

Mountain Home AFB Youth Programs

# Sports Parents' Handbook

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## **Welcome to the World of Youth Sports!!**

Welcome to Youth Sports. Our purpose and goals reach beyond a quality leisure time activity into equipping your child with lifelong quality of life enhancing skills. As the parent, you are the key person in the mentorship and development of your child. Recreational sports can become a valuable tool in raising children. Youth sports strives to assist the parent in this endeavor.

Honestly, youth sports and even professional sports have made some bad examples for our youth. Coaches and parents argue and even fight; professional players disrespect our national anthem and flag. This is not what sports are about! By changing our focus, raising our goals and ensuring the best quality possible, we together can mentor our children with excellence. This starts at the top with a proper perspective of recreational sports. After safety, the most important aspect of any sport, especially for a kid is that it must be fun!

Join in together; administration, coaches, and parents, to provide fun, healthy, fundamental life skill developing sporting activities.

Ed Hershman  
Youth Sports and Fitness Director

## **MHAFB Youth Sports Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Mountain Home AFB Youth Sports Program is to offer a wide array of organized sports activities for youth to help them develop desirable physical skills and to mature emotionally and socially. The sport programs provide opportunities for children to have contact with other youth, volunteer leaders, and youth program staff. It also provides opportunities for parents and other adults to interact with children and contribute to the Air Force community by serving as volunteers in youth programs.

We always strive:

- ~ To provide a meaningful experience for all participants through quality instruction, emphasizing good sportsmanship, and equal play, along with teamwork, respect dedication and discipline.
- ~ To provide an atmosphere where each child feels a sense of belonging and achievement regardless of ability.
- ~ To recognize effort and improvement along with achievement to help improve self-esteem and foster a positive self-image.
- ~ To provide guidelines to make each sport age-appropriate and to ensure proper fundamentals are developed and enthusiasm for the sport is fostered.
- ~ To design each sport program to attract and retain every interested player and raise the level of play of each of these players as high as possible.
- ~ To provide the support and training for parents and other interested adults who take on the responsibility of providing through sports these positive lifestyle choices for their children.

## **Program Philosophy**

“Our program philosophy is to focus on fun and fundamentals of each sport. We are a recreation league that de-emphasizes winning and focuses more on learning the sport. We want to encourage fun and sportsmanship in our leagues to help build a base for a lifetime of healthy activities.”

## **Concepts and Goals of Youth Sports Program Mountain Home AFB Youth Programs**

- a. **Fun and enjoyment:** Provide all youth, regardless of talent, ages 4-18, with opportunities for participation, fun and enjoyment.
- b. **Leisure Skills Development:** Provide opportunities for youth to develop lifetime leisure skills.
- c. **Physical Development:** Assists youth with physical development by:
  1. Teaching fundamental and safe sport skills appropriate for their age.
  2. Providing opportunities to improve their physical conditioning.
  3. Teaching sound health habits.
  4. Providing safe playing area and proper supplies and equipment.
- d. **Psychological Development:** Help youth develop psychologically by:
  1. Fostering the development of self-worth and personal identity.
  2. Providing opportunities to express and control emotions.
  3. Creating a learning environment.
- e. **Social Development:** Help youth develop socially by providing opportunities:
  1. To have fun with others.
  2. To learn independence and the importance of teamwork.
  3. To learn cooperation and sportsmanship.
  4. To develop leadership skills and initiative.
  5. To learn how to compete - how to put winning or losing in perspective.
- f. **Concept of Winning:**
  1. Participants can learn from both winning and losing if winning is placed in a healthy perspective.
  2. Winning is not the primary goal. Do not define success as winning.
  3. Losing a game or event is not a reflection on their self-worth.
  4. Success is related to effort and is found in striving for the best they can do.
- g. **Support and education of parents**
  1. It is the goal of Youth Sports to assist the parent by equipping them with knowledge and opportunity to meet the above goals with their children.
  2. Parents are required to read, sign and follow the Parent’s Code of Ethics

## **Registration Policy**

Each child participating in youth sports at Mountain Home AFB must be registered in person by a parent/ legal guardian. Registration forms may be completed any time during a registration period. A birth certificate is required at time of registration and a current physical is required before the first practice. Payment must be made at time of registration. All documents to include: physical, immunization records, AF 88, and registration must be submitted before the first practice.

## **Refund Policy**

A refund may be requested and honored by Youth Programs administrative staff by the scheduled parent meeting. After the start of the season refunds will be granted for medical reasons. These refunds will be prorated and will require supporting documentation.

