

# **YOUTH SPORTS HANDBOOK**

Welcome to the Mountain Home Youth Sports program! Our program has been developed and organized to provide a POSITIVE, SAFE, and RECREATIONAL youth sports environment. Each sport offered by our program supports youth development, enhancing the emotional, physical, social, and educational well being of each participating youth, while also providing a fun-filled experience with positive role models that serve as coaches, assistant coaches, and team parents. Our Youth Sports program is also affiliated with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), and, as a result, focuses on the BGCA *Youth Development Strategy*, which states all participating children will have a positive experience that contributes to a positive sense of self-esteem by assuring youth develop a sense of competence, a sense of usefulness, a sense of belonging, and a sense of influence.

The Mountain Home Youth Sports program is a community effort. Our volunteer coaches are the heartbeat of our program. Our staff and faithful volunteers have applied a lot of energy and effort to our very successful sports program!

Our Mountain Home Youth Sports program made a commitment to ensure all volunteers working in key leadership roles with youth would be certified by the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA). Key leadership roles are coaches, assistant coaches, and officials. This certification program is not meant to be a determination of whether a volunteer is an expert coach in a particular sport. The NYSCA certification program provides volunteers an awareness of the current philosophy spreading across our nation: to provide a safe, positive environment for youth involved in out-of-school sports leagues. The NYSCA program works to “sensitize” coaches to their responsibilities when working with children in sports and hold them accountable to the NYSCA Coaches’ Code of Ethics. In addition, parents are required to review and sign the NYSCA Parents’ Code of Ethics

It is the desire of the 366 Force Support Squadron and the Mountain Home Youth Sports program to provide an opportunity for all children to participate in sports if it is their desire to do so. Our program stresses safety and FUN, as well as the basic skill building and good sportsmanship of each participant.

Thank you for your interest, participation, and continued support of our community program. Best wishes for a fun and successful experience in our program!

## **Youth Programs’ Mission**

To assist DoD military and civilian personnel in balancing the competing demands of the accomplishment of the DoD mission and family life by managing and delivering a system of quality, available, and affordable programs and services for eligible children and youth 4 through 12 years of age

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**Mission Statement**

To assist DoD military and civilian personnel in balancing the competing demands of the accomplishment of the DoD mission and family life by managing and delivering a system of quality, available and affordable programs and services for eligible children and you birth through 18 years of age.

**PHILOSOPHY**

“Our program philosophy is to focus on fun and fundamentals of each sport. We are a recreational 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 life time of healthy activities”

**KEY CONTACTS**

**Resource Information for the National Alliance for Youth Sports**

National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS)  
2050 Vista Parkway  
West Palm Beach, FL 33411  
(561) 684-1141  
(800) 688-KIDS  
[www.NAYS.org](http://www.NAYS.org)

**Helpful Telephone Numbers**

**366 FSS**

Youth Sports	208-828-2501
Youth/Teen Center	208-828-2501
School Age Program	208-828-2501
Child Development Center	208-828-2443
Family Advocacy	208-828-7520
DoD Child Abuse and Safety Hotline	877-790-1197

## **Program Policy and Unity**

1. The Mountain Home Youth Sports program is developed and organized to provide an age appropriate recreational sports environment. Each sport supports youth development, enhancing emotional, physical, social, and cognitive development, while providing a fun experience with positive role models that serve as coaches, assistant coaches, and team parents. The administration of the sports program shall be the responsibility of the Youth Programs director and the Youth Sports director. The program's objectives, policies, and procedures are a direct result of community input from youth, parents, coaches, and league administrators.
2. All concerns will be brought to the attention of the Mountain Home Youth Sports Director and/or Youth Director.
3. The policies and guidance reflected in this handbook are hereby implemented representing the community and Mountain Home Youth Programs primary means of governing the program.

## **Eligibility**

1. All parents must attend one mandatory Parent Orientation per year
2. Dependent youth of active duty, military and armed services, and DOD personnel ages four through twelve years of age are eligible to participate. Players **MUST** be four years of age to participate in the youth sports program.
3. Participants must register at the Youth Center, either in person, or via email. Registration must include:
  - a. Parental consent.
  - b. Payment of registration fees (prior to participation in sport).
  - d. Authorization of emergency medical treatment in the absence of a parent and/or legal guardian.
  - f. Physical Examination (in accordance with DoD regulation, youth participating in youth sports must have a youth sports physical at least annually).
4. Youth not wearing appropriate and/or required protective equipment for said sport shall be ineligible to play.

## **Mountain Home Goals for the Youth Sports Program**

1. Provide all Mountain Home youth who desire with opportunities for participation, fun, and enjoyment.
2. To provide opportunities to the Mountain Home youth for the development of lifetime leisure skills.

3. To assist Mountain Home youth with physical development by:
  - Teaching fundamental and safe sports skills appropriate for their age.
  - Improving their physical condition.
  - Teaching sound health habits.
  - Providing safe playing areas and proper equipment.
4. To help Mountain Home youth develop psychologically by:
  - Fostering the development of self-worth and personal identify.
  - Providing the opportunity to express and control emotions.
  - Creating a learning environment.
5. To help Mountain Home youth develop socially by:
  - Learning cooperation and sportsmanship.
  - Providing opportunities to learn independence and the important of teamwork.
  - Providing all youth with opportunities to develop leadership skills and initiative.
  - Providing opportunities to learn how to compete.

## **Program Organization**

1. The Youth Sports program is the responsibility of the Youth Programs director and the Youth Sports director. They will coordinate and assemble base resources through the Youth Center in support of respective league and division matters.
2. The Mountain Home Youth Sports program inter-leagues with other bases for older children during the season.
3. Teams will have no returning players. There will be no player trading once teams have been formed.
4. At parents' request, sibling combinations will play on the same teams. All reasonable requests by spouses of deployed active duty members will be honored.
5. A waiver must be obtained from the Youth Sports director if a parent wishes to move a child to a higher age. If the Youth Sports director approves the waiver, the child will remain on the new team for the remainder of the season.
6. Teams and leagues shall be organized according to age. A maximum of a two-year age division will be used.
7. No coaches, including assistants, shall change teams for the duration of the season unless specifically approved by the Youth Sports director.
8. Once teams have been formed, assignment of remaining players shall be made only by the Youth Sports director.
9. The number of players on a team roster will be determined by the number of players registered and by the Youth Sports director; however, the number shall be as matched between teams as possible.
10. The Youth Sports program will initiate and obtain a completed Installation Records Check on all managers, coaches, and officials.

## **THE INCLUSION POLICY**

**Everyone Plays** – Any eligible child can register and be assigned to a team, regardless of athletic ability. No registered child is ever excluded from participation!

**Children with Disabilities** – because our program’s belief in inclusion is SO strong, we will make any reasonable accommodation for children with disabilities.

We only ask two things:

1. A physician’s note allowing for participation in youth sports, and
2. A “Care Plan” be coordinated between parents, the Youth Sports director, and the coach(s). We want to make sure we meet your child’s needs, so let us brief the coach on what you would do to ensure inclusion!

An appropriate sports environment is offered to support all children’s youth sports experience, including age and development for participation, the type of sport, the rules in the sport, the age range of participants, and the proper level of physical and emotional stress.

Teams or coaches are NOT permitted to cut players. The league is designed to be a learning experience for all the children involved. As the coach, you are here to teach our children a lifetime skill and to promote their feeling of self-worth. The children should be able to enjoy the sport without fearing they may be cut from the team based on their skill level.

Certificates of Participation will be given at the close of each season. **PLEASE avoid giving out any special awards that only recognize certain players or your team.**

Remember that each child needs to be included in EVERY aspect of the game. This includes but is not limited to: every position, captain/leader, player of the game, etc.

## **Positive Points**

**Everyone Plays** – Any eligible child can register and be assigned to a team, regardless of athletic ability. No registered child is ever excluded from participation!

**Playing Time** – Any eligible child is guaranteed equal playing time. Our philosophy upholds the old adage, “It is better to play on a losing team, than sit on the bench of a winning team.”

**Different Levels** – Leagues are designed to meet the age and experience levels of each child.

Our league age groupings are as follows

4 years of age                      10-12 year of age

5 years of age

6-7 years of age

8-9 years of age

**Post Season and All Star Teams** – Our program does not believe post season play for regular season teams is appropriate, nor does our program believe post-season all-star teams are fair. We uphold the belief that NO CHILD BE EXCLUDED from any facet of our program! For us, it is ALL or NONE!

**Participation & Tournament Awards** – our program hands out participation certification at the end of each season’s for the all divisions.

**Safety** – Playing rules, equipment, and playing fields/areas are scaled to maximize safety and performance. The Youth Sports director, all coaches, and all referees are responsible for ensuring the safety of equipment and playing fields prior to each game and practice.

**Suitability of Coaches** - To ensure we have suitable, safe, and trustworthy coaches, a local installation records check and Defense Criminal Investigative Index Check is completed for all coaches, assistant coaches, and specified volunteers. Reference checks are also required and coaches are not allowed to work with children until all references have come back reflective of suitability for working with children. It is also a requirement of our program for coaches to provide three references. Again, coaches are not permitted to work with children until references have come back in a positive light.

## **Program Safety & Risk Management**

1. Safety is a primary factor in the success of any youth sports program. The following policies will be adhered to:

### **GAME/PRACTICE AREA:**

- Participation in unsafe conditions, such as lightening storms, darkness, playing sites in disrepair, etc., is not permitted.
- Playing facilities will be inspected routinely by volunteer coaches and the youth center staff to ensure continual safety.
- Report any neglected areas to the Sports Director as soon as possible.
- Individual game safety rules will be published in the by-laws prepared for each sport.

### **EQUIPMENT:**

- All equipment will be inspected to ensure continual safety.
- Players will only wear protective equipment issued by the Youth Center. Equipment bought by individual players is not authorized unless inspected and approved by the Youth Sports director.
- A fully equipped first aid kit will be provided at each sport activity.

### **PLAYER FITNESS:**

- In accordance with Air Force regulation, youth participating in a youth sports league must have a youth sports physical at least annually.
- Physical conditioning equal to or surpassing the requirements of the game is mandatory.

- Warm up periods (primarily stretching) before any contest to prepare and improve muscle tone and reflexes is a definite advantage to the player and to the team.
- Coaches or leagues are not permitted to require year-round participation in sports.

### **INJURY:**

- Each youth sport coach must be prepared for the possibilities of injuries that may occur on the playing or practice field.
- Like it or not, each coach will be faced with injuries and your ability to take appropriate steps will be invaluable to the players and parents.
- Youth sports coaches are the first line of defense in preventing sports injuries. THE KEY to successful injury prevention is allowing your players the proper amount and type of warm up and cool down periods. Warm up and cool down tips are listed in this training guide.
- Constant and effective control and supervision is by far the greatest preventive safety practice in youth sports.

All coaches must complete CPR and First Aid training.

1. Any player receiving an injury requiring a cast or splint will be placed on the injured list and not allowed to participate for the remainder of the season unless a written consent from the doctor is received by the coach and league administrators.
2. Once a player is removed from a game because of injury or illness, he or she will not be allowed to play if doubt exists as to the nature and extent of injury and/or illness. The game official will determine if the player is able to reenter the game.
3. In accordance with Air Force regulation, youth participating in a youth sports league must have a youth sports physical at least annually.
4. Individual game safety rules will be published in the by-laws prepared for each sport.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES & FIRST AID PROCEDURES**

Every attempt by the staff to prevent a medical emergency is necessary for a safe environment for youth. However, in the event of a medical emergency our first action is to care for the victim, notify the parent, and notify the chain of command of the medical emergency and procedures taken. To ensure that proper care is provided to the victim(s) it is required for all staff members to receive first-aid care and CPR training within the first six weeks of employment.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES & CANCELLATION POLICY**



## **Emergency Procedures for Weather & Catastrophes**

In the event of base closure due to inclement weather, Youth Programs facilities will be closed. If children are in the facilities, parents will be notified by phone and facility will remain open one hour so all children can be picked up. If the parent, legal guardian or emergency contact cannot reclaim a child within one hour, Police will be called to pick up the child.

Regular season games cancelled due to inclement weather / bad driving conditions or unforeseen circumstances ***will not*** be made-up. Extra games are built into the schedules to allow for possible cancellations.

