



## YOU CAN COACH A YOUTH SPORTS TEAM!!

Enthusiastic and positive volunteers are needed each season to coach our Youth Sports teams.

**Coaching a team of youngsters can be a tremendously rewarding experience**, giving you the opportunity to help young players grow and learn, face challenges and experience success.

**No prior coaching experience necessary** - as a youth sports Coach, you will be given resources and support to help you succeed.

**If you have a child playing in the league, you will coach their team.**

Volunteer coaching positions will be filled, as needed, by registration deadline.

**All coaches must successfully complete a Background Check, conducted by SSCI, and the CDC Heads-Up Concussion Awareness Training (~ 30 minutes)**

### FCPR Recreational League Coaching Overview

- Coach a team of boys and girls, ages 5-11yrs
- Coach practices 1 weekday evening per week for 1 hrs in duration
- Coach Games on weekends for 1 hrs in duration
- Teach players the fundamentals of the game
- Emphasis on sportsmanship, fair play, and full participation
- Provide a safe and fun environment for the players
- Learn and follow all league rules, policies, and procedures
- Give each player equal playing time
- Put the feelings of the players ahead of the coach's desire to win
- Communicate effectively with parents and coaches, as needed

### Qualifications

- Successfully pass a criminal background check
- Complete Heads Up Concussion Awareness Online Training (~ 30 minutes)
- Attend Pre-Season Coach's Orientation Meeting with League Director
- Be enthusiastic, organized and dependable
- Makes ensuring a positive experience for players a priority over winning
- Be patient, especially with the players
- Have a working knowledge of the sport
- Be open to suggestions and advisement from FCPR Staff and League Director

### How to Volunteer

[Apply here to be a volunteer youth coach](#)

[SSCI Background Screening](#)

[CDC Heads-Up Concussion Awareness Training](#)

# LEAGUE EXPECTATIONS FOR COACHES

As a coach in the league, it's important to have a good understanding of the league mission and its guiding principles. In addition, we as an organization have made a number of promises to your players' parents and are relying on you to help us keep these promises.



## FCPR Youth League Mission

FCPR youth leagues strive to create and maintain a positive, no-pressure atmosphere in a fun, safe and supportive environment for young athletes. Healthy competition is promoted, rather than the high-pressure, "win-at-all-costs" mentality prevalent in so many youth sports leagues today. The primary focus is on the kids having fun. No matter the outcome of the game, every child is a winner.

Being a community based recreational league with "Everyone Plays" and "Equal Playing Time" policies, children of all sizes, athletic abilities, and experience are encouraged to participate in the action. Players are taught the fundamentals of the game, improve their athletic skills, stay active, and learn important life lessons and skills such as good sportsmanship and teamwork to help them succeed both on and off the field.

## Promises FCPR and its Coaches Make To Parents

### 1. This is a recreational league

This means ensuring all the kids are having fun and getting an opportunity to play takes precedence over any coach or parent's desire to win.

### 2. Equal Playing Time

All players get about the same playing time. Our league philosophy includes a promise to get everybody involved and made to feel like they are an important part of the team. That means rotating positions and giving every kid a chance to make a play.

### 3. Practices are 1 Hour, One Night per week

We promise parents that practice will be 1 hr in duration and that would be the only practice for the week. Please DO NOT schedule any additional mandatory practices. Encourage your players to practice with their parents and friends and give them things to work on. Informal "we're going to throw the ball around at the park at 4 pm Thursday if you'd like to come by and play" get together are allowed, but they must be optional and no player should ever be penalized on game day for not attending an optional practice. Feel free to send team emails with any pertinent information you'd like to impart.

### 4. Promoting a love of sports and exercise

With regard to discipline, if you keep practices light and fun for the kids and limit the time spent standing around, you shouldn't have any kids messing around during practice. But if you do, **never discipline a kid by making them do push-ups, run laps or any form of exercise** - we're trying to promote a lifelong love of exercise so it should not be used as

punishment. Instead, sit them out for a minute or a 2 - they are here to play so sitting them out, depriving them of that, is usually an effective way to get their attention.

