driveways. All cars must be parked in a parking space.
- Do not walk across the gym floors/fields to get to another court/field. Please walk around.
- Program participants and their families are limited to gym and bathroom areas only.
- **Children must be supervised.** Unsupervised children who are misbehaving will be returned to their parents and/or asked to leave.

### **YMCA Staff**

YMCA personnel shall be present and visible at all games. If you encounter any problems or have questions, please contact the site supervisor, official or the Youth Sports Director. If you have a question or suggestion concerning the game or league, please present it before or after the game to the site supervisor, NOT during the game. This can be distracting to the coaches, players, officials, and other fans.

### **Officials:**

- Have jurisdiction from the beginning until the end of the game. Their decisions are final.
- May caution or eject a player/coach/fan for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- May terminate a game if the game becomes unproductive
- We will not tolerate any abuse toward officials. Discuss problems or questions with the Site Supervisor or call your YMCA Sport Director.



## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE**

In inclement weather conditions, sport activities may be cancelled if necessary. The following procedure is used for notifying participants of a cancellation:

1. YMCA staff will notify coaches and parents at least one hour before game time. Coaches should notify parents as well to ensure all participants receive the communication.
2. Coaches are responsible for canceling their own practice and notifying all players. The YMCA reserves the right to cancel any practice or games if the safety of the participants is compromised.
3. If Site Coordinator must cancel games after arriving at the site, teams scheduled to play will be notified as soon as possible. We appreciate your understating of this situation.

At times, the YMCA of Greater Omaha may cancel a scheduled game due to weather or unforeseen circumstances. Due to reasons outside of our control we may not reschedule every game. However, we guarantee each team will have at minimum 6 scheduled games.

## **PlayerSpace.com Sports Website**

PlayerSpace.Com PlayerSpace is our league management system for youth sports. As a registered participant, you will have access to a personal account within PlayerSpace. Once your account is active, you will receive an email\* with your username and password as well as a link to access your PlayerSpace accounts. Benefits of PlayerSpace include:

### **Parent Functionality:**

- Access team game schedule and sync to personal calendar
- View updates posted by coach or other parents
- Message coach directly
- Post video and pictures of games

### **Coach Expectations:**

- Coaches will communicate with teams primarily through PlayerSpace email and text messaging
- Coaches will post updates about any practice changes (time, date, location) on PlayerSpace and send out notifications through the PlayerSpace communication system
- Coaches will monitor posts by team families and respond within a few days

### **Sports Director Communications**

- Email and text team alerts of game/practice cancellations due to weather
- Email and text team schedule changes.

\*Notifications from PlayerSpace will be sent to the email address that you provided at registration. Please add noreply@playerspace.com to your safe sender list to ensure that you receive all notifications. If you have concerns about the email address that you provided a registration, please contact your YMCA Sports Director

## **PARENT/FAN CODE OF CONDUCT**

We ask that you uphold this code so that everyone can enjoy their experience. As a YMCA parent, we expect you to:

- Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or event.
- Place the emotional and physical wellbeing of the players ahead of your personal desire to win.
- Demand a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free sports event and agree to assist by refraining from their use at all youth sports events.
- Ask your child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect.
- Promise to help your child enjoy the youth sports experience by fostering good sportsmanship, assisting in coaching, being a respectful fan, and modeling that behavior for your child.
- Have your child participate in as many practices and games as possible while providing proper supervision for all of the children brought to practices and games.
- Attend practices and games to support your child's participation.
- Be a positive role model for your child and the other players on his/her team.
- Not use profanity or vulgar speech while observing your child's activities.
- Not coach your child, or other children, during games if you are not an official coach.
- Keep off of the playing field at all times, unless specifically told otherwise by an official or coach.
- Refrain from bringing a dog or other animal to practices or games. Pets are not allowed at many locations.
- Resolve conflicts without regressing to hostility or violence.
- Not encourage any behavior that could be dangerous to your child or the other children.
- Not taunt, heckle, argue with, any coach, official, or opposing player during the course of your child's games/practices.

### **Policy Enforcement**

- Individual may be given a warning for inappropriate behavior.
- Individual may be asked to leave the game(s) and may be asked not to return for other Youth Sports activities.
- Other sanctions as deemed necessary may be enforced.

### **Thank you for choosing YMCA Youth Sports!**

If you have questions, please contact the sports staff at your YMCA branch.

**[metroymca.org](http://metroymca.org)**