## **NAYS Parents' Code of Ethics**

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parents' Code of Ethics:

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 place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of my personal desire to win.

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 Coaches' Code of Ethics.

I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

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 adults.

I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.

I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.

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 read the National Standards For Youth Sports and do what I can to help all youth sports organizations implement and enforce them.

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## **NAYS Coaches' Code of Ethics**

I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.

I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.

I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.

I will promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.

I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.

I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.

I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.

I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.

I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.

I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.

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## **Providing Positive Reinforcement**

Your support is vital to your child's ability to retain our Code of Ethics philosophy. Your support is also vital to your child's ability to retain concepts taught as part of their youth sports experience. Don't forget to provide your child the opportunity to practice the skills learned at practices and also reinforce lessons learned from participation. For example, if your child "strikes out" at a game and you overhear coach saying, "Hey, you did your best. That is what is important." Remember to repeat this message to your child on the way home from the game. Be POSITIVELY involved and interested in your child's youth sport experience! Without your support (something as simple as saving negative comments about the coach when your child is not present!), the hard and positive work of coaches and our Youth Sport program is often lost.

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

You cannot deficit the child if they do not show up for practice or a game. The parents might have other priorities that take precedence over the sports program. The child is relying on the parent to set priorities and assist the child's development.

## **Program Conduct and Discipline**

### **REMOVAL PROCEDURES AND SUSPENSION**

All coaches, parents, and players must establish and maintain the highest standard of behavior and integrity. The Mountain Home Youth Sports program provides a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free environment. In addition, our program provides a profanity, and violence-free environment. Any violation of the NYSCA Code of Ethics will be addressed and, if appropriate, disciplinary action will be pursued.

**Coaches** – each coach signs the NYSCA Coaches' Code of Ethics. If the coach does not honor this code, he or she will be counseled and possibly lose coaching privileges. Any coach dismissed from a game for unsportsmanlike behavior will be disqualified for the remainder of that game and the next official game in which that respective team participates.

**Parents** – each parent signs the NYSCA Parents' Code of Ethics. This pledge specifies what is expected of all parents. Parents who break the code of ethics can and will be asked to leave the practice/playing area. The playing area is considered any surrounding area, which could be considered close enough to possibly cause further disruptions. Repeated violations will result in permanently being barred from attending sporting events.

In addition, each parent must attend one Mandatory Parent Orientation per year. Orientations are offered throughout the year, prior to the beginning of each sport season.

## **NUTRITION**

“Health is the state of being sound in body or mind” (Information taken from Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus, Copyright 1988).

An interesting fact ...

A study was done looking at families and their eating habits. Less than one-third of American families eat at least two meals together at home each day. Most of your athletes are probably eating on the run or eating poorly. This will affect their athletic performance. As the coach, if you are promoting good eating habits and teaching your athletes to make good choices, you are promoting a healthier lifestyle and helping to maximize their performance (Information taken from NYSCA Journal, Spring 1999, Vol 1, Issue 1)

Parents, if you are promoting good eating habits and teaching your children to make good choices, you are also promoting a healthier lifestyle and helping to maximize their performance!

Parents, please note:

- Rapid weight gain/loss is banned in any Mountain Home Youth Center Sports Program. This can be harmful to your child!
- ALWAYS make sure and assist your coach, if needed, to have plenty of water on hand at practices and games. Dehydration can be serious! Water is the best choice!
- Bring healthy snacks for the young athletes to enjoy after each game.
- Make sure time is allotted to stretch and warm up prior to any practice and game!
- If you notice that an athlete is deprived of proper nutrition and appears to be in need of medical attention, call 911 right away! *Make sure that you stay in contact with the Youth Sports Director in any case of concern in regards to a child.*
- Your child should be conditioned to participate in practice/games and follow practices of good health and nutrition.

## **Sportsmanship**

How we define SPORTSMANSHIP:

The National Summit for Sportsmanship in Youth Sports, (San Antonio, Texas, August 20-22, 1992) developed the following statement with regard to Sportsmanship and this statement was adopted by the National Alliance of Youth Sports:

Sportsmanship has much to do with one's perspective. Good sportsmanship is reflected in respect and compassion for others, respect for the pre-defined sport, and a strict adherence to personal morality. Many unsportsmanlike actions within the youth sports field are a result of a loss of perspective. Adults losing perspective and forgetting that the children and their many needs come first often results in behavior that teaches the children how to be poor sports. We must remember that children learn behavior, such as poor sportsmanship, from watching their parents, coaches and other adults around them.

Parents, please remember:

- Winning should NEVER be a top priority in youth sports!
- It is vital that our youth sports arena be an environment that strives to teach the RIGHT lessons and keeps the WRONG people out!
- A youth sports facility must be maintained as a sanctuary for our children!
- **Adult Rules for Kids Sports:**
  - **Make it FUN!**
  - **Set a good example!**
  - **Cheer for EVERYONE!**

Kids, please remember:

- Respect your opponent
- Role model
  - Shake hands with **opposing coach**
  - Compliment opposing team
  - Show respect toward officials
- Continuously discuss importance of good sportsmanship
- Ignore conduct from opposing team – don't become part of the problem

## **INFORMATION ON CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION, IDENTIFICATION, AND REPORTING**

### **Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting**

All Youth Program staff, coaches, instructors and volunteers are mandated reporters and are held liable if aware of an instance of child abuse or neglect and failed to report. All are trained within 5 days of reporting to work and annually thereafter on proper identification and reporting child abuse and neglect.

### **COMMON INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS:**

- Benching less skilled players. Our program is based on equal play time for each child, regardless of skill
- Grabbing players by their equipment
- Cursing, yelling, or using “put-downs” that demean a child
- Using excessive physical training techniques to punish / discipline young athletes
- Name calling
- Not allowing a young athlete to take a break or to use the restroom when needed
- Depriving young athletes of water
- Throwing equipment at players
- Grabbing or shaking players in a fit of anger

- Using racial slurs
- Stereotyping athletes
- Paying attention to only the best players, casting aside the less talented
- Cutting young athletes from the team
- Hurtful comments and/or participation denial to persons with disabilities
- Demanding unrealistic expectations, perfect performances, etc
- Inappropriate sexual contact between adult and child
- Teaching and/or expecting players to taunt, cheat, intimidate, fight, or trash talk

### **Types of Abuse:**

- Physical Abuse – all must ensure no inappropriate physical contact occurs between adults and children
- Emotional Abuse – a pattern of behavior that attacks a child’s emotional development and sense of self-worth
- Sexual Abuse – involves the misuse of authority and power
- Neglect – involves the failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life
- Philosophical Abuse – “Win-at-all-cost” mentalities, encouraging unsportsmanlike behaviors and condoning or perpetuating inequalities in opportunities are all forms of philosophical abuse

**CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE - ALL adults working with youth are mandated to call in suspected abuse: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453). Always notify Youth Sports Director! 208-828-2501**

### **CHILD ABUSE NUMBERS**

Family Advocacy: 208-828-7520

After Hours Call UCC: 208-828-7520

Statewide: 1-855-552-KIDS (5437)

Local: 208-334-KIDS (5437)

DOD Child Abuse and Safety Violation Hotline: 1-877-790-1197

### **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

**Any instances of child abuse or neglect identified shall be reported as required by DOD – Child Abuse and Neglect in Center Settings.**

- **Youth Programs volunteers and employees will complete a AF Form 1187(Incident/ Accident Report), giving complete details for cause of suspicion. When complete this form will be hand-carried to the Youth Programs Director or supervisor on duty.**
- **Upon receipt of the report, the Youth Programs Director will immediately contact the Family Advocacy Officer at he MHAFB Hospital Mental Health Clinic and the Family Member Programs Flight Chief.**
- **The volunteer or staff will never communicate suspicions with coworkers or parents. All information must remain confidential.**

- **Volunteer or staff observing or suspecting another staff member or volunteer of abusing children must report their suspicions to the Director or Supervisor on duty.**
- **Volunteers or employees accused of child abuse or inappropriate guidance will be removed from the activity immediately. While an investigation is in process, the employee will have no access to youth. Substantiated allegations of child abuse or severe violations of the guidance policy as stated in AFI 34-144 will result in a proposed termination of employment or volunteer services.**