**5. Teaching kids the value of good sportsmanship and teamwork.** Be a role model for these kids – that means always being respectful of the officials, coaches and players on the opposing team. It's easy to get caught up in the game and the competition, but please remember, ultimately, all the coaches and officials are there for the same reason: to ensure that the kids are having fun and playing in safe environment. Never get into it with an official or an opposing coach, player or parent. Remember, the kids will see the way you act - be a role model for these kids by displaying good sportsmanship at all times and graciousness in both victory and defeat and you will earn their respect.

**6. Player safety is the top priority.** All coaches are required to take the CMC Heads Up Concussions In Youth Sports training. Please take it seriously – if you have any concern whatsoever that a player may have suffered a concussion, sit him or her out for the rest of the game. **When In Doubt Sit Them Out** is our policy regarding any potential head injury. No exceptions.

## Keys to Coaching Success

### Have a Plan for the Season

Have a game plan for yourself, your assistant coaches, your players and parents. Make sure you keep it focused and you set the proper expectations prior to your first practice.

### Your First Practice

This is your most important practice of the year. This practice will set the tone for your players, coaches and parents. Make sure it is organized, has high intensity and that everyone is involved. Have a fun game or drill to end practice with that everyone will remember and look forward to doing again in the next practice.

**Drills:** What drills will your players need to work? Put these together in a logical order starting from very basic fundamental drills to more complex. Drills will help your players improve their game and your strategy. [See recommended drill and skill sheet attached.](#)

### The Importance of Time Management

Managing your practice time is the most difficult task for any coach. You never have enough time to run enough plays, practice every drill and cover every possible play. Prior to the start of the season is the time for you to think of ways you can maximize your practice time effectively.

## Letter to Parents and Players

Once you receive your roster for the upcoming season, the first thing you'll want to do is send an email to the parents and players introducing yourself and setting expectations for the team, players and parents. In most cases, your letter will be the first time your players and parents hear from you as a flag football coach.

Here is a list of items to address as a flag football coach in your letter to players and parents:

<b>Coaches:</b>	Names, Titles, Contact Information
<b>Location:</b>	Practice and Game Fields
<b>Schedule:</b>	Practice and Games
<b>Team Goals:</b>	Have Fun, develop friendships, teamwork, skill development

<b>Coaching Philosophy:</b>	Practice Expectations
<b>Communication:</b>	Team Announcements via Phone, Text, Website, Social Media
<b>Volunteers:</b>	Team Mom, Snacks, Other
<b>Team Pictures:</b>	Date and Time
<b>Equipment:</b>	Required Player Equipment
<b>Parents:</b>	Practice at home with your player
<b>Handling Issues:</b>	How to bring up issues or concerns with coaching staff (not at practice or games)

## Pre-Season Goal and Expectation Setting

Setting goals will help you provide a road map for your team's season. The most successful coaches in football all set goals. Setting goals is the most important task in coaching because the goals you set will guide your team strategy, coaching, practices and games for an entire season.

### Team Goals and Expectations

Team goals will set the mission for your season for your coaches, players and parents (if applicable). Make sure you are setting realistic goals for your team based on your team personnel. This can be a delicate balance - you do not want to set your goals too low or too high. Make sure you challenge your players as the season progresses.

### Coaching Goals

- Communicating Effectively with players and parents
- Teaching players the fundamentals of the game
- Motivating your team effectively
- Utilizing Positive Reinforcement with your players
- Being Fundamentally Sound
- Being Competitive in Every Game
- Being Accountable to your team
- Have Fun no matter the outcome of the game

### Player Goals

- Commitment to Practicing with 100% Effort at every practice
- Have Fun no matter the outcome of the game
- Accountable for Myself, Family and Team
- Practice at 100% Each Practice
- Improve My Skills
- Be A Leader and a Good Sport to opposing team

### Parent Goals

- Encourage and Support My Player and opposing team
- Positive Reinforcement
- Let The Coaches Coach and refs officiate the games
- Teach and Practice at Home

## Getting Started

Teaching young players the game can be really fun and ultimately rewarding. As coach, you will be looked upon as a teacher, leader, role model and authority figure by the kids on your team. Don't underestimate the influence (positive or negative) you can have upon a child. Kids are very impressionable and will watch your every move. The team will take your lead, adopt your attitude and take on your personality.

Sounds daunting, but while you shouldn't be overwhelmed by the responsibility, you also should not take your coaching responsibilities lightly.

Helping others, especially children is such a rewarding endeavor. If you can have even the slightest positive influence on a child's life, your coaching experience will have been a success. Watching a player improve as both player and as a person can be one of the most fulfilling accomplishments a person can have. Valuable lessons kids can learn from sports:

- Ethics and how to follow the rules
- Coping with Failure: How to cope with both winning & losing
- Goal Setting - How to set and work toward achieving goals
- Teamwork - How to work with others
- How to respect authority
- How to follow directions

League Rules - Prior to the start of the season, obtain a **copy of the League Rules** and familiarize yourself with them.

Practices and Games – know when and where and have schedules to distribute to parents as needed

Equipment – To effectively run a team, you should have all the equipment that is handed out to you by the league director. Make sure to keep track of your equipment and that nothing is left behind after any practice or gam



## Communicating With Players

### Communication

The most important and most difficult task you as a coach will face is effectively conveying your message to your players. When talking to your players, remember that they are young. **You** need to talk down to their level. When explaining a drill or concept, do not get too technical. Yes, you must teach the basics, but do it in a way so that **THEY** can understand. If you explain a drill 3 times to your team, and they don't understand it, guess what!? **YOU** are explaining it wrong!

### Keep It Simple

Always keep it simple enough for all your players to understand. This is not the Pros, and the main purpose is ensuring the kids are having fun. Make sure that every player has an equal opportunity to participate and feel like they are a valuable part of the team.

### **Always remember this is all about the children and having fun.**

As a coach you should inspire your players to give their best and work well with other team members to achieve the team's goals. You are a role model for the children under your wing. What you do impresses them more powerfully than what you say. Strive to emphasize sportsmanship, character, and trust.

### **Ask Questions**

If you're explaining a play, ask them questions like, "What's the reason for this?" or "Is there anything we should watch out for when trying this out?" The fact that you're asking them reinforces their self-esteem and makes them feel like they're an important part of your team.

### **Don't Be Too Dictatorial**

Be sensitive to the children's limitations and emotions. Even if they look up to you for guidance and support, you must value their opinions and understand your players' different personalities. Never humiliate a player publicly or corner a player.



### **The Complement Sandwich**

Instead of criticizing a player, focus on the positive. For many players, this is their first experience with any organized sport. At this age children have very fragile egos. While what *you* may feel is correcting a player, the child may feel as criticism. Always focus on the positive. When correcting a player, we recommend the Complement Sandwich: start out by Praising/Complementing on what the player did correctly, and then explain what they may have done wrong or where they could improve. Once you have done this, finish with a positive complimentary statement. No one, especially a young player,

needs to constantly hear negative criticism.

## **Learning Curves & Differing Abilities**

You will quickly notice that some players are more coordinated than others. Also, your players will grasp concepts and learn at different paces. This is one of the challenges of coaching younger children. You don't want to "lose" any child that may not be grasping the subject. However, you must also avoid boring the other players that quickly master a drill. Spend a little extra time with the players that may be learning slower than the others. After practice, give these players some additional "homework" to do before your next practice/game. Speak to these players on a one-on-one basis; in a very discrete manner (be careful not to make it look as though you are singling out these players). For the players that are excelling faster than the others, add some "twist" or complexity to a drill that the rest of the team is performing.

