

Welcome YMCA Coaches!

Thank you for volunteering your time. YMCA Youth Sports welcomes you! This will be one of most rewarding and fun experiences you will be involved with. As a coach, you will have the opportunity to make a positive difference in a child's life, one that could last a lifetime.

Your team will probably be made up with some fairly skilled players and some not so skilled players. Your practices may not always go as planned, but have fun, relax, and remember the YMCA program is designed to provide an "experience" for girls and boys through sport.

We don't care how many wins or loses your team accumulates. We care that every child leaves your practice, games, and season feeling good about themselves!

Greater Augusta YMCA Mission Statement

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

Purpose of YMCA Sports

The sports program is designed to be an aid and tool in the development and growth of the participants. The YMCA is not a building, athletic fields or just sports. It is an association of people, a fellowship of people united by a common loyalty to Jesus Christ for the purpose of developing Christian personalities and building a Christian society. The YMCA is not just a sports association; however, the YMCA does use sports as one of its programs to foster physical, mental, and spiritual growth. The attainments of exceptional athletic skills and the winning of games, through important, are secondary – the molding of future men and women is the goal.

The activities around soccer are merely a vehicle by which we as concerned adults utilize Christian models to work with young people. The program purpose is:

1. Develop and build self-esteem;
2. Develop and teach physical skills, fitness, and health;
3. Develop social skills and relationships among participants;
4. Support and strengthen family life;
5. Develop responsibility, decision making, and leadership;
6. Create a unique and enjoyable leisure family activity.

YMCA Pledge and Procedures

Before each game, the referee will blow the whistle signaling for the teams to line up in the middle of the field/court. All players and coaches are asked to repeat the following pledge in unison prior to every game:

“Win or lose, I pledge before God
to play the game as well as I know how,
to obey the rules,
to be a good sport at all times,
and to improve myself
in spirit, mind and body.”

The officials will thank the team, give them any pre-game instructions, and will inform the coaches of any necessary information. When this is done, the teams can move to their bench area and take their position on the field.

Now That You're a Coach

For your players, you, as the coach are the single most important adult leader and role model. You will help the players have fun, learn skills, develop sportsmanship, and discuss values in a meaningful way.

Specifics about your sport:

1. Call your team immediately to set up practice and make sure the players' parents know how to contact you – home/work/cell/email, etc.
2. Set up a parents meeting prior to or following the first practice. (See Page 4)
3. Read your rules carefully.
4. The YMCA will provide game balls, flag belts, goalie jerseys, and cones. Everything that is pertinent to your sport.
5. Support the officials – they may be a trainee gaining experience and trying to do their best.
6. Coaches are responsible for their own behavior and the behavior of the fans. Be a positive role model. Put the game in perspective (FUN), and then you can relax when you see things differently from the officials.
7. Incorporate character development discussions/activities.

8. Practice times/sites will be reserved, may be shared with other teams/coaches – if needed, work cooperatively.
9. The YMCA philosophy is to give players equal playing time and a chance to play many positions. Give your players a well-rounded experience.

The Family YMCA of Greater Augusta Coaching Philosophy

As the coach, forget the professional and college models and the win at all cost approach. Do not try to get your feeling of self-worth from your team's win-loss record. Coaching youth sports calls for teaching the fundamentals properly, developing the basic team concepts, working on fair play values and encouraging all players to participate and enjoy the sport. The most important element is the relationship between the coach and the team. The coach is the leader, role model, teacher and friend. This relationship is far more significant than games won. The quality of the coach-team relationship is the ultimate measure of success for youth sports coaches.

- **Keep it Simple:**
 - Most sports are relatively simple to play and can be enjoyed by all ages. Overcomplicated formations, plays and strategies tend to confuse and frustrate youth.
- **Work on the basics:**
 - Younger teams especially should concentrate on fundamentals. Teach skills and concentrate on the basic. Help players become conscious of the importance of proper execution. Stop the action often to help individual players improve, but don't interfere excessively.
- **Work with every player on the team:**
 - The most highly skilled and least skilled players on your team should be given equal attention. Every player should be helped to improve in ability and to enjoy the game. It is important that every player participates and has fun. Rather than just a few good players dominating the action.
- **Teach fair play:**
 - Playing fair is an essential part of youth sports. Respect for oneself, teammates, the other team, the rules and the officials who uphold them.
- **Keep winning in perspective:**
 - Winning games is only one of the many goals that are important in sports. Help players and their parents become aware of the other important goals: learning skills, becoming better physically fit, being a good leader and a good follower, dealing with the emotions of sports and having fun.

Parents need to be Good Sports!

***We are depending on you to share this information.**

- 1. Introduce yourself and other coaches; introduce players and parents.**
- 2. Discuss pertinent rules for your level of play.**
- 3. Describe your coaching philosophy/YMCA philosophy – objectives for the season.**
- 4. Allow questions and concerns from all parents/players.**
- 5. Practice details – ask for help, equipment for players to bring, water, etc.**
- 6. Game behavior – stress sportsmanship for all people involved; refer to Fan Behavior Policy. (See below)**
- 7. Snack List – parents may bring drinks/snacks for after the game to handout.**
- 8. Handout to Parents – write/type information discussed, so even parents not attending will have a copy. Include important phone numbers.**

The Family YMCA of Greater Augusta Spectator's Code:

- 1. Remember that children play organized sports for their own fun. They are not here to entertain you, and they are not miniature pro athletes.**
- 2. Be on your best behavior. Do not use profane language or harass players, coaches or officials.**
- 3. Applaud good plays by your own team and the opposing team.**
- 4. Show respect for your team's opponent, without them, there would be no game.**
- 5. Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a completion.**
- 6. Respect the official's decision.**
- 7. Condemn the use of violence in all forms.**
- 8. Encourage players to always play according to the rules.**

CODE OF ETHICS FOR COACHES

1. I will treat each player, opposing coach, official, parent, and administrator with respect and dignity.
2. I will do my best to learn the fundamentals skills, teaching and evaluation techniques, and strategies of my sport.
3. I will become thoroughly familiar with the rules of my sports.
4. I will become familiar with the objectives of the Youth Sports program with which I am affiliated. I will strive to achieve these objectives and communicate them to my players and their parents.
5. I will uphold the authority of 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.
6. I will learn the strengths and weaknesses of my players so that I might place them into situations where they have maximum opportunity to improve their skill level through active participation.
7. I will conduct my practices and games so that all players have an opportunity to improve their skill level through active participation.
8. I will communicate to my players and their parents the rights and responsibilities of individuals on my team.
9. 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.
10. I will protect the health and safety of my players 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.

Coach's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Youth Sports Philosophy:

The YMCA's philosophy is to ensure that young people are prepared for life. We do this by helping them learn new skills, connecting them to other youth, communities, and families, and by exposing them to positive role models.

YMCA Sports: 7 Pillars

1. Everyone plays. We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from YMCA Youth Sports programs. Everyone who registers will be 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 these injuries from happening in the first place. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable

to play. We ask you to take time to check that the equipment and facilities are safe and to teach the sport as we've prescribed, so that the skills taught are appropriate for children's developmental level. We also ask you to develop your players' fitness levels gradually, so that they are conditioned for the sport. Finally, we ask you to constantly supervise your players so you can stop any unsafe activities.

3. Fair play. Fair play is about more than playing by the rules. It's about you and your players showing respect for all who are involved in the YMCA Youth Sports programs. It's about you being a role model of good sportsmanship and guiding your players to do the

same. Remember, we're more interested in developing children's character through sport than in developing a few highly skilled players.

4. Positive competition. We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. Learning to compete is important for children, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. The "right perspective" means adults make decisions that put the best interests of the children above winning the contest. These are the lessons we want to teach through our YMCA Youth Sports programs.

5. Family involvement. YMCA Youth Sports programs encourage parents to be involved appropriately, along with their child, participating in our sports programs. In addition to parents being as helpful as

volunteer coaches, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their children.

