



# **YMCA OF WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA YOUTH SPORTS PARENT HANDBOOK**





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# **WELCOME LETTER**

**Dear YMCA Sports Parents and Spectators,**

**Welcome to the YMCA Recreational Youth Sports Leagues! The YMCA mission is at the core of everything we do. To that end, we seek to deliver youth, teen, and family programs that fulfill community needs, eliminate service gaps, and focus on building a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.**

**As a sports community, we have a unique opportunity to build everlasting relationships and experiences based on caring, honesty, trust, and responsibility. We are excited that you have joined our sports program to help promote a safe and fun learning environment for our participants.**

**We are here to deliver, through a nurturing and emotionally secure environment, an enriching athletics experience which puts an emphasis on the importance of individual effort as a part of a team where participants are challenged to grow at their own pace, embrace mistakes, develop good sportsmanship, and continually strive to develop a healthy mind, body and spirit.**

**The purpose of this manual is to outline and clarify the mission, expectations, and rules & regulations for all participants and spectators who take part in our YMCA of West Central Florida Sports Leagues. You are responsible for the information in this manual, so please read it and make sure you understand these expectations. Please note that this manual functions as an addendum to the YMCA policies and procedures. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to speak with any member of the Sports Leadership Team.**

**– YMCA of West Central Florida Sports Leadership Team**



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## OUR MISSION

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

At the YMCA of West Central Florida, we take the Y's mission seriously and incorporate it into all we do. Through role modeling the four core values, we put the mission and commitment to Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility into our everyday lives.

The YMCA teaches character development skills through its sports programs. The four core values that we try to develop in all involved are: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. We expect all sports participants, spectators, volunteers, and staff to model and teach these values to all who enter our sports programs.

### CARING

Treat all sports participants, spectators, volunteers, and staff with the same care you would wish to be treated with and have an understanding that all participants come from a differing background.

### HONESTY

Be honest with your feelings and situations. If you don't feel comfortable with what other participants, spectators, volunteers, or staff are doing, tell a YMCA sports staff member in a polite manner.

### RESPECT

It is your responsibility as a sports participant and spectator to have respect for all involved and for the YMCA sports mission. If you see or hear anything that you feel is not in the best interest of the YMCA sports mission, please say something to a YMCA sports staff member.

### RESPONSIBILITY

Hold yourself and all involved accountable for upholding the mission of the YMCA sports program and being there for other participants to uphold the same mission.



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# EXPECTATIONS

## GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Our goal for our Recreational Youth Sports Leagues (RYSL) is to develop all sports participants in their respective sports. Our main goal though is to create a safe and fun environment for all participants to partake in sports. There is a tremendous responsibility of all participants and spectators to implement the Y mission and core values into all our sports programs especially our leagues. For our Recreational Youth Sports Leagues, we believe in fair play and equal opportunity for all involved and at the appropriate level for each age group.

Our RYSL Rulebooks are given to all for every sport and age group as a reference for how we call our league games and age groups to ensure we are keeping this league recreational and appropriate for each age group. Most of our leagues are officiated by YMCA Sports Staff and coached by Volunteers offering their time to better our leagues. As a spectator you have an obligation to positively encourage all participants, not to referee or coach from the sidelines. Mistakes will be made, that is part of sports even at the highest level of play. Any instance of inappropriate behavior by spectators or participants that doesn't fit the mission or core values of our sports program could lead to disciplinary action, not excluding, immediate removal from the facility, effecting the status of membership or access to our facilities or affecting participation in future programs. For any issues or concerns you have, it needs to be addressed to the Sports Leadership Team.



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# YOUTH SPORTS CODE OF CONDUCT

The YMCA of West Central Florida aims to promote positive character development in our youth by exemplifying good sportsmanship, respect for others, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. We have a strict policy of zero tolerance for bullying, child abuse, and inappropriate behavior. We kindly request that staff, parents, coaches, players, and guests attending YMCA sports events adhere to these character traits during all games.

When attending YMCA sports events, I therefore agree:

- I will be a positive role model for my child. I will encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy. I will support all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice, or other sporting event.
- I will not engage in any unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent, such as booing, taunting, or using profane language or gestures.
- I will not endorse any behaviors or practices that could jeopardize the health and well-being of the officials and athletes.
- I will teach my child to play by the spirit of the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I will strongly encourage my child and guests to treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect, regardless of race, sex, or ability.
- I will never ridicule or yell at my child or another participant for making a mistake or losing a competition.
- I will show respect to the officials and their authority during games. I will not question, discuss, or confront coaches or referees on the game court or field. Instead, I will arrange to speak with coaches at an agreed-upon time and place.
- I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices unless I am one of the team's official coaches.
- I will notify the coach of any physical disabilities or ailments that may affect the safety of my child or others. I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be immediately subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Verbal warning
  - Game suspension with written documentation of the incident
  - Season suspension with written documentation of the incident
  - One Year Ban from the YMCA with written documentation of the incident.
- If law enforcement is called due to an incident. I will be immediately subject to disciplinary action that will include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Lifetime Ban from the YMCA with written documentation of the incident. These steps can be taken in any order by the YMCA's Sports Director or Sports Staff.



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# COMMUNICATION

## PRE-SEASON

You will begin receiving communication from the sports department one week prior to the season beginning. Our hope is that you will hear from your coach one week prior to the season beginning. There are reasons why this may not occur so do not panic. The emails you receive from the sports staff will have everything you need to know. Be sure to check your spam folder as the initial email often ends up there.

## IN-SEASON

You will receive a welcome, mid-season and end-of-season email update from the sports staff. Each update will include a summary of how the season is currently going, registration information, and any updates going forward. Any issues or changes will be shared through this method as well.

## PLAYERSPACE

Playerspace is our league management system that manages team schedules, rosters and parent communication. Prior to the season, you will receive an email inviting you to create a log-in (if you do not already have an account). Upon log-in, you will receive communication from the YMCA and your coach through Playerspace platform. You will also be able to view your teams' schedule, teammates and be able to communicate with your coach.

You may also receive text message alerts from Playerspace. It is very important we have your correct email and mobile number on file to ensure you are receiving communication. If you feel as though you never received a log in email or are not receiving updates, please check your trash and junk mail and be sure add [noreply@playerspace.com](mailto:noreply@playerspace.com).

In addition to using Playerspace on your computer, you can also download the app and sign up to receive text message alerts. For help and tips on how to use Playerspace, please visit [playerspace.net/parent-help-sports](http://playerspace.net/parent-help-sports).



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## JERSEY & EQUIPMENT

When you register, a link will be sent to the parents in order to order your jersey. We recommend everyone dress in comfortable athletic attire and bring a water bottle with them to stay hydrated throughout practices and games. Your own ball is not required, but you are more than welcome to bring one to practice with you. Any personal item should be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. The following is required for each sport:

### BASKETBALL:

- Augusta Sportswear Basketball Jersey
- Non-Scuff Athletic Shoes/Basketball Shoes

### SOCCER:

- Augusta Sportswear Soccer Jersey
- Shin Guards
- Tennis Shoe, Turf Shoes & Indoor Soccer Shoes are allowed, NO CLEATS

Starting in the Summer of 2025, all league players will need to order our custom designed jersey from Augusta Sportswear to participate in YMCA Youth Sports leagues. Once you purchase a jersey, you're set until the design changes, as long as it still fits. Jerseys are ordered directly from our supplier so you can have them shipped right to your home and be ready to play at the first practice!

The link for our jerseys is posted on our website under each specific sport! Go to [ymcawcf.org](http://ymcawcf.org) under the "Programs" section, click either "Youth Basketball" or "Youth Indoor Soccer", scroll to the bottom of the page and click the link to purchase your jersey!





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# YMCA FACILITY & SPORTS POLICIES

## YMCA FACILITY & SPORTS PROGRAM POLICIES

**Animals** – Animals are not allowed inside the YMCA of West Central Florida’s facilities unless it is a service animal, police animal, or part of a YMCA of WCF’s approved program or event.

**Attendance Policy** – We understand that life events happen, schedules are busy, and emergencies take place. The attendance of all sports participants is of the utmost importance for the success and growth of our youth sport leagues and all involved. For our recreational youth sport leagues, every child is guaranteed to play half of every game, and we encourage equal playing time. If you are going to miss a practice or a game, please notify the coach through text, email, the Playerspace App or the Sports Leadership Team via email.

**Attire** – The YMCA is a family-friendly facility, so please dress appropriately. Athletic shoes must be worn on wood floors. Garments that have pictures and/or writing that are vulgar, suggestive, indecent or otherwise offensive are not allowed.

**Cancellation** – Youth Sports Leagues are non-refundable. We ask that you commit to our youth sports leagues before signing up. Any request for a refund is only permitted due to medical injury, illness, or moving. Doctors’ notes may be required to show proof of injury or illness.

**Discipline** – We encourage all of YMCA sports staff and volunteer coaches to display positive discipline tactics. Positive discipline includes modeling of behaviors by adults, setting clear limits and expectations, redirecting a child to a better activity, and positive reinforcement of good behavior. However, in incidents where we feel a child is displaying unsafe or disruptive behavior to other participants, they may be asked to sit out. If the unsafe or disruptive behavior continues after several warnings, participants may be asked to not participate in youth sport programs.