## **Keeping Them Moving Will Keep Their Attention**

All children, especially young children have short attention spans. It's your job to keep them focused and interested in what's going on. The best way to keep the players focused is to have constant movement and change. If one small group is practicing plays, another group can be doing drills while waiting for their turn. This keeps everyone busy and prevents boredom. Have an assistant or parent supervise one group while you coach the other. Use several balls so that every player can perform the drills at the same time. That will cut down on the amount of time a player is standing



around and watching the other players go through the activity. The time that a player is not engaged in activity is the time you will “lose them”. Also, to keep everything new and exciting, each drill should last no more than 5-10 minutes. Gauge your team’s attention span and adjust the length of each drill accordingly.

## Problem Players – You Are Not a Babysitter

Dealing with problem players can be quite difficult - get a handle on this situation quickly. Coaching a bunch of young players is difficult enough when everyone is cooperating - Throw in a few behavioral problems and the season can deteriorate quickly. In a behavioral problem situation, take a look at the situation, analyze what may be causing the problem and attempt to address it accordingly and as quickly as possible.

### Agree on the rules for discipline

Setting this early can lead to a more organized practice not just for one meeting but for the rest of the season. Earn and engage the kid's respect so they will stay focused on the game and not engage in disruptive activities. Call the player aside and talk to them if you feel it's necessary. Never use exercise (running laps, push-ups, etc) as a punitive measure. Benching them (for a few minutes) is more effective, as this deprives them of the chance to participate in the activity that they're supposed to be engaging in

- If there are a few players who seem to fool around during practice drills, separate these players and put them in separate groups
- If one player seems to be disruptive because he or she is bored, attempt to keep their attention by talking to them throughout practice
- If a behavioral problem persists, sit the player down for a “time-out” for a few minutes.
- Once they see all the other players, who behave, enjoying themselves, they will want to join along.
- If all else fails, speak with the child’s parent on a one-one basis, asking for their help in addressing the problem

## The First Practice

Finally, the first practice is here. What an exciting time for every coach, player and parent. You have already emailed your letter to your team and parents. Now it's time to fulfill the goals and expectations you've set for the team. The first practice is the most important practice of the year. All of your players, coaches and parents will have your full attention. Spend the first few minutes introducing yourself to your team. Introduce your coaches and your goals for the team (play as a team, focus, improvement a particular skill). You will also need some sort of ice breaker. Have the players introduce themselves and announce one of the following:

- Favorite Player / Team
- Favorite Position
- School and Grade

Now is a great time to ask for volunteers (for the practice and also for the whole season). This is your best chance to get as many volunteers as possible for your Team Parents, Assistant Coaches, Practice Coaches, and Photographer.

Every practice must have a plan. **If you do not have a plan, chances are your practice will be chaotic.** Break the practice schedule down into time periods. Clear communication and demonstration will be needed, especially for younger aged teams. You should use the “**IDEA**” method for introducing new skills.

**I – INTRODUCE** the skill by discussing it in a team huddle.

**D – DEMONSTRATE** the skill by showing them the correct way to complete it.

**E – EXPLAIN** why mastering the skill is important to the team’s success.

**A - ATTEND** to each player as they work through drills and help them get better (no punishment for mistakes just repeat the drill).

Yes, give your practice schedule to your parents. This will get your parents more involved and they will feel more a part of the team. The first practice should be light on plays and heavy on fundamentals. Some of your players may not have played in a while or at all.

Here is an example of a soccer practice schedule with time periods:

Thursdays at Urbana District Park, Field #1, 5:30 – 6:30pm

- 5:30–5:45 Warm Ups
- 5:45-6:00 Offense Fundamentals: dribbling, passing, shots on goal
- 6:00-6:15 Proper field positioning, offense/defense
- 6:15-6:30 Defense Fundamentals

Utilize drills and team scrimmages to evaluate the skills of each player to allow you to determine what positions each player can have the most success playing. By the end of your first practice or two, and depending on the age of your teams (very young kids will take longer), players should have been taught the basic fundamentals of your particular sport.