



## Mansfield Township Recreation

### Recreation Policies

#### **Policy #1 – Parent/Coach Code of Conduct**

Children's sports are supposed to be fun - for the children. Unfortunately, many parents, fans, and coaches don't realize that their actions, whether verbal or nonverbal, can have a lasting emotional effect on children. Too many children are leaving sports activities because the fun is unfairly taken away by adults. That is why the National Youth Sports Safety Foundation (NYSSF), a non-profit educational organization dedicated to promoting the healthy development of youth in sports, convened a consensus meeting with representatives from more than thirty sports, medical, educational, and professional organizations to create the following Code of Conduct for parents and spectators to abide by at every game. Parents, fans, and coaches who follow this simple code can help reinforce what sports are all about...BEING FUN FOR EVERYONE.

As a Parent/Guardian, I agree:

1. I will not force my child to participate in sports.
2. I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
3. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
4. I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
5. I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice, or sporting event.
6. I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language or gestures.
7. I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well-being of the athletes.
8. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
9. I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
10. I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
11. I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.
12. I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition.
13. I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my child over winning.
14. I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
15. I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
16. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
17. 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.



## Mansfield Township Recreation

I, as parent/guardian, assume all risks and responsibilities for my child/myself while participating in the Recreation Program. As parent/guardian of the registered child, a minor, I herewith authorize treatment by a qualified and licensed medical doctor in the event of a medical emergency which, in the opinion of the attending physician, may endanger his or her life, cause disfigurement, physical impairment, or undue discomfort if delayed. This authority is granted only after a reasonable effort has been made to reach me.

I also agree that if I fail to abide by the forementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or head of league organization.
- Written warning.
- Parental game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file by organizations involved.
- Game forfeit through the official or coach.
- Parental season suspension.

Remember... be kind to your child's coach and to the officials. The coach is a volunteer - giving of personal time to provide a recreational activity for your child. The coach is providing a valuable community service, often without reward other than personal satisfaction. Without them your child could not participate.

### **Policy #2 - Coaches' Responsibilities**

All Volunteer coaches will:

- Submit to a background check through Identogo Fingerprinting as required by Township Ordinance 2024-3. Coaches will be reimbursed for this expense by the Recreation Department.
- Attend a Rutgers SAFETY Clinic for partial protection against civil liability as required by Township Ordinance 2024-3.
- Complete mandatory concussion training through CDC Head's Up Online training or comparable program.
- Attend township sponsored clinics, meetings or training sessions relating to their specific sport. Such events may be scheduled before, during or after the season.
- Prepare for the season by studying the rules of the game and organizing efficient practices to teach strong fundamentals of the sport.
- Explain all practice and game schedules to ensure that all players have the opportunity to attend as many practices and games as possible. All participants must participate to an acceptable level in the individual sport.
- Review first aid principles and survey the field and equipment before games and practices to ensure a safe environment.
- Encourage sportsmanship, teamwork and a strong work ethic in practice and games. Recognize leadership and initiative in players.
- Stress strong fundamental play during games rather than setting winning as the goal. With strong fundamentals, winning takes care of itself.
- Coach and lead by example when dealing with opposing coaches, officials, parents, and players by treating all involved with respect.
- Coaches are responsible for players while under their supervision. Every effort must be made to keep tabs on the players' actions and whereabouts.
- After the completion of a game or practice, ensure that all children have rides home with parents or other responsible adults. Children must never be left unattended.



## Mansfield Township Recreation

- Coaches are responsible for assigning a team parent to assist with various responsibilities throughout the season. Responsibilities include but are not limited to, gathering forms, notifying participants of practices and games, collecting uniforms and equipment etc.
- Coaches are responsible for the condition of fields and facilities following their practices/games. The indoor facility, fields, dugouts, and equipment sheds should be left in a clean and orderly manner. All trash and recycling should be disposed of properly.
- Coaches will assess player progress during the season for possible inclusion on post-season tournament teams.
- Ensure that all uniforms and other equipment are returned within one week of the end of the season.