## **Awards and End of Season Parties**

Awards and end of season parties are the responsibility of each individual team. We suggest that the team parent along with the coach decide on the date and time of the end of season party. Participation certificates are available upon the request of the coach and team.

## **Certification of Coaches**

All youth sports coaches must be certified under the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA), must be current in CPR & First Aid and are required to attend four hours of valuable training. A \$20 per year fee is paid for all active coaches by Youth Programs. Installation records checks will be conducted on all coaches and volunteers.

## **Inclusion Policy**

Equal sports play opportunities are provided for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status, or ability.

- All eligible children have the opportunity to play regardless of their race, creed, sex, economic status or ability.
- Sex/role stereotyping and racial prejudice of any kind is prohibited.
- Free or low cost equipment is provided for youth not able to participate because of economic conditions.
- Adult youth sports leaders demonstrate a tolerance of, and respect for, people of all abilities, sizes, shapes, colors, cultural and economic backgrounds.
- Each league has a non-discrimination policy that ensures participation for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status, or ability.
- Co-recreational programs are encouraged through age 12.
- There is an active coaching recruitment program to recruit and select qualified women and minorities as coaches.

## **Participation Policy**

The emphasis in youth sports, especially for the younger age groups, will be on enjoyment, maximum participation, and then skill development. Opportunities to participate in youth sports must be available for young athletes at all levels of playing ability. Each child must be given equal opportunity to play in every game. Specific sport by-laws/rules will reflect this policy.

## **Transportation Guidelines**

The MHAFB Youth Programs uses military vehicles driven by Youth Programs staff or qualified volunteers to transport children. All vehicles are licensed and receive regular inspections. All vehicles contain a fire extinguisher and first aid kit. Driving records and driver's licenses of all staff/volunteers are verified and kept on file. Use of seatbelts is mandatory. At no time will a staff member/volunteer transport a child in a personal vehicle. Additional guidance on transportation can be obtained in OI 34-801.

## **How to Get Involved!**

Youth Sports cannot exist without the support and involvement of parents and community members. If you would like to act as a coach, team parent, official, or other supporting member, please contact the Youth Sports Director. We would love to include you in our program!

## **Parents/Spectators Policy**

Spectators are a vital part of the youth sports program. We highly encourage parent and spectator support, however NEGATIVE comments will not be tolerated. Spectators may be asked to leave the play area for verbal abuse towards the players, coaches, or officials. Continued abuse will result in possible suspension from attending any other games. All parents are required to sign a code of conduct policy (see end of parent handbook).

## **Role of the Parent**

The role of the parent in relation to Youth Sports is to help ensure your child is on time to practices and games with the appropriate gear and picked-up on time from every practice. Additionally, the role of the parent is to:

1. Encourage their child
2. Focus on their successes.
3. Assist and participate as appropriate for age and activity
4. Be the second adult. Never leave a coach as the only adult with a team or individual child or children.
5. Read, sign and follow the Parent's Code of Ethics

## **Roles of Staff, volunteers (coaches) and Officials**

The role of staff in youth sports is to organize all the practice and game schedules, check paperwork to insure compliance with AFIs and are the top pier of the program. A parent can always come to the Youth Sports Director with questions and concerns. All of our coaches are volunteers. It is their responsibility to coach the youth to the best of their ability. Officials can be

certified by multiple organization, are normally contracted and have final say at any game. Please contact the Youth Sports Director if there is a problem or question about any official.

## **Sportsmanship for the Parent**

Oxford Dictionary defines sportsmanship as the fair and generous behavior or treatment of others, especially in a sports contest.

Youth sports, worldwide, have been plagued with issues of bad sportsmanship, mistreatment of young athletes, disrespect to officials up to, and including serious disturbances. Mountain Home AFB Youth Sports Program strives to be part of the solution.

The Parents Part:

- Model good sportsmanship
- Recognize and applaud ethical behavior and good sportsmanship
- Continually reinforce good sportsmanship
- Discuss it with your child
- Stress fair play, being civil, common decency especially toward opponents, coaches, officials, and your own child.
- Reinforce the importance of having fun
- Be responsible for your behavior
- Never discriminate
- Never allow yourself or others to disrespect, make fun of, or bully.
- Always show respect
- Be gracious in victory as well as defeat
- Read and follow the Parent's Code of Ethics
- Encourage, encourage and encourage your child

Assistance is available from your Youth Sports Director, NAYS resources and other professional resources.

Inform and discuss sportsmanship issues with the Youth Sport Director.

## **Dear Mom and Dad,**

I hope that you won't get mad at me for writing this letter, but you always told me never to keep anything back that ought to be brought out into the open. So here goes.

Remember the other morning when my team was playing and both of you were watching? Well, I hope that you won't get mad at me, but you kind of embarrassed me. Remember when I went after the puck in front of the net trying to score and fell? I could hear you yelling at the goalie for getting in my way and tripping me. It wasn't his fault. That is what he is supposed to do. Then do you remember yelling at me to get on the other side of the blue line? The coach told me to cover my man, and I couldn't if I listened to you, and while I tried to decide they scored against us. Then you yelled at me for being in the wrong place. You shouldn't have jumped all over the coach for pulling me off the ice. He is a pretty good guy, and he knows what he is

doing. Besides, he is just a volunteer coming down at all hours of the day helping kids, just because he loves sports. And then neither of you spoke to me the whole way home. I guess you were pretty sore at me for not getting a goal. I tried awfully hard, but I guess I am a crummy hockey player. But I love the game, it is lots of fun being with the other kids and learning to compete. It is a good sport, but how can I learn if you don't show me a good example? And, anyhow, I thought I was playing hockey for fun, to have a good time, and to learn good sportsmanship. I didn't know that you were going to get so upset because I couldn't become a star.

Love,  
Your Son/Daughter

### **Youth Sports Safety Plan**

The number one priority of MHAFB Youth Sports Program is the safety of all participants. All efforts are made to ensure that a safe environment is maintained at all times.

1. MHAFB Youth Sports Program uses the guidelines in AFM 34-804 8.2 through 8.7
2. All playing areas are checked before start of season with Wing Safety.
3. Adequate safety equipment is made available for each sport.
4. All coaches are briefed on and given a copy of Youth Sports Emergency Plan.
5. Coaches are required to conduct adequate warm up time before each game or practice.
6. Proper clothing is required for each participant according to sport
7. Spectators are required to stand back from playing areas to minimize player distraction
8. If severe weather is sighted within 10 miles of the base games will be suspended

### **Concussion and Head Injury**

Training is available on concussion and head injury in youth sports. This is a concern and parents should educate themselves. Always remember that you, the coach and sports administrator should always apply the rule: if in doubt, sit them out! Training about head injuries can be found at: <https://www.nays.org/additional-training/preview/concussion-training.cfm>

### **Substance Abuse**

Drugs and alcoholic beverages are not permitted at any youth practices or games. Any player or coach found guilty of substance abuse will be dismissed from the program. Parents/spectators who consume drugs or alcohol prior to attending youth games will not be allowed on the premises. YOU WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE and security forces will be notified. Youth Center grounds are TOBACCO-FREE areas. Coaches, players, and parents are asked to refrain from smoking at youth practices or games.



## **Positive Guidance and Appropriate Touch**

The highest standards are expected of all. Dealing with youth in need of guidance must comply with USAF Child and Youth Programs guidelines. From a parental perspective related to Youth Sports, please remember other children may be at a different developmental stage or dealing with unknown life factors. Understanding and respect are the guides in dealing with difficult situations. Likewise, appropriate touch in sports is guided by the standards of caring and respect. Touch is important to the growth and health of everyone. In the sporting venue appropriate touch is best limited to high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, all of short duration. At no time should a child be touched inappropriately. The traditional, slap on the buttocks, is an example of unacceptable touch. Additional information on positive guidance and appropriate touch are available at the Youth Center or from the Youth Sports Director.

### **Important Phone Numbers**

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Youth Sports Coordinator	828-2501
Youth Programs Front Desk	828-2501
Youth Director	828-2501
Emergency Cell Phone	828-0911

### **Additional Information**

Mountain Home AFB Youth Sports Policies and Procedures Handbook and all applicable Air Force publications are available for review upon request.

Information on Bullying Prevention is available at:<https://www.nays.org/additional-training/preview/bullying-prevention-training.cfm>

## ***PARENT'S CODE OF ETHICS***

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this

### ***PARENT'S CODE OF ETHICS PLEDGES:***

- 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 inform the coach of any physical, emotional or mental disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will teach my child that doing one's best as part of the team is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sports coach and that the coach upholds the NAYS Code of Ethics for Coaches.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.
- 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 youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth - not for adults.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports 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 praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
- I will have my child to practices/games on time and pick my child up from practices/games on time.