



Mahomet Parks & Recreation Department  
Youth Soccer 2020  
Parents & Coaches Guide

217-586-6025

[WWW.MAHOMETRECREATION.COM](http://WWW.MAHOMETRECREATION.COM)

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Mahomet Recreation is to improve the quality of life for all participants by meeting the needs of the community through the provision of safe, excellent, recreational and leisure-time activities.

## SPORTSMANSHIP

We promote good sportsmanship, which is a combination of fair play, respect and consideration for opponents, spectators, teammates, coaches and officials.

## HEALTHY RECREATION

Our programs are designed to provide healthy recreation and to keep winning in perspective in an environment where participants can have fun while developing their physical skills and emotional maturity levels.

## RESPONSIVENESS

Mahomet Recreation regularly evaluates community needs and responds by offering programs that are desired.

## EQUAL ACCESS

All citizens are encouraged to participate in our affordable programs regardless of their skill levels, gender, race, socio-economic status, or any other factor that is not in conflict with our mission.

## REFUND POLICY

A refund application form must be filled out and submitted to the Mahomet Parks & Recreation Department office in order to receive consideration for a refund. We cannot accept telephone Refund Application Requests for **ANY** Parks & Recreation activity. All requests must be made by mail or in person during regular office hours.

- **NO** refunds on "league" programs once teams are set up and posted on our website.
- **NO** refunds will be given after the start of the program.
- **NO** refunds for certain special events. (i.e.; recreation trips, camps, clinics, etc.)

All refunds are subject to a \$10 Admin. fee (per registration) except under the following circumstances:

- Refund is initiated by the Park & Recreation Department
- Doctor's note is submitted with Refund Application Form prior to the start of the program

## DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that we're a fee base program? Fee base programs receive very limited tax revenues. We are a department of the Village Administration, unlike Park Districts; we rely only upon participant fees and donations from the community.

## Coach's Responsibility Code

### Goals and Objectives:

The Mahomet Recreation Youth sports program is a group-oriented program involving social and physical development. The goal of our league is to teach sports fundamentals, sportsmanship and a love for the game. Your support and encouragement will go a long way to helping achieve that goal. As a coach, you should demonstrate the following:

1. Build sound **fundamental** sports skills and develop a love for the game.
2. **Encourage** team play.
3. Reinforce good **sportsmanship**.
4. Show **respect** for referees, other coaches and players at all times.
5. Be a resource person to your **team**, helping them to develop their athletic and human potential.
6. **Involve** all team members and parents in special events.
7. **Recognize** that all children are not the same and respect their individual differences.

**Remember:** Be careful where you walk ... you never know who's going to follow in your footsteps!

### Safety:

The safety of children is extremely important. Here are some strategies to help you safeguard any children or youth in your supervision:

- Ensure that you are the last person to leave practice/game. Wait until all players have either left practice/game or have been picked up by a responsible adult.

- Talk to parents/legal guardians and introduce yourself. This initial contact can facilitate communication between you and parents regarding any player or team matters.
- If an emergency situation arises, report events as soon as possible to your Mahomet Recreation staff.

### **Parent's Responsibility Code**

Mahomet Recreation requests that the parents /guardians of children participating in the youth sports programs help us monitor the program by:

- communicating with their children and coach
- observing their children in practices and games

As a parent with a child in Mahomet Recreation youth sports program, it is reasonable to expect the following from the program:

- that your child is involved in both weekly practices and games
- that your child have the opportunity to play all positions and have equal playing time
- that a special event involves all team members and parents
- that your child enjoy a safe, satisfying and growing experience while involved in the program

Please remember:

- children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment, not yours
- children learn best by example
- children should always be encouraged to play by the rules
- children (and officials) should never be yelled at or ridiculed for making a mistake
- children should be taught that an honest effort and hard work are just as important as winning

The Mahomet Recreation youth sports program is a group-oriented program involving social and physical development. The goal of our league is to teach fundamentals, sportsmanship and a love of the game. The support and encouragement of all parents will go a long way to helping this come true.