### **Policy #3 - Coach Selection**

Coaching a Mansfield Township Recreation team is considered to be a privilege. The responsibilities are enormous in that a coach has the opportunity to influence and shape, positively or negatively, a child's attitude especially towards athletics, sportsmanship, and team play for life.

A parent, guardian, resident, or adult eighteen years of age or older should make his or her desire to coach known by volunteering through Team Sideline, or by contacting the Recreation Coordinator, the sport subcommittee chair, or the Recreation chairperson. All adults communicating their desire to coach will be responded to and considered using the criteria outlined below.

Selection of coaches for all Mansfield Township Recreation sponsored teams will be administered as follows in descending order of precedence but will take into consideration all points:

#### Head Coach Selection

For teams represented solely by Mansfield Township residents, a Mansfield Township coach will volunteer or be appointed as the head coach by the recreation subcommittee for that sport, using the following criteria:

- A head coach who had served as head coach the previous year and wishes to head coach again.
- A parent of a player on a team in a specific sport who was the head coach the previous year who wishes to coach again.
- A parent of a player on a team in a specific sport who was an assistant the previous year who wishes to be the head coach.
- A parent of a child playing in the league or age bracket whom volunteers to coach, and there are no other volunteers. The prospective coach will be asked to provide a resume or short summary of his/her coaching history, teaching background, athletic background, or other pertinent qualifications.
- If the number of parents of players offering to volunteer as a head coach exceeds the number of teams available in that league or age bracket, and if there is no agreement between individuals on who should be the head coach, the recreation subcommittee for that sport will make the decision based on the following criteria:
  1. Competency based on the input from the individuals on the recreation subcommittee for that sport, other coaches, and parents.
  2. Seniority as a coach in Mansfield Township, assuming all other qualifications for that sport are equal.
  3. Experience as a coach in the Township or elsewhere
- If a parent volunteers to coach, and there are no other volunteers, and the lone parent is inexperienced as a coach, every effort will be made to provide an assistant who is more experienced or qualified, but who may not be able to offer the time necessary to be the head coach.



## Mansfield Township Recreation

- A Mansfield Township resident who, a) has coaching experience, b) is not a parent of a player in the specific league, c) is a parent of a player that plays or played in the Mansfield Township Recreation program.
- A Mansfield Township resident who, a) has coaching experience, b) is not a parent of a player that plays or played in the Mansfield Township Recreation program.
- A Mansfield Township resident who a) is a parent of a player that plays or played in the Mansfield Township Recreation program, b) has little or no coaching experience.

All coaches will be required to adhere to the Mansfield Township Recreation Mission Statement, and the Coaches Responsibilities outlined herein.

### **Policy #4 - Player Assessments**

Registered players must attend a pre-season assessment session. The coordinator is to schedule the assessments with the appropriate facility and provide each coach/assessor with a clipboard and pen. The rules for the facility must be followed where it pertains to food, drink, clothing, etc. At least one makeup session should be scheduled. Assessments should be conducted as follows:

- Head coaches will be invited to attend assessments.
- There should be at least three unbiased assessors in addition to the coaches to assess players
- Parents are NOT permitted to attend assessments. They must wait outside of the gym/facility.
- ALL players MUST assess - even coaches' children - no exception.
- If a player does not assess, it is at the discretion of the sport chairperson(s) to assign the player to a team.
- Any player wishing to "play up" must assess at the age-appropriate level and the decision will be made by the sport subcommittee as to whether the player can be moved up.
- Players' names should not appear on the assessment sheets. Each player is assigned a number that will correspond to the label placed on the front and back of the player.
- Players' skills are ranked from 1 - 5.
- The sheets are collected from the coaches when the assessments are completed.
- The coordinator will work with the sport subcommittee to input the players' assessment scores into the excel spreadsheet which will be used for team selection.
- Split spreadsheets into rounds dependent on the number of players in the division.

### **Policy #5 - Team Roster Formation**

Team rosters will be formed so that talent level and age ranges are distributed equally among teams in each division or age bracket so that, to the best of the program subcommittees and coaches' knowledge, parity will prevail between the Mansfield Township teams in that program. Formation of team rosters in Mansfield Township Recreation programs will be administered as follows:

- Registrants MUST participate in the appropriate league or age bracket depending upon their respective birthdays or grade in school. Requests by parents to play their child at a more advanced level of competition will only be considered once the player is reviewed in a skills assessment by the subcommittee to ensure that they can play at the advanced level. In assigning younger players to these teams, the sport subcommittee will make every effort to ensure that parity among teams is maintained.
- Head Coaches and, in some instances, Assistant Coaches will be assigned by members of the sport subcommittee. Assistant Coaches will be assigned based on the make-up of the team during team formation.



## Mansfield Township Recreation

- If practical and desired, head coaches can participate in team selection. Numbers should be drawn from a hat to determine who selects first and selection should proceed in a snake system, ie. 1 to 3 and then 3 to 1.
- The child or children of the head coach must be placed on that coach's team in the round where the child falls based on their assessment.
- After the end of each round, the scores should be even. If they are largely out of proportion trades must be made. This process is followed until all players are rostered.
- If the number of registrants in a specific age bracket or league results in the formation of teams which, in the opinion of the sport subcommittee, consist of too many or too few participants, the members of the sport subcommittee - at their sole and absolute discretion - may invite players from the next younger league or age bracket to participate at the older level.
- Special requests within leagues or age brackets by parents needing assistance for car-pooling, medical, or work-related reasons will be reviewed by the sport subcommittee. Team equality and parity will take precedence in these cases. Requests to be assigned to a specific coach will not be considered.
- At the youngest age levels, i.e., wiffle tee-ball, tee-ball, mini-basketball, and instructional soccer, players will be divided among teams by the subcommittee to equalize ages and number of boys and girls on each team.
- Coaches must assess their players at the end of each season to assist in distributing talent and forming equal teams in subsequent seasons.
- Coaches "moving up" to coach at the next level MAY NOT bring their entire team from the previous year up to the next league. Players moving up will be pooled and selected in a round-robin type fashion, with player assessments from the previous year available to each coach selecting players for the season. This clause is designed to give kids an opportunity to play, learn, and experience different coaches and coaching methods. It also gives a player an opportunity to learn from a coach that he/she would not have if he/she stayed with one coach from year to year and league to league.

### **Policy #6 - Procedure for Complaints and Disciplinary Review**

The procedures that a participant, parent, assistant coach, official, or spectator must follow when a comment, recommendation, criticism, or complaint is to be made regarding Mansfield Recreation policies, are as follows:

The Head Coach of the team must be approached initially to make him/her aware of the concerns. This will be done discreetly, in a one-on-one meeting or by phone, in a professional and constructive manner.

The Recreation subcommittee chairperson for the activity or sport should be notified by phone call if the concerns have been brought to the attention of the Head Coach, but not addressed satisfactorily. The subcommittee chairperson must then contact the Head Coach and attempt to resolve the situation.

The complainant's concerns should be documented in writing by the Recreation subcommittee chairperson for the activity or sport involved, with copies sent to the Head Coach, the complainant, and the Recreation Committee chairperson for review.

Failure to comply with the intent of the Mansfield Township Recreation Committee Policies may result in a formal review by Township Recreation Committee. Pending the outcome of such review, a participant, parent, spectator, or coach may be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the Mansfield Township Recreation Committee. Such action may include a written reprimand, probation, suspension, or expulsion of which all decisions shall be subject to review by the Mansfield Township Committee Liaison.



## Mansfield Township Recreation

If a Club feels a complaint regarding an officiating situation is warranted, it may file a report in writing with an applicable Recreation Committee representative who shall forward such a report to the appropriate officiating representative. Such a report may only be submitted by the head coach.

### **Policy #7 - All-Star/Tournament Coach Selection & All-Star/Tournament Team Formation**

To challenge and reward the players in a league that have demonstrated a high skill and talent level during the regular season, all-star/tournament/travel teams may be selected near or at the conclusion of the regular season.

#### Head Coach Selection

For teams represented solely by Mansfield Township residents, a Mansfield Township coach will volunteer or be appointed as the head coach by the recreation subcommittee for that sport. Coaches interested in such positions shall make their intentions known to the sport's sub-committee chairperson within four (4) weeks following the start of the respective sports' season. Coaches will be selected based on the following criteria:

- A coach of a regular season team volunteers to coach the all-star/tournament team, and there are no other volunteers.
- If more than one coach volunteers for the position of head coach, and if there is no agreement between individuals on who should be the head coach, the recreation subcommittee for that sport will make the decision based on the following criteria:
  1. Competency based on the input from the individuals on the recreation subcommittee for that sport, other coaches, and parents.
  2. Seniority as a coach in Mansfield Township, assuming all other qualifications for that sport are equal.

Coaches will be required to adhere to the intent of the Mansfield Township Recreation Mission Statement, and the Coaches Responsibilities outlined therein.

#### Player selection, Team goals, Head Coach responsibility

Nomination and selection of players to an all-star/tournament team is based on the appraisal of the skill and talent of each individual player by the regular season head coach, and then a selection committee of coaches. The goal of the all-star/tournament team is to succeed and advance in the tournament. Therefore, selection for such teams will not be based on player seniority, unless the tournament rules provide for an age restriction. If, for instance, the age bracket for the tournament team is ten through twelve years old, the most skilled and talented children in that age bracket may be selected, regardless of seniority (i.e., selecting a less skilled twelve-year-old over a more skilled ten-year-old is not required).

Additionally, it is up to the discretion of the head coach of the regular season team who should or should not be nominated for inclusion on the tournament team. A more skilled or talented player may not be nominated based on the coaches' experiences during the year that may include the player not working with fellow players as a team, lack of discipline and respect, poor attendance, etc.

Formation of tournament team rosters in Mansfield Township Recreation programs will be further administered as follows:

- Candidates will be nominated by the head coach from each Mansfield Township team in the league.
- A meeting of the head coaches and assistants (Selection Committee) from each team will be convened to determine the final roster by vote (equal number of votes per team; if only a head coach attends the meeting, only head coaches will vote on the roster). Roster size will be determined by the rules of the league tournament being entered.
- Rosters may be filled according to the position needs of the tournament team. For example, in baseball/softball, the Selection Committee may decide that it is more important to have a third





## Mansfield Township Recreation

catcher who is less skilled or talented overall than a fifth outfielder because of the needs of the team at the catcher's position.

- Unless the league tournament rules require it, there will be no minimum playing time required for players on tournament teams. Coaches will be encouraged to substitute and play as many players as possible as the game situation dictates, but the goal of the tournament team is to succeed and advance. The head coach alone makes the final determination as to how best to achieve the goals of the team.
- Comments or concerns by assistant coaches and/or parents must follow the procedures outlined in Recreation Policy #6 – Procedure for Complaints and Disciplinary Review.

### **Policy #8 - Team Sponsorship**

Sponsorship of Mansfield Township Recreation teams will be administered as follows, in descending order of precedence, pending approval by the Mansfield Township Recreation Committee.

- The head coach of a team who wishes to have their business, employer, or another business sponsor his/her team.
- An assistant coach who wishes to have their business, employer, or another business sponsor his/her team..
- A parent of a player on the team who wishes to have their business or employer sponsor the team.
- A business which sponsored a specific team in a specific sport the previous year that wishes to sponsor that team again.
- A business that sponsored a team in that sport the previous year.
- A business who sponsored a team in any sport the previous year.
- A business which did not previously sponsor a team that requests to sponsor a team in a particular sport.

