

Lamar County Recreation Department Youth Sports Policies & Procedures Manual

“Lamar County Recreation Department Growing Community, Character, and Champions”

Welcome to the Lamar County Recreation Department Youth Sports Program!

We are excited that you have decided to join our team and help develop necessary life skills in the youth of our community. Youth sports provide great opportunity to teach young players lifelong lessons in teamwork, dedication, discipline, physical fitness, self-esteem, and even fair play. These lessons learned on the field/court help the overall growth and maturation of young people. The Lamar County Recreation Department and staff take this role seriously and strive to offer quality programs that will help aid in this development.

We have put together this hand book to serve as a reference for you as a parent or coach. This handbook will help you to understand the philosophies of this organization and allow us together to make each program a success.

We look forward to many years of your involvement in the programs at Lamar County Recreation Department. Together we can Grow Community...Character...and Champions!

Sincerely,

**Tiffany Lowe- CYSA
Lamar County Park Director**

Purpose:

- To provide affordable youth sports programs to every child regardless of talent, race, gender, economic, or social status.

Mission:

- The Lamar County Recreation Department to the best of our ability strives to provide affordable, safe, and fun youth sports programs. We work to create an environment that encourages and promotes good sportsmanship, builds character, and teaches lifelong skills.

Mission Statement:

- LCRD Growing Community.... Character....and Champions!

Vision:

- The vision of the Lamar county recreation department is that every child who participates in our programs will have fun, but that they will also build character and life skills that will help them in their future endeavors. Our hope is one day they will come back and give to a generation the same life skills they have learned.

Our Core:

- Who are we?
- What do we want to see accomplished?
- What is our motives?
- These are all questions we should ask ourselves as we participate in the development of children through youth sports. We strongly believe that youth sports can play a vital role in the development of young lives. However, our focus should always be how is this child learning, what are they accomplishing, how can I help encourage them. Winning is a part of any competitive environment, but it should never come at the cost of hurting a player/ team development. We should remember this is rec and every child should receive the same opportunity to play no matter talent, race, economic or social status. When we create a positive environment that teaches fundamentals winning will come.

Core Values:

- **Have Fun-** The number one goal for our players should be to have fun. (Even on the professional level the game is still fun to them.) The majority of our players are under 12 years old and when ask why they play it's "because it's fun"
- **Build Team/Life Skills** Character, hard work, discipline, commitment are just a few life skills that children can learn from being involved in youth sports.
- **Always show sportsmanship-** What is a "good sport"? Someone who can win with grace. Not bragging or boastful. Also someone who can loose and not blame everyone around them. A good sport encourages their teammates as well as the opposing team. A good sport never quