



FORT SMITH BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS



YOUTH SPORTS COACH & PARENT HANDBOOK



Welcome Message

Dear Parents, Coaches, and Participants,

The Fort Smith Boys & Girls Club welcomes you to our youth sports program! Our goal is for all youth sports participants, parents, and coaches, to have an enjoyable experience this season.

The Fort Smith Boys & Girls Club Youth Sports Programs aim to accomplish many goals. We want to build self-esteem, teach social skills and values, improve communication, and promote teamwork.

Our sports programs will positively develop responsibility and decision-making skills while building relationships. Leadership skills will be enhanced for both players and coaches. We aim to support and strengthen family life while creating fun experiences for coaches, children, and their families.

FSBGC youth sports programs are made possible by the dedication of our volunteer coaches. Our volunteers put in many hours of work to make the programs successful, investing their time and energy into the lives of young people in our community. If you are interested in coaching, please do not hesitate to contact us!

We hope you will take an active role in your children's experience this season. Please support your child by encouraging them, being a positive role model, and maintaining your expectations. The FSBGC environment is meant to be fun, while still building their sports skills.

Thank you for your participation! We look forward to serving you and your child in our youth sports program. If you have any comments or questions, please call or text Chris Reeder, Athletics/Activities Director at (479) 651-3837 or email at creeder@fsbgc.org.

Mission

The Fort Smith Boys & Girls Club mission is to help youth of all background develop qualities to become responsible citizens and leaders. Through our association with Boys & Girls of America, we seek to enhance the quality of life for the youth of our community.



Standards for Youth Sports

Everyone Plays

Everyone who registers will be drafted to a team and will have the opportunity to play in practices and games.

Safety First

Our sports programs are designed to be safe and enjoyable for all participants.

Fair Play

We are all expected to teach our players/children how to maintain the tradition & integrity of the game, be gracious in victory & accept defeat with dignity and remember to promote sportsmanship over gamesmanship.

Positive Competition

Learning to compete is important for children, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson in life. Positive competition is about growth, grit, and taking ourselves and our team to the next level.

Involved Families

We encourage all parents to be instrumental by being at all games and practices to support their athlete's participation. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that through your words and actions, you strive to build the character of your children as well players as a person.

Code of Conduct

All coaches, players, and spectators are expected to maintain good sportsmanship behavior. More than self-control, everyone is expected to be supportive, even if the competition is not going as they'd like. Fairness, integrity, responsibility and respect are virtues everyone should demonstrate at all times.

Sports are for the kids. Our goal is for them to have FUN !

Volunteer Coach Information

Our volunteer coaches are vital to the success of our youth sports programs. Throughout the years, committed and talented volunteers have impacted the lives of many children within our community through our youth programming. The Fort Smith Boys & Girls Club greatly appreciates every volunteer coach each season.

Keys to Being a Good Coach

Sportsmanship: Remember basic courtesy and good manners? Use your practices and games to reinforce these basic principles. Make sure your players can give a firm handshake with eye contact to officials and opposing coaches, as well as a high five to opposing players.

Teamwork: Teach your players that “we over me” is what most often leads to “us over them,” in team sports competition. Encourage your players to be selfless and supportive teammates in both losing and winning efforts.

Positive Attitude: Life is not fair and sports is worse. Help your players get over it and still do what they need to do to succeed. Playing sports is one of the best ways to practice overcoming adversity and preparing to handle tough times in life. Humor helps!

Respect: Pay it forward and get it back. How a coach interacts with other adults—coaches, parents and officials—will naturally influence the behavior of your players. Be mindful that you are a role model and are always being watched. Insist that your players respect coaches, officials and opponents—like you do. Have the courage to enforce your rules with every player and parent involved with your team.

Everyone Has the Opportunity to Play: - Every athlete will have the opportunity to participate in every game, as the athlete and their fans are expecting participation.

It is important that coaches are aware of FSBGC Sports principles, making certain that positive competition in youth sports is a positive experience for kids, parents, coaches, referees, and spectators.