All sponsorship inquiries or requests must be submitted on the Sponsorship Form available through the Recreation Township Committee.

### **Policy #9 - Field Safety**

Mansfield Township considers the safety of the participants using recreational fields paramount.

To maintain safe fields for use, Mansfield Township will establish a schedule for the closing of athletic fields for organized sports. During this time, Mansfield Township will not maintain fields, activate lights or scoreboards, and users will play at their own risk. This period is needed for the fields to regenerate growth and recover from the previous season. Maintenance includes mowing the grass, dressing infields, or correcting any safety issues.

The schedule is as follows:

- All Baseball/Softball fields close November 1<sup>st</sup>
- All Soccer fields close December 1<sup>st</sup>

Fields will open once the Township prepares all fields for use in the spring of the following year. Spring sports coordinators will be informed when the fields are available for use.

The Recreation Coordinator will have the ultimate decision on the safety of the fields and whether they are playable or not at all times.

### **Policy #10 - Uniform Ordering**

It is the intention of the recreation committee to obtain competitive bids for uniforms to ensure the lowest price from the qualified vendor to keep registration costs as low as possible. Although the total cost for



## Mansfield Township Recreation

uniforms may not fall under the New Jersey bidding rules, the recreation committee feels there is a fiduciary responsibility to the registered families of the sports programs.

- Sports chairperson to provide coordinator with specific specifications for desired uniform. This includes manufacturer and model number, placement of logos, numbers or any other work that needs to be completed by the vendor. All uniform parts will be quoted as ONE package.
- Should the sport subcommittee decide there will be any ancillary pieces added to the uniform (ie. warmups, special event socks, etc.), a separate round of quotes will be requested.
- The recreation coordinator will send out quote requests. To ensure the best price is received, an approximate number of pieces should be sent to the coordinator with the package, as well as the requested delivery date. Vendors utilized for quote purposes will be sent from a list of approved providers as provided to the coordinator. It is suggested this be maintained on a yearly basis by sport.
- Recreation coordinator to report back to sport chairperson upon receiving all quotes. Vendor to be awarded that order will be based upon the following criteria:
  - Lowest bidder.
  - Local business has priority if there is a tie.
- Coordinator will notify all vendors as soon as a decision is made.
- Coordinator will place order once the sport chairperson approves and submits to the coordinator the final uniform list. The order will be in the format as desired by the vendor.
- Should the vendor need to make any changes to what was quoted and accepted, it is to be put into writing to the coordinator. The coordinator will review and send to the sport chairperson for comment. Many material changes to the product quoted and accepted will need to be discussed before any changes are made.
- Coordinator will follow up to make sure products are delivered according to desired delivery date and location.
- Coordinator will work with vendor should there be any delivery or other issues as sent in writing to the coordinator by the sports chairperson.
- If there is an issue with a vendor, such as non-delivery, change of product, or any other material issue, they are to be reported to the coordinator and discussed with the Recreation Committee Chairperson as to whether they remain on the vendor list. Any remedy that the vendor has undertaken and total past performance of the vendor should also be reported.
- Coordinator will submit for payment the invoice once delivery has occurred and any issues resolved. Total cost will be reported to the Committee but will not require Committee approval.

### **Policy #11 – Registration Refunds**

Refunds may be issued prior to assessments. If the refund is issued, it will be less any administrative fees associated with the fee. Once assessments have concluded, a player is not eligible for a refund.

---

Originally reviewed by the Mansfield Township Recreation Committee, September 1997.

Reviewed and approved by the Mansfield Township Recreation Committee, October 1998.

Revised and approved by the Mansfield Township Recreation Committee, November 2007.

Revised and approved by the Mansfield Township Recreation Committee, April 2023.

**Revised and approved by the Mansfield Township Recreation Committee, February 2024.**