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# YMCA FACILITY & SPORTS POLICIES

## YMCA FACILITY & SPORTS PROGRAM POLICIES

**Expected Behavior** – The YMCA is an inclusive, family-friendly organization. We expect all members and guests to model our four core values, caring, honesty, respect and responsibility, in their conduct and language (including digital and social media communications). The YMCA has right to suspend and/or terminate any membership or program participation for violation of any posted or written rules of conduct, for any behavior that interferes with the enjoyment of the YMCA by others, and for any inappropriate behavior at the YMCA, including but not limited to sexual conduct, abusive or threatening language, theft, fighting, or assault.

**Inclement Weather Policy** – Any games or practices cancelled by inclement weather will be attempted to be made up on a later date. Any game or practices that are unable to be made up due to inclement weather are non-refundable. We will make the decision on inclement weather based on participant safety. Games/practices missed due to holiday closure will be made up

**Lost Items** – The YMCA of West Central Florida is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Inquiries about lost items must be made in person at our front desk.

**No Weapons Policy** – In the interest of maintaining an environment that is safe and free of violence for members, employees, and visitors, The YMCA of West Central Florida prohibits the wearing, transporting, storage, presence or use of dangerous weapons is licensed to carry weapons on YMCA property, regardless of whether or not the person is licensed to carry the weapon. Members that violate this policy may have their membership revoked immediately. This policy does not apply to any law enforcement personnel or security personnel engaging in official duties.

**Smoking/Tobacco Products** – Use of tobacco products, vaping, and/or smoking is prohibited in all YMCA facilities and on all YMCA grounds.



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# **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

## **Volunteer Coaches**

Our Recreational Youth Sports Leagues depend on the help of Volunteer Coaches. Our goal is to give a consistent parenting presence and a sense of community to all involved in our youth sport programs. The impact of volunteer coaches in youth sports has an everlasting experience on our children. Volunteer coaches have a tremendous responsibility of helping develop skills, harnessing good sportsmanship, and teaching valuable life lessons on and off the court/field. We want our volunteer coaches to help us deliver the mission of the Y and install our core values into all sports participants. We need to fill every team for every age group and sport with volunteer coaches. During the registration process you will be asked if you want to be a volunteer coach, please consider marking yes and helping us transform Lakeland through sports. We assist our volunteer coaches for an easy experience with Volunteer Coach Meetings, providing all equipment needed for practices and games, and resources to help create practice plans.

## **Teams without a Coach**

If your team has no coach your child season will not be cancelled, and the team will not be disbanded. By the time the season begins, please know we have made every effort to find a coach to help assist the team, but no one has formally committed yet. In this occurrence, a YMCA employee will be present at every practice and run it for the team while we continue to search for a coach. In this circumstance, our hope is a parent will take on the role of head coach and that another will serve as their assistant to fill in when needed.

## **Other Volunteer Opportunities**

If the commitment to be a coach is too much, we understand. We have other volunteer opportunities that help our youth sports leagues run efficiently and smoothly. Volunteer opportunities include scoreboard/score sheet operators and referees, with more opportunities coming in the near future. If you are interested in helping us in these areas, please reach out to the Sports Director for further steps.



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## ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

Together, we can make a difference. Support the space where communities can stand united, not divided. When you give to the YMCA of West Central Florida, you continue to strengthen our community and move us all forward. As the nation's leading nonprofit for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the Y uses your gift to make a meaningful, enduring impact right in your own neighborhood.

As a locally based nonprofit organization, our promise is to serve this community. So, every taxdeductible dollar you donate directly affects all of us in the best possible way, through before & after-school care, swim lessons, health & socialization for seniors, summer camps, family activities, youth sports & enrichment activities, and of course, financial support that ensure our doors are always open for those in need.

Our Annual Campaign is more than just about raising money. Utilizing volunteers, the Y shares story after story of how the YMCA fulfills our promise. By engaging volunteers, the stories are personal, prophetic, and profound. These stories lead to generous gifts that ensure resources of the Y are available to everyone in our community.

If you would like to donate to our Youth Sports or any YMCA program, please go to [ymcawcf.org/donate/donate](https://ymcawcf.org/donate/donate).



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**Thank you for taking the time to read through the YMCA of West Central Florida's Recreational Youth Sports Leagues Manual. By participating in our youth sports program, you are adhering to and agreeing to all policies and procedures outlined in the is manual. We look forward to a great sports experience and can't wait to see you at the Y!**