### **Player's Responsibility Code**

1. Play for the fun of the game!
2. Play by the rules.
3. Cooperate with your coach, teammates and opponents.
4. Work hard for yourself and your team.
5. Do not yell or argue at/with the officials.
6. Control your temper and your language.
7. Be a good sport, be a team player and treat all players like you would like to be treated. (The Golden Rule)

### **Officials Responsibility Code**

- Know and familiarize yourself with the Mahomet Recreation Youth program rules and philosophy.
- Arrive 15 minutes before scheduled start time of first game.
- Act as an ambassador for Mahomet Recreation - take ownership and act accordingly.
- Dress appropriately - in Mahomet Recreation staff shirt / official shirt, proper shoes and shorts or sweat pants.
- Introduce yourself to players and coaches.
- Ensure field area is clean and tidy upon arrival and departure.
- Check field and equipment for safety before and after game.
- Report any safety issues or damages to Mahomet Recreation Staff.
- Know and understand the rules for the league you are officiating.
- Umpire your game(s).
- Explain the rules to players when a call is made.
- Use discretion and good judgment when a negative situation arises.
- Hustle at all times while officiating.
- Finish games **on time**

## Important Information for Coaches and Parents

### What to Wear

All players must wear recreation-issued T-shirts and/or jerseys. Soccer cleats are allowed, however no metal spikes are allowed. Shin guards are required. No extra equipment is allowed (i.e. bandannas, jewelry).

### Coaches Meeting

**July 28<sup>th</sup> at Barber Park**

**6:00 PM**

### Picture Day

Coaches will distribute picture packets with order forms prior to your picture day. Forms are also available online under forms @ [www.mahometrecreation.com](http://www.mahometrecreation.com), to expedite the picture taking process please pre-fill your order form prior to your picture time. Also, **there are no makeup dates scheduled for team pictures, please do not be late. Only in the event of weather cancellation, will picture day be rescheduled.**

## **PICTURE DAY- September 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Note: Only in the event of a complete rainout will pictures be rescheduled. Please pre-fill your picture order forms to expedite the process, order forms are available through your coach or online under "forms and documents"**

### Contact from Coaches

Coaches should contact players **no later than August 2.** *(If you have not heard from your coach please feel free to contact them yourself.)*

### How can I contact my coach?

The current season's coaches contact information will be available on the website under "Rosters". Find your team and you'll find your coach!

### First Aid/Ice Packs

First Aid and Ice Packs are located with the coordinators and at the concessions onsite.

### Game Day

- Garbage: At the conclusion of games please do your part to place trash into a garbage can. Help keep our parks looking good.
- Game times are start times. Have your team and players there early to warm up. That way the game can begin promptly.
- Remember have a good time, this should be fun for everyone: players, coaches, parents and even the officials.

### Weather/Cancellations

Weather cancellations will be posted the following ways by 4:30PM weekdays and 7:30AM on Saturdays  
If there are no updated announcements, please assume all games will continue as scheduled.

## Notification Options

- **Free mobile app:** Download the Rainout Line app for free from your phone's app store. Once downloaded, search for "Mahomet" and favorite these options: "Field Status" and "Program Deadlines/News": .
- **Email/text:** Go to [rainoutline.com](http://rainoutline.com) and search for "Mahomet." Select the items you would like to receive notifications for and then select text & email alerts, enter your email address or 10-digit phone and subscribe to the program area you want to receive notifications for. Or click on the Rainout Line Banner above then click "Email & Text Alerts" in the left-hand column of the page.
- **Phone:** call 217.586.7246 (RAIN) and follow the extension for your desired program area.

## Rosters/Schedules

All rosters, team schedules and coaches contact information will be posted online no later than August 2 @ [www.mahometrecreation.com](http://www.mahometrecreation.com). As a reminder, **No changes can be made to the rosters by the coaches or parents for a number of reasons, including liability concerns.**

## Game Schedules

Final game schedules will be available online at [www.mahometrecreation.com](http://www.mahometrecreation.com). Practice locations and times will be communicated through the volunteer coaches.

**4/5 Year Old's – Saturdays @ 9:00am or 10:15am**

**Kindergarten – Saturdays @ 11:30am or 1:00pm**

**1/2 Girls – Thursdays @ 5:30pm & Saturdays @ 10:15am**

**1/2 Boys – Tuesdays @ 5:30pm & Saturdays @ 8:30am**

**3/4 Girls – Thursdays @ 5:30pm & Saturdays @ 10:00am**

**3/4 Boys – Mondays @ 5:30pm & Saturdays @ 11:30am**

**5/6 Girls – Tuesdays @ 5:30pm & Saturdays @ 11:45pm**

**5/6 Boys – Mondays @ 5:30pm & Saturdays @ 10:00am**

## Practice Days and Availability

Once the season has started, Pre 4, Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade are strongly encouraged not to hold practice sessions. Before the season starts, coaches will be given an opportunity to meet with their team before their first game.

For all other groups: As a general rule, practice space at Barber Park will be available on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays on a first-come, first-serve basis. On all other days, there are open spaces in the South-West corner of the field that are usually open and available for practice. **Never practice on Field 1 or 2 at Barber – those fields are reserved for scheduled games only.**

## Background Investigation Forms

Every volunteer must submit a background investigation form before they are able to coach. All background forms are submitted to the Mahomet Police Department and are completely confidential. If you have volunteered for us in the past year than you are not required to fill out a new form, we'll simply process your information we have on file. Thus, it is important that you notify us of any changes to your address or any other pertinent information.

## Concerns/Issues/Conflicts

Furthermore, if a problem/concern arises during the season, the department encourages its staff, officials, participants, parents and coaches to follow the "24-hour rule" before communicating the concern. In other words, give it 24 hours and allow the problem or concern to "cool off", you may be surprised at the results of this approach. Obviously, major concerns should be brought to our attention immediately.

<b>Youth Soccer League Cheat Sheet</b>					
<b>Leagues</b>	<b>Field Size</b>	<b>Goal Size</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Ball Size</b>	<b>Players on Field</b>
(Pre- K) 4/5 yr olds Kindergarten	30 yd. x 20yd.	6-8 ft long. 4 ft high	30 min practice, 30 min game.	Size 3	3 on 3 no goalie
1st and 2nd Grade	50 yd. x 30 yd.	6-8 ft long. 4 ft high	30 min practice, 30 min game.	Size 3	4 on 4 no goalie
3rd and 4th Grade	55yd x 45 yd.	12 ft long, 6 ft high	four 10 minute periods	Size 4	7 on 7 one being goalie
5th and 6th Grade	TBD	21 ft long, 7 ft high	Two 25-minute halves	Size 5	7 on 7 one being goalie

### Rules Summary by League

## League: Pre-K / Kindergarten

**Location:** All games are played at Bridle Leash or Barber

#### **Format:**

1 Hour: Includes 1/2 hour of soccer fun and soccer games and 1/2 hour of soccer scrimmage on two small fields. There will be one-two soccer instructors there to assist the volunteer coaches.

A) For the first half-hour, each team has their own small field to play soccer games and fun soccer activities. The parent coaches will plan the games and activities for the first half-hour. Maximize the fun and maximize how long each child has a soccer ball on their foot. Some of the best activities are those that have each child with their own soccer ball.

B) For the second half, please scrimmage the other team on both fields playing 3 v 3 soccer.

#### **Rules of 3 v 3:**

1) Similar to soccer you would play in your back yard.

2) No goalies. There is "exclusion" circle around goal that players cannot go into until the ball goes in that area. This is to prevent someone from playing goalie. Also we want to encourage players to get out onto the field and not just stand guard by the goal.) All of the players (offensive and defensive) can go into the exclusion zone when the ball goes into the exclusion zone. They must leave the "exclusion zone" when the ball leaves the area. 3) No throw-ins. Players place the ball on the ground and kick the ball into play. Encourage them to try to pass to a teammate.

4) No offsides.

5) All kicks are indirect kicks. This means the player cannot kick the ball directly into the goal from a kick-off, kick-in, corner kick, or any kind of free kick. Someone else must touch the ball before it goes into the goal. That is, the ball must be passed to a teammate before a goal can be scored. Opponents must be (3) yards away before the kick is allowed. There are no penalty kicks.

6) Substitutions are allowed anytime the ball is out of play.

7) Play approximately two (12-minute halves). Shin guards are mandatory and soccer socks are required over hard shin guards. Tennis shoes / sneakers or soccer cleats are fine. No cleats with "toe cleat" are allowed (i.e., baseball cleats).

Please play all children evenly.

#### **Do the coaches call fouls?**

Yes, a primary responsibility of the parent / coaches is the safety of the players. I do not care much if all the handballs are called or if the player dribbles out of bounds and then back in. However, it is very important to maintain the safety of the game. There are no slide tackles allowed at this age bracket. The job of the parent/coach is to keep the playing environment fun and safe. When you stop play for a foul or other reason, take the time to explain to the players WHY. Please control the players on the field and help keep everyone safe.

# League: 1st and 2nd Grade

**Location:** ALL Games at Barber Park.

**Format:** 1 Hour: ½ hour practice and ½ hour game.

A) For the first half-hour, each team has their own small field to play soccer games and fun soccer activities. Maximize the fun. Some of the best activities are those that have each child with their own soccer ball. Please refer to your practice guide for some good suggestions.

B) For the second half-hour, please play a game against the other team on the two adjacent fields playing 4 v 4 soccer. Split squad into two 4 v 4 games.

## **1 / 2 Grade League Rules of 4 v 4:**

Two Games Are Played Simultaneously on Two Adjacent Fields

Goals: 4' x 6'

Ball: Size 3

Number of Players: 4 versus 4, there are no goalkeepers

Substitution Procedure: Substitute during any stoppage in play.

Length of Game: 12 minute periods

Offsides: Does not apply

Free kicks: All free kicks are Indirect free kicks. Opponents must move back at least 3 yards.

Penalty Kicks: none.

Throw-Ins: No Throw-Ins. Players make "Kick-ins" instead of throw ins.

Players place the ball on the ground on the sideline and kick the ball into play. Encourage them to try to pass to a teammate.

Goal kicks: Yes. Taken from top of exclusion circle.

Corner kicks: Yes. Cannot score directly from corner kick.

Please play all children evenly

Referee: Coaches act as referees Coaches are encouraged to briefly explain calls to the players.

Equipment: Shin guards are mandatory and soccer socks are required over hard shin guards. Tennis shoes / sneakers or soccer cleats are fine. No cleats with a "toe cleat" are allowed (e.g., baseball cleats or football cleats). No jewelry or watches.

**Please Define the "Exclusion Circle" (or Exclusion Zone):** There are no goalies. There is "exclusion" circle marked around the goal that players cannot go into until the ball goes in that area. This is to prevent someone from playing goalie. Also we want to encourage players to get out onto the field and not just stand guard by the goal. All of the players (offensive and defensive) can go into the exclusion zone when the ball goes into the exclusion zone. They must leave the "exclusion zone" when the ball leaves the area.

**Please Define an Indirect Kick:** All free kicks in the All Stars League are indirect kicks. This means the player cannot kick the ball directly into the goal from a kick-off, kick-in from the sideline, corner kick, or any kind of free kick. Someone else must touch the ball before it goes into the goal. That is, the ball should be passed to a teammate before a goal can be scored. Opponents must be (3) yards away before the kick is allowed. There are no penalty kicks.

### **Common Questions:**

1) Do we have to play 4 v 4?

Yes 5 v 5 has too many kids on the field and it is too crowded. If you do not have enough players, 3 v 3 will work just fine.

2) Do we give the players positions or just have them run around?

I would suggest that everyone teach their kids about offense and defense and some basic positions.

Possibly set them up like this and rotate everyone through all the positions:

X Forward

X X Left and Right Midfield

X Defender

Encourage the offensive player (Forward) to stay in front of his / her teammates so that they have someone to pass to and not to come too far back past the midfield line. Encourage the Midfielders to spread out and to help on offense and get back on defense.

Encouraged the Defender to move up towards the midfield when the ball is on the other side of the field (we don't want him/her camping out by the goal guarding it.) Encourage the defender to be careful how far past the midfield

line he goes because his main job is on defense. This usually works out very well. The 2nd graders will pick it up very quickly while the 1st graders may need a little more time but still will do very well. If all the kids play all the positions, they will learn quite a bit during the season.

### 3) Do the coaches call fouls?

Yes, a primary responsibility of the parent / coaches is the safety of the players. At this age level, we are not too concerned if all the handballs are called or if the player dribbles over the edge of sideline (out of bounds) and then back in. However, it is very important to maintain the safety of the game. There are no slide tackles allowed at this age bracket. The job of the parent/coach is to keep the playing environment fun and safe. When you stop play for a foul or other reason, take the time to explain to the players WHY. Please help keep everyone safe.

## League: 3rd and 4th Grade Soccer

Goals: 6' x 12'

Ball: Size 4

Number of Players: 7 v 7 with goalkeepers

Substitution Procedure: Substitutes at the halfway line prior to stoppage.

Substitution times: Both teams at a: Goal kick, Scored goal, Injury (injured player must leave field).

Team in Possession: Throw-in and Corner kick.

Team not in possession: On throw-in and corner, only if team in possession has substitutes.

Referee: 1

Length of Game: (4) 12 minute quarters

Offside: Does Not Apply

Free kicks: All indirect. Opponents at 8 yd. required distance or on goal line between goal post.

Penalty Kicks: None. All kicks from point of foul or at a location chosen by the referee.

Yellow card: Player must leave game until next substitution opportunity.

Red card: Ejection

Throw-Ins: Yes. Same player gets two chances. Referee can instruct.

Goal kicks: Yes. Taken from anywhere inside the goal/penalty area.

Corner kicks: Yes. Indirect kick.

Referees are encouraged to briefly explain calls to the players.

Equipment: Shin guards are mandatory and soccer socks are required over hard shin guards. Tennis shoes / sneakers or soccer cleats are fine. No cleats with a "toe cleat" are allowed (e.g., baseball cleats or football cleats).

No jewelry or watches. Small ear rings may be taped if they cannot be removed.

Please Define "Indirect" Free Kicks:

All free kicks in the Kickers League are Indirect free kicks. This means the player cannot kick the ball directly into the goal from a kick-off, corner kick, or any kind of free kick resulting from any kind of foul. Someone else must touch the ball before it goes into the goal. (Normally this refers to someone passing the ball to a teammate but it could bounce off an opponent into the goal and count.) Opponents must be (8) yards away before the kick is allowed. There are no penalty kicks.

Please Define "The Advantage Rule":

The purpose of the rule is to keep a player and his or her team from gaining an advantage by committing a foul.

Directs the referee to refrain from stopping play for a foul if a stoppage would benefit the team that committed the violation.

Please Define "Hand" ball:

A couple of points to clarify; First, the rule for a hand ball includes using any part of the body from the tips of the fingers to the shoulder. Second, the proper way to look at this soccer rule is that a player cannot "handle" the ball. A ball that is kicked and hits a player's hand or arm is not a hand ball. This means that the referee must use his or her own judgment to some extent in determining whether or not a hand ball is accidental contact or a purposeful attempt to gain an advantage.

## League: 5th and 6th Grade Soccer

Goals: 7' x 21'

Ball: Size 4

Number of Players: 7 versus 7 with goalkeepers

Substitution Procedure: Substitutes at the halfway line prior to stoppage.



Substitution times:

Both teams at a: Goal kick, Scored goal, Injury (injured player must leave field).

Team in Possession: Throw-in and Corner kick.

Team not in possession: On throw-in and corner, only if team in possession has substitutes.

Referees: 2 or 3

Length of Game: (2) 25 minute halves

Offside: Yes.

Free kicks: Direct and Indirect. Opponents at 8 yd. required distance or on goal line between goal post.

Penalty Kicks: Yes.

Yellow card: Player must leave game until next substitution opportunity.

Red card: Ejection

Throw-Ins: Yes. Foul throw is turned over to opposing team.

Goal kicks: Yes. Taken from anywhere inside the goal area.

Corner kicks: Yes.

Referees are encouraged to briefly explain calls to the players.

Equipment: Shin guards are mandatory and soccer socks are required over hard shin guards. Tennis shoes / sneakers or soccer cleats are fine. No cleats with a "toe cleat" are allowed (e.g., baseball cleats or football cleats).

No jewelry or watches. Small ear rings may be taped if they cannot be removed.

Please Define "Direct" free kick and "Indirect" Free Kick:

The simple difference between the two is this: On a direct kick you can score by kicking the ball directly into the goal. On an indirect kick you cannot score. An indirect kick must be touched by another player before it can go into the goal – that is the kicker and a second person. In the Strikers League, opponents must be (8) yards away before the kick is allowed.

As a parent on the sideline, you can tell whether the kick is direct or indirect by looking at the referee. For an indirect kick, the referee will hold one arm straight up in the air until the second person touches the ball. No arm up, it's a direct kick. There are many soccer rules around what causes a direct or indirect kick. In general, a direct kick comes from a contact foul or hand ball. Everything else is indirect.

Please Define "The Advantage Rule":

The purpose of the rule is to keep a player and his or her team from gaining an advantage by committing a foul. Directs the referee to refrain from stopping play for a foul if a stoppage would benefit the team that committed the violation.

Please Define "Hand" ball:

A couple of points to clarify; First, the rule for a hand ball includes using any part of the body from the tips of the fingers to the shoulder. Second, the proper way to look at this soccer rule is that a player cannot "handle" the ball. A ball that is kicked and hits a player's hand or arm is not a hand ball. This means that the referee must use his or her own judgment to some extent in determining whether or not a hand ball is accidental contact or a purposeful attempt to gain an advantage. A Direct Free Kick is Awarded.

Please Define "Offside" Rule:

I decided to leave the best for last. This is without a doubt the least understood rule by parents and coaches alike. The first thing to know is that you cannot be offside on a corner kick, goal kick, or throw-in. Don't ask me why. Just accept it and go on. The explanation is too long.

Also, it is not an offense for a player to be in an offside position (defined below). The player must be involved in active play as determined by the referee to be called offside. As quoted from the FIFA soccer rules:

A player is in an offside position if: he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent.

Clear yet? I didn't think so.

Try this. An offensive or attacking player can't be ahead of the ball and involved in the play unless there is a defender between him and the goalkeeper. Or, you can't hang out at the other team's goal waiting for the ball.

A few other but's; You can't be offside if you are standing on your half of the field. Also, the offside rule applies when the ball is kicked, not when the player receives the ball.

To be honest with you, this can be a hard rule to understand. Don't get too hung up on it. Trust the referees.

Download the FIFA Laws of the Game.

They have good diagrams of what is and isn't considered offside.

Offside position:

An attacking player positioned so that fewer than 2 opposing defensive players (usually the goalie and 1 other defender) are between him and the goal he is attacking; a player is not offside if he is exactly even with one or both of these defensive players.

## Referee Signals



Indirect free kick



Advantage



Substitution



Offside



Throw-in



Caution



Direct free kick



Sending Off



Offside on the near side of the field



Offside in the centre of the field



Offside on the far side of the field

## Helpful Links and Contacts

Mahomet Recreation Main office – 217-586-6025

Mahomet Recreation Website – [www.mahometrecreation.com](http://www.mahometrecreation.com)

The department also has a small library of instructional books and videos for coaching youth sports, call our office 586-6025 to check one out!

## **Parenting Tips – What it Takes to be a Good Sports Parent**

**Mary-Louise Langlois**

One of the more difficult challenges for parents when their children are involved in youth sports is modeling appropriate behavior – whether it is at a recreational or an elite level.

Sports parents have often read about the success and failure rates of elite athletes; they also know that only a fraction of the millions of kids involved in youth sports “make” it to the professional ranks. Even earning a college scholarship is exceedingly difficult.

While most parents may say that it’s not their dream some still end up taking the entire sport experience far too seriously and cause damage to relationships within – and beyond – the family. Parents sometimes need to really self-reflect and look in the mirror and ask themselves: “Am I a good – or bad – sports parent?”

All kinds of factors come into play – unreasonable expectations, envy, comparing their kids with other people’s kids, that natural human inclination to “compete”. It’s human to be competitive, but what can be done to control or eliminate certain negative behaviors?

Here are five behaviors that are counter-productive but because of the emotion involved are often displayed – and the small steps sports parents can take to try to act more appropriately:

### **PARENTS SHOULD BEHAVE THEMSELVES AT KIDS’ SPORTS MATCHES**

It’s important to team cohesiveness for parents to think about their own behavior during game time. It’s not okay to yell at a child even if they do make mistakes. Nor is it acceptable to cause a problem with team officials or referees.

If a parent has trouble controlling his temper or mouth, he needs to work to address it because in short, it’s a problem – especially for the children. Also, don’t get involved with negative behavior on the part of other parents – avoid temptation. Parents should make it a practice to say positive things only – or nothing.

### **POSITIVE ROLE MODELS CAN SET THE EXAMPLE FOR GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP**

Learning how to be a “good sport” at an early age has many benefits for children beyond sports.

### **AVOID TALKING NEGATIVELY ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE’S KIDS**

As parents, and the adults, it is important not to discuss other children. It’s not up to parents who make a certain team, or how they play, or if they think, certain players are talented or selfish. That’s for coaches to deal with. To speak negatively of other people’s kids opens up all kinds of potential issues. Abide by the old saying – “If you can’t say something nice about someone – say nothing at all.”

### **FOLLOW THE 24-HOUR RULE**

Every mom and dad should remind himself or herself of the *24-hour rule*. That is, if a parent is upset – with his or her own child, or with a coach, he or she should wait for a day to pass, and then make the appropriate effort to discuss the situation. Everyone will be calmer, and the issue may not seem so serious after all. Right after a game or practice is not the right time to approach a coach.

### **KEEP SPORTS FUN**

On the car ride home, it’s just not acceptable for parents to spend time criticizing their young athletes. Don’t take away the fun that is essential to being involved in youth sports. This one should be easy, but for many it’s not. Sometimes parents begin to ask questions or comment on what they didn’t do well, or correctly the moment the child gets in the car. This isn’t constructive; it just makes the entire experience stressful and unpleasant. What’s the point of being involved in youth sports if the child is made to feel bad – playing a sport is supposed to be a fun and healthy activity.

## **GIVE CHILDREN SPACE TO DEVELOP THEIR SPORTING SKILLS**

Parents sometimes have a tendency to stay and watch at practice and this can be a great time to get to know other parents and build positive team chemistry. But if a parent stands to the side at training and appears grim and judgmental, or says things during practice that are not supportive it might be a good idea to go home, relax and pick them up after training is done for the day. Let the children enjoy the practice and the camaraderie of their teammates.

## **BEING A GOOD SPORTS PARENT**

There is much more to being a good “sports parent”, of course. It is essential for parents to be good listeners, be there when things don’t go well, be able to wipe away the occasional tear, and generally help make the experience a great one for their kids. However, if parents don’t always do the right things, they should at least work hard to eliminate negative behaviors that make the experiences less than what they should be for their children. Parents need to be aware the basics: their own behavior, they shouldn’t be negative about anyone – other players, coaches, officials or fellow parents, they should follow the 24-hour rule, remember not to criticize their young athlete, and to give their child the space they need to learn the sport and enjoy their teammates.

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