6. Sport for all. YMCA Youth Sports is an inclusive sport program. This means that children who differ in various characteristics are to be included, rather than excluded from participation. We offer sport programs for children who differ in physical abilities by matching them with children of similar abilities and modifying their sport. We offer programs to all children regardless of race, gender, religion, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to support and appreciate the diversity of children in our society, and to encourage their children

and parents to do the same. We do not forfeit games; instead, we share players and proceed with games as planned.

7. Sport for fun. Sport is naturally fun for most children. They love the challenge of mastering the skills of the game, playing with their friends, and competing against other individuals. Sometimes when adults become involved in their children's sport, they over-organize and dominate the activity to the point of spoiling children's enjoyment of the sport. If we take the fun out of sport, we are in danger of our children taking themselves out of the sport.

Remember, these sports are for the kids; make sure the kids are having fun and enjoying themselves.

Best Practices

Practices

- Come early and prepared for practice
- Bring a whistle and watch
- Dress to participate
- Be a positive teacher
- Send players home with drills to practice

First Practice

- Circle parents and introduce yourself, ask for volunteers
- Go over snack schedule
- Next: Circle players and do an ice breaker
- Please don't scrimmage at the first practice as some players are beginners

Miscellaneous

- Parent Communication– Most important
- Have one parent be in charge of emailing once a week for reminders (games, snacks, etc.)
- Passing out certificates– make sure to personalize for each player

SAMPLE EMAILS

Introduction email

Dear (Team name) Parents,

My name is (Coach's name), and I will be coaching the (Team name) team this year. I am looking forward to a fun-filled season where the kids will learn and improve their skills as well as the values of teamwork, sportsmanship, and fair play. My goal is to create a positive and supportive environment, so that every player, regardless of ability, has a great experience.

Our practices will be held (day) evenings at (time). Our first practice is (day and date). Games are on (days of games). The first game is on (date) All practices and games will be held at the (location)

Game schedules are posted on both ends of the gym and are available online at Ygametime.com

Being on time is critical. Please try and arrive at games 15 minutes before game time so we have ample opportunity for a team meeting and warm-up. Please be at each practice 5-10 minutes prior to start time. If a child will not be at a game or practice, please notify me.

I am expecting to have a great season and know I will enjoy coaching your children. If you have any questions or suggestions, please let me know, otherwise I look forward to meeting you all at our first practice!

Sincerely,

Coach (your name)

Sick day email

Dear (Team name) Parents,

Unfortunately I will not be able to make (game/practice) on (date). However, (assistant coach's name) will be attending and running (game/practice).

See you all next week.

Go (Team name)!

Coaches: Things to Remember

Sick: If you are sick, get another parent to coach for that day and please email the director. If no parent is willing to coach, then cancel practice. Please call ALL parents.

Parent Meeting: I would suggest having an early season parent meeting before your first practice, so you can discuss snack schedule, see if any parents are willing to be an Assistant coach, inform them of when practices are, exchange contact information, etc.

Players not able to make your team's scheduled practice times: We understand not all parents are able to make your scheduled practice, so if you have any parents that are unable to make the practice time, please have that parent call the YMCA and we will try to switch them to another team that has a practice time opening that works with their schedule.

Ask your parents for help: To make your job easier as a coach, try to get a team parent at the beginning of the season.

Awards: Please do not buy trophies or medals for your team. Pass this information on to your team parent! Trophies/metals will be available from the YMCA at your last game.

End of Season Party: The end of season party is voluntary, however, if you decide to have an end of season party, try to plan it ahead of time as local businesses can be pretty busy with other teams scheduling parties as well.

AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE YOUR ROSTER. Parents and players are very anxious to hear from you. If you are not cleared by that time, the YMCA will make phone calls.

Things to Remember

24 Hour Policy:

□ The YMCA Sports department does NOT permit any individual to confront a referee or YMCA Sports official at any time. If a situation arises in which a referee's actions create a problem, please give the situation 24 hours to cool down.

□ After the 24 hours have passed, if you still feel strongly that something should be done, please contact the Sports Director.

Procedure for Head Injuries during YMCA Sports Programs:

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. An accident report needs to be filled out by either a staff member or volunteer (given to Sports Director that same day).
3. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.

4. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact/symptom sheet on concussions.
5. Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional.