

# North Oakland Family YMCA Youth Sports Parent Packet Table of Contents



- I. Welcome
- II. Introduction – YMCA Mission Statement
- III. YMCA Youth Super Sports Philosophy
- IV. Volunteer Opportunities
- V. Frequently Asked Questions
- VI. Payments/Late Registrations/Refunds
- VII. Inclement Weather/Reschedules
- VIII. Parental Code
- IX. Is Winning Everything?
- X. NCAA Stats

# WELCOME

Welcome to the North Oakland Family YMCA Youth Sports Program. This program is a recreational athletic program, which provides an opportunity for youth to improve skills, develop leadership, sportsmanship, and strive for excellence. This program is committed to fostering an atmosphere of fun and fair play.

We believe that maintaining a positive focus is the key to athletic excellence:

## *Athletes First..... Winning Second*

Young athletes participate in team sports to enjoy the friendship and fun of youth sports. By learning the fundamental skills associated with the various team sports, young athletes develop both maturity and confidence in their abilities. Coaching plays an instrumental role in this development; young athletes need and deserve the proper guidance from volunteer coaches. YMCA programs provide the environment, but as a volunteer coach, you provide the leadership essential to the growth of the participants in the programs.

If you have any questions or concerns at any point during the season, please feel free to call me at the North Oakland Family YMCA at 248-370-9622 ext. 204. I look forward to seeing all of you at the gyms, fields and rinks in the seasons to come.

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Sports Coordinator  
North Oakland Family YMCA

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# Introduction

The Young Men's Christian Association, YMCA, was founded in London, England in 1847 and 1852 in Detroit. It was organized to provide a wholesome Christian environment for young men who had left their farms and moved to the city to work in the factories. Over the years, the YMCA expanded its service to include both male and female participants of all ages. Today, the YMCA Youth Sports still provide wholesome, values oriented atmosphere consistent with the YMCA's original purpose of a century ago.

## YMCA Mission Statement

**To put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs  
which build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.**

## Character Development

Character Development focuses on 4 Core Values that the YMCA incorporates into all of its programs. Those values are Caring, Respect, Responsibility and Honesty. It is the YMCA's goal to highlight these values in the actions of the children and adults involved with the program and provide learning opportunities with team circles about each of the values. For more information regarding Character Development, please contact the Birmingham Family YMCA.

## Youth Super Sports Pledge

The Youth Super Sports Pledge encompasses the traditional values of the YMCA by promoting the true spirit of competition. Before the start of any contest, all participants, parents and coaches will gather together and recite the following pledge:

**Win or lose, I pledge before God, to do my best, to be a team player,  
to respect my teammates, opponents and officials,  
and to improve myself in spirit, mind, and body.**

The purpose of the Youth Sports Pledge is to create unity and to build a sense of sportsmanship among all participants: the athletes, coaches, parents and officials. The YMCA encourages spirited competition that maintains the proper perspective to bring out the best in all those participating.

# Age Group Guidelines

In order to create age groupings that are more consistent, the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit has developed new age group guidelines.

- **ALL BIRTHDATES ARE TAKEN BASED ON THE HONOR SYSTEM. THE YMCA HAS THE RIGHT TO REQUIRE BIRTH CERTIFICATES IF NECESSARY**
- **THE CHILD'S AGE ON AUGUST 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2010 DETERMINES AGE GROUP THAT CHILD CAN PLAY IN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR (SEPTEMBER-AUGUST)**
- **THE YMCA RECOMMENDS THAT ALL CHILDREN PLAY IN THEIR CORRECT AGE GROUP**
- **CHILDREN MIGHT BE ABLE TO PLAY UP A SINGLE YEAR INTO THE OLDER AGE GROUP. IT MAY REQUIRE PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE SPORTS COORDINATOR OR BRANCH OPERATIONS MANAGER**
- **CHILDREN MAY NOT PLAY DOWN INTO A LOWER AGE GROUP**

These guidelines are in place to create balanced leagues and more enjoyment for everyone. Every child needs the opportunity to succeed and fail at the appropriate level.

# YMCA Youth Sports Philosophy

## The Seven Pillars + One

The goals and objectives of YMCA Youth Sports are based on certain beliefs about youth sports, known as the Seven Pillars of Youth Sports plus one.

### PILLAR ONE

#### EVERYONE PLAYS

There are no tryouts or cuts. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team, During the season, everyone plays the same amount of time in every game and has equal practice time. Both the most highly skilled and the least highly skilled players are given equal attention by the coach. At season's end, everyone receives the same award. There are no MVP's or all-star teams. No personal statistics are kept.