Most importantly, parents and their children are depending on you.

Coaches Responsibilities and Expectations

1. Be welcoming! Contact athletes prior to your first practice to welcome them and confirm practice times/dates/locations.
2. Be accessible and approachable to athletes and parents. Arrive early. Have a parent's meeting at the first practice to help build relationships.
3. Be informative and communicate any changes in the schedule or special announcements, such as Picture Day and tournament information.
4. Take attendance and contact the legal guardian, of any athlete, that has not attended two consecutive games/practices.
5. Promote good sportsmanship and respect for others regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
6. Assure safe and fair play at all times.
7. Dress appropriately.
8. Plan practice sessions and game plans.
9. Encourage and be positive in correcting and instructing.
10. Know emergency procedures.
11. Listen to athletes.
12. Know the rules of the game and pass that knowledge on to other athletes.
13. Make it a rewarding and worthwhile experience.
14. Be drug, tobacco, and alcohol-free during all team events.
15. Understand that you are a representative of the FSBGC during all events.
16. Lead by example.
17. Remember you are a role model spiritually, mentally and physically.
18. Have fun!

Administration & Communication

FSBGC sports coaches serve as the go-between for the Club and the program participants. This necessitates some administrative duties. To succeed administratively as a FSBGC volunteer coach, it is important to recruit helpers. Any additional coaches or volunteers must complete all necessary credentials.

All coaches are responsible for parent communication. Parent communication can be in the form of GroupMe™ messaging, email, or telephone calls. Should you encounter any problems with parents please notify the athletic director. As your administrative staff, we are here to help/assist in any way possible. Please feel free to use us as a resource at any time.

It is the coaches' responsibility to contact the athletes regarding their first practice, season details, uniform/equipment information, and other pertinent information for the season.

Before the first practice, the coach should be prepared with the following:

- Practice day/times and location.
- A potential assistant coach/team manager/team parent.
- The coaches' expectations of players and parents.
- Rules of the game for parents.
- Answering any questions or concerns.

The Athletic Director, Sports Committee Member, Youth Development Professional, or Unit Director will be present during game day.

We are here to assist coaches, athletes, and spectators.

We will help with the following:

- Ensure locations are respected by spectators, games run smoothly and on time, and spectators are safe and act in accordance with the Fort Smith Boys & Girls Clubs. This includes inappropriate comments or actions toward officials, staff, participants, or coaches.
- Evaluate coaches and officials.
- Questions regarding rosters, game schedules, and rules.
- **If there is an issue on-site, please contact the Athletic Director.**
- Any emergencies should be brought to the attention of the Athletic Director as well as the Unit Director.
The Sports Committee welcomes questions, comments, and concerns that may come up over the course of the season about practices, coaches, games, etc.
Please communicate them clearly and in a timely manner. Issues can only be resolved when effectively communicated.



Parent Information

Parent's Responsibilities and Expectations

1. Read and use all material provided for the sports program.
2. Make sure your athlete arrives on time for all practices and games.
3. Ensure the athlete is properly equipped with shoes, shorts/sweats, a uniform, and any other sport-specific equipment.
4. Stay at practices and games whenever possible and support your athlete and team.
5. Volunteer to help the coach whenever possible.
6. Inform the coach if the athlete is unable to attend a practice or a game.
7. Encourage your child and team, and encourage good sportsmanship.
8. Encourage your child to treat others with respect regardless of race, sex, or ability.
9. Spend time at home practicing with your child on his/her skill development.
10. Acknowledge the other team's accomplishments.
11. Support the coach.
12. Support the referees.
13. Be positive at all times!
14. Be drug, tobacco, and alcohol-free during all team events.
15. Be aware of the BGCA sports policies.
16. Enjoy the games and have fun!



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- Answering any questions or concerns.

Policies & Procedure

Player Draft

The Boys and Girls Club believes that its Athletic program should and will operate for the benefit of the participant. It is our goal to operate athletic leagues that are fair to each member. The best way to be fair is to have an HONEST draft that will have the well-being of the players foremost in mind.

Draft Procedures

1. Every child who is not a returner in the age group will go through the tryout and draft for the appropriate league.
2. All returners to a league must return to the team they played for the previous year.
3. If a child is unable to make the tryout, they will be considered a no-show and will be drawn out of a hat for team placement.
4. There are no carpools unless the children are siblings.
5. Coaches' children will be rated by club staff and put in the round the staff believes the child should go in.
6. For expansion teams, all players in the draft that are considered second year players will be placed in a hat and the expansion team will pull out the average of players on existing teams.
7. The draft will begin after no-shows have been placed, coaches' children rated and placed, and expansion draft completed if necessary.
8. Every team will draw out of the hat for draft order.
The draft will be a **snake draft**.
The order will go 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 3, 2, 1.
Each team will pick one by one until their roster is full.

Practice and Game Information

Teams will get two practices a week before the season begins, and once the season starts will get one practice a week. Practice length depends on the sport and the age group. The day and time of practices are at the coaches' discretion and availability of facilities.

Games will be played on various days and at local and away venues. Please arrive at least fifteen minutes before game time to allow ample time for parking, finding the correct field or court, and seeing to any last-minute needs prior to the beginning of the game.

Inclement Weather and Cancellations

Games may be canceled because of excessive rain/snow and wet fields. Cold weather game decisions will be evaluated depending on the duration of cold air and wind chill. For updated Youth Sports Game information, please use the following methods:

1. If games are canceled, a notice will be posted on Facebook or FSBGC.org.
2. Coaches will be notified first and are expected to contact parents and their teams.

Practice and Game Information

Injuries

In the case of an injury, please locate a staff person immediately for help. It is up to the discretion of that staff person and the participant's parents on whether or not the participant needs additional medical attention.

Head Injuries

A participant shall be suspected of suffering a concussion or head injury if any of the following symptoms are observed arising from possible blunt trauma, acceleration of force, or deceleration of force:

- Confusion, disorientation, or impaired consciousness.
- Dysfunction of memory
- Loss of consciousness

Other signs of dysfunction include seizures, irritability, lethargy, vomiting, headache, dizziness, and fatigue

In the case of any of the above symptoms, it is highly recommended that the participant go to the closest medical facility and get checked out and cleared by a medical professional. Depending on the severity of the injury, it may be required by the Athletic Director that the participant get cleared by a medical professional before resuming activity.

Child Abuse Awareness

We will do our best to give volunteers tools to identify signs of abuse.

WHY TRAIN VOLUNTEERS IN CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS?

- To detect and prevent child abuse
- To protect volunteers from false claims of abuse
- To send a strong message to all those involved that any abuse of children will not be tolerated.

Practice and Game Information

Sportsmanship and Conduct

Sportsmanship behavior is expected from all coaches, players, and spectators at all times. If an individual is asked to stop their unsportsmanlike conduct and fails to comply, they will be asked to leave the facility. Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct include, but are not limited to: intimidating officials, players, and/or coaches, arguing, taunting, swearing, pushing and fighting.

No Tolerance Spectator Code

Remember children play organized sports for their own fun. To help teach our philosophy to kids, we ask for parents' cooperation and coach enforcement with our Spectator Code:

- Be on your best behavior. Don't use profane or harass players, coaches, or officials
- Cheer
- Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a game or practice. They are still learning the game.
- Respect the officials' decisions
- Encourage players/coaches to always play according to the rules

Zero Tolerance Policy

The Fort Smith Boys & Girls Club has implemented a Zero Tolerance policy throughout our sports programs. Coaches are asked to encourage their players in a positive way and avoid verbally harassing game personnel.

No trash-talking, obscene gestures or other unsportsmanlike behavior will be tolerated.

The FSBGC Staff reserves the right to suspend any coach for unsportsmanlike behavior during games or practices.

Coaches who demonstrate this type of behavior will be required to meet with the Athletic Director and other staff deemed necessary for the situation.

Violators, including players or parents, will be removed from the game for a period deemed necessary by FSBGC staff.

Contact Information

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