

## SPORT PARENT 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, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Governors Committee on Physical Fitness and 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. The Code of Conduct can also be found at [www.nyssf.org](http://www.nyssf.org).

Parents, fans and coaches who follow this simple code can help reinforce what sports are all about...  
BEING FUN FOR EVERYONE.

### Preamble

The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character." 1

I therefore 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 other 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 wellbeing 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 participant for making a mistake or losing a competition.

13. I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my child over winning. I will also deemphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.

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.

I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned 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

In addition, please see updates to our "Conduct" section of our by-laws:

**Player Behavior:** Treat your teammates and your opponent as you would like to be treated. Be a good sport at all times and remember you represent your parents, and your team. Play by the rules. Control your behavior at all times. Use of bad language is unacceptable. Do not do anything that would endanger your opponents, your teammates, your coaches, yourself, or officials. Compete and prepare to win, never cheat to win.

**Parent/Spectator Code of Conduct:** Always keep in mind that the players are grade school children trying to learn a game, the team concept, improve their skills, and learn life lessons. They are NOT playing for the entertainment of the spectators. Applaud good performances from both teams. Congratulate all players regardless of the outcome. Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during competition. Be positive. Condemn the use of violence in any form, be it by spectators, coaches or players. Be part of the solution NOT the problem when it comes to criticism and possible violence. Show respect for your teams' opponents. Encourage players to obey the rules and decision of officials. Demonstrate appropriate social behavior by not using foul language, harassing players, coaches, or officials. Calmer heads always prevail.

**Spectator Misconduct:** If, in the judgment of the referees or a Board Member, spectator behavior is out of line with respect to the code of conduct, the referees will call a stoppage of play, and confer with the game coaches and Director on Duty. The Director on Duty will in turn be responsible to contact the spectators for the purpose of correcting the inappropriate behavior. If the inappropriate conduct is not corrected, the offending spectator may be asked to leave the gym. Failure on the part of the spectator(s) to comply may result in the referee calling a premature end to the game. The Vice President will be contacted, and a determination will be made whether further action is necessary.

**Player Misconduct:** If a referee determines that a player is exhibiting inappropriate behavior, the referees will stop play and confer with the coach to correct the inappropriate behavior. The use of technical fouls will continue as in the past, including mandatory suspension of a player for game ejection. If, in the judgment of the officials, a player's conduct is extremely out of line, they will file a report to the Referee Director who in turn will contact the Vice President to review the situation and a determination will be made whether further action needs to be taken.

**Subsequent Action Penalties:** If it is determined by the league officials, head of referees, and/or the League Director that misconduct is of such a severe nature that a meeting is required to determine if further penalties or sanctions should be imposed on the offending parties, Vice President will call a meeting of the Executive Board and involved parties to review the incident. Failure of involved parties to attend the meeting may result in suspension.

**Social Media Policy:** Coaches, Players, Parents, Officials and Board Members are prohibited from posting anything on social media – direct or implied– that could be implied as negative, critical, or derogatory in reference to any specific BYBA affiliated individual/teams other than his or her own self or children. Positive comments are of course fine. Posting critical comments on officiating on a social media platform is prohibited by anyone affiliated with a BYBA team. Much like professional sports, college sports, or MIAA (Massachusetts HS sports), commenting on officiating via any media platform (print, electronic, social or otherwise) is not allowed. And suspensions are given for any such activity. Any offense of this guideline will result in a game suspension for the first offense and removal from the league for a 2nd offense. This includes spectators, parents, coaches, directors, and players.