### PILLAR TWO

#### SAFETY FIRST

Although children may get hurt playing sports, we do all that we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. Using age appropriate rules and equipment, we help each child have a safe and enjoyable experience.

### PILLAR THREE

#### FAIR PLAY

Fair play requires a clear understanding of the rules by everyone involved: players, coaches, officials, and parents. This is accomplished through training events and materials. Fair play is based on:

- Respect for the rules and the officials*
- Respect for one's self-taking responsibility for one's one behavior and learning*
- Respect for one's teammates working to become a team player who unselfishly contributes to the good of the whole team*
- Respect for the other team*

### PILLAR FOUR

#### POSITIVE COMPETITION

We believe that competition can be a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. When adults make decisions that put the best interests of the players before winning the contest – that's the right perspective. Learning to compete is important for children, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. We want to help these young people today, tomorrow and into the future.

## PILLAR FIVE

### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Youth Sports is not a program for youth only. It involves family members in a variety of ways, beginning with a kickoff event to acquaint everyone with YMCA Youth Sports philosophy. Parents are kept informed about the program through frequent communication, which usually includes a parent-player handbook and often involves a Youth Sports newsletter. Special family events are often scheduled at midseason and season's end. Family members are encouraged to volunteer.

## PILLAR SIX

### SPORT FOR ALL

YMCA Sports is an "inclusive" sports program. That means that children of different characteristics are to be included rather than excluded from participation. No child will be turned away because of disability, race, gender, religious beliefs or ability. In addition, our Financial Assistance program assures that everyone belongs at the YMCA.

## PILLAR SEVEN

### SPORTS FOR FUN

Sports are simply games for people to have fun. Let the child have fun. The game is not about winning or losing it is about the children playing in a safe and fun environment where they can learn and feel challenged. If adults take the fun out of sports, the children may take sports out of their lives.

## PILLAR EIGHT

### SPORTS FOR EXERCISE

Sports are a great way for children to get exercise. Childhood obesity is a nationwide epidemic. Participating in sports gives children the opportunity to get the blood pumping. By learning to exercise in a fun and safe environment, children will continue to exercise outside of their practice or game times.

# Volunteer Opportunities

Every YMCA Youth Sports Program offers several volunteer opportunities for parents who are looking to be involved with their child's team. The volunteer positions listed below, Head Coach, Assistant Coach and Team Parent are just a few ways that you can help out.

## Head Coaches

Head coaches are the most common volunteers at the YMCA. They are responsible for organizing the team's practices and games. They are also responsible for notifying players at the beginning of the season as well as any changes in the schedule. In addition, the coaches are expected to be a role model by portraying proper sportsmanship before, during and after the games.

## Assistant Coaches

Assistant coaches help the head coaches in all aspects of the season, from planning to phone calls to setting the right example. The more assistant coaches the more individual attention each player will receive. Also assistant coaches often fill in when the head coach cannot make a game or practice.

## Team Parent

The role of the Team Parent is to support the coach by taking care of the duties that go along with youth sports but are not directly related to coaching. Responsibilities may include the following:

- Organize the game day snack schedule
- Coordinate communication among the team
- Assists coaches when needed
- Assist in the planning of any end-of-season party
- Report any concerns, issues, or questions that come up at the site to the YMCA
- Make sure the team huddles up and goes over the youth sports pledge before every game

## Others

Whatever your specialty may be, the YMCA Youth Sports Program can use your help. Other options include (but are not limited to): Team Photographer, Site Supervisor, Equipment Manager, Administration Help, etc. If you want to volunteer, we will find a way for you to be involved.

## *MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION ABOUT YOUTH SUPER SPORTS*

### ***Why the YMCA?***

YMCA Youth Sports emphasize the value of learning and growing rather than winning. The YMCA's emphasis on fun and fitness ensures children develop a positive attitude toward physical activity and a healthy attitude toward competition. By focusing on being "a winner in life", and putting winning or losing into the proper perspective, participants can become better citizens in our society.

### ***How do I register my child for a Youth Sports Program?***

Every youth sports program (i.e. basketball, flag football, soccer, and T-Ball) has a different registration form, which must be completed for every youth each season. Registrations may be mailed, faxed, or preferably in-person using cash, check or credit card. It is very important that the registration form is filled out completely at the time of registration – **DO NOT LEAVE ANYTHING BLANK!**

### ***How are teams formed?***

As registrations come in, the Sports Coordinator places participants on teams. Teams are formed by age, requests, school, City, and finally by team need. Since teams are formed at the time of registration, it is imperative that participants with requests register early. **Teams are formed on a first come first serve basis. NO requests are guaranteed!**

### ***When will we hear from the coach and when will practice begin?***

Rosters, game schedules, and rules are handed out at the parent meeting which is scheduled a week before the season begins. Extra copies can be found at the front desk.

A mandatory coaches' meeting is scheduled approximately a week before the season begins. The VOLUNTEER coaches will receive their team rosters, rules, practice location and times. Coaches should begin calling their players after the meeting.

*If you do not receive a call from a coach by the Monday of the first week of practices, please feel free to stop at the YMCA for the practice and game schedules.*

### ***What will happen if our team does not have a head coach?***

YMCA sports are based on volunteerism and not every team initially will have a coach. When a team does not have a coach, three steps will be taken to find a coach. First, an assistant coach will be asked to take on the responsibilities of the head coach. Second, the YMCA will call each parent and try to find a volunteer coach or coaches. Third, the YMCA will set up the first practice to get the group started and find a coach. If after these steps there is no coach, participants will be given a refund. So if you have the time, please volunteer to coach.

### ***When do we receive the uniforms?***

The North Oakland Family YMCA uses the same reversible shirt for all of its sports leagues. We usually have all sizes in stock. You may pick them up at any time. We will have them available at the score table on the first game day.

### ***The team roster is full, but my child has always played on the team?***

The normal registration period is approximately six weeks long. It is always a good idea to sign up early if you have a specific request. Requests are taken on first come, first serve basis. We will not allow additional players on full rosters unless if the coach calls the Sports Coordinator to approve it.

### ***Does my child receive an award?***

Every child that participates in a YMCA Youth Sports will receive an award or medal. Coaches and parents may decide to purchase additional awards for the team. If a team decides to provide the children with additional awards, we ask that the team holds a separate ceremony away from the YMCA, due to the fact that other teams may not choose to give additional awards.

### ***How can I become a Head Coach for my child's team?***

On every registration form, there is an area that invites parents to volunteer for different positions; head coach, assistant coach, and team manager. A background check will need to be filled out by all perspective coaches. This application allows us to check references and backgrounds, ensuring the safety of the children. Each coach needs to attend a mandatory coaches' meeting where they will pick-up a team roster, practice schedule, and a coaches' packet

Parents who volunteer to coach will ALWAYS be placed with their child's team. Coaches are also welcome to coach additional teams if they have the time. Coaching will take about three hours a week: one hour practicing, one hour for games, and the rest for planning, driving and phone calls.

### ***What day, time, and location will my child's team practice and play a game on?***

This is selected by the parent at the time of registration.

### ***What does my child need for practice?***

Players need to bring a full water bottle and wear comfortable clothing. It is mandatory for all participants to wear black shorts for the soccer league. In addition, coaches will inform players regarding any sport specific equipment necessary – i.e. shin guards, baseball mitt, etc. Please make sure to label everything!

# Payments

Every player must be registered and paid prior to participation. Without payment a child will not be placed onto a team. The North Oakland Family YMCA accepts cash, check, Visa, MasterCard, or Discover. Registrations may be dropped off, faxed in or mailed in.

## Late Registrations

Every registration period has a deadline that occurs approximately 2 weeks before the first week of practice. This time allows us to prepare for the upcoming leagues. Occasionally, the YMCA will accept registrations after the deadline, only if there is space available. The following conditions apply to late registrations:

- No requests will be taken – children will be placed onto a team as needed.

The North Oakland Family YMCA would like to emphasize the importance of registering early. Early registration allows the YMCA to better prepare for the season, from getting coaches to securing gyms and field space to placing kids on teams closest to their school. Late registrations require special attention that causes the program preparation to be slowed down.

**PLEASE REGISTER YOUR CHILD EARLY!!!!**

## **REFUND POLICY**

It's no fun to hold a program where no one shows up. Because expenses are the same no matter who shows up, we must adhere to the following guidelines when determining who is entitled to a refund or credit.

- Participants will have program fees fully refunded when classes are cancelled by the YMCA. Refunds are processed through the business office of the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit. A check will be sent to your home and may take up to three weeks to arrive.
- Credits toward other YMCA programs are given when a participant drops a class for a medical reason. A doctor's note is required to receive the credit. The amount credited will be pro-rated.
- The YMCA will not issue refunds or credits based on participant's inability to attend class. This includes schedule conflicts, sick days, vacations, etc.
- There is a \$5 fee to change or cancel out of a class.

# Attendance

If your child is sick or unable to make a practice or game, please contact your coach. This is the responsible thing to do and it will make your coaches' job much easier.

## Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, the Sports Coordinator will make a decision and call the coaches. In most cases, the weather situation on the morning of game days will dictate whether games will be played or postponed and is dependent on the severity of the weather, field drainage and saturation, as well as what has been forecasted. In any event, the YMCA staff will make decisions as early as possible on game days. Any conditions, which hamper the safety of the athletes, will automatically result in postponement or cancellation. **Parents and coaches can call the Sports voicemail at 248-370-9622 ext. 204 at 4:00 p.m. on weekdays and an hour before your scheduled time on the weekends to find out if the practices or games will be played.**

**If the Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, leagues off site at the schools will be cancelled. Leagues at the YMCA will not be cancelled. No credits or refunds will be issued.**

## Rescheduled Games/Practices

When game days are canceled by the YMCA, the regular season will usually be extended an additional week or on another day in order to reschedule that game day. One rain day has been pre-scheduled. Check your calendar for that date in the event that a full day of play is rained out. rainouts will be rescheduled by the YMCA and sent to coaches by mail within 10 days of the rained out game.

# Parents Code

The role that parents play in the life of young athletes has a tremendous impact on their experience. With this in mind, we have written down some helpful reminders for all of us as we approach the upcoming season. If you should have any questions about these thoughts, please feel to talk to your coach or us here at the North Oakland Family YMCA.

Children learn how to be a “good sport” at home! By the time a child joins a team, a sense of sportsmanship (or lack thereof) is already well established.

1. Do not force an unwilling child to participate in sports.
2. Remember children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment, not yours.
3. Encourage your child to play by the rules.
4. Teach your child that honest effort is as important as victory.
5. Turn defeat to victory by helping your child work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship. Never ridicule or yell at your child for making a mistake or losing a competition.
6. Remember that children learn best by example. Applaud good plays by your team and by members of the opposing team.
7. Actively review the values discussions held in your child’s team circles.
8. Do not publicly question the officials’ judgement and never their honesty.
9. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children’s sporting activities.
10. Recognize the value and importance of volunteer coaches. They give their time and resources to provide recreational activities for your child.
11. Support the program: Get involved. Volunteer. Help out with fundraisers, car-pool; anything to support the program.
12. Be your child’s best fan: Support your child unconditionally. Do not withdraw love when your child performs poorly.
13. Support and root for all players on the team: Foster teamwork.
14. Do not bribe or offer incentives: Your job is not to motivate. Bribes will distract your child from properly concentrating in practice and game situations.
15. Help your child keep his priorities straight: Help your child maintain a focus on schoolwork, relationships and the other things in life besides sports.
16. Keep sports in its proper perspective: Sports should not be larger than life for you. If your child’s performance produces strong emotions in you, suppress them. Remember your relationship will continue with your child long after their youth sports days are over.
17. Have fun: This is the most important thing – these kids are just playing a GAME.

# *Bill of Rights for Young Athletes*

- I. Right to participate in sports.**
- II. Right to participate at a level commensurate with each maturity and ability.**
- III. Right to have qualified adult leadership.**
- IV. Right to play as a child and not as an adult.**
- V. Right of a child to share in the leadership and decision-making of his/her sport participation.**
- VI. Right to participate in safe and healthy environments.**
- VII. Right to proper preparation for participation in sports.**
- VIII. Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success.**
- IX. Right to be treated with dignity.**
- X. Right to simply have fun when participating in sports.**

# IS WINNING EVERYTHING?

**If you ask the kids, the answer is "NO"...**  
**And at the YMCA, we firmly agree!**

At the YMCA, winning isn't everything. Our primary goal is to help your child have a positive experience through his/her participation in our program. Our objective in youth sports is to help young people have fun, and to help them develop physically, socially, and psychologically.

In order to achieve our objectives, we need your help. As a parent, we ask you to support our simple philosophy:  
**Athletes First...Winning Second**

Every decision you make and every behavior you display is based first on what you think is best for you youngster, and second, on what may improve the team's chances of winning. Maybe these tips can help put this philosophy into practice.

- ◇ Children should be involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Never force an unwilling child to participate in sports.
- ◇ Encourage your child to respect the rules, and always play by the rules.
- ◇ Teach your child an honest effort is as important as victory. Winning should not be more important than trying.
- ◇ Emphasis in sport should always be on skill improvement and good sportsmanship. Never ridicule your child for making a mistake or losing a competition.
- ◇ Children learn best by example. Applaud good plays and good effort by your team and by the opposing team.
- ◇ Respect and care about the opposing team. Following the game, coaches, players, and parents should come to the center of the field and shake hands.
- ◇ Do not publicly question the official's judgment and never question their honesty.
- ◇ Recognize the value and importance of volunteer coaches. They give their time and resources to provide the best possible experience for your child.

**Let your top priority be the children's amusement and  
the sheer fun of playing the sport, because after all...**

**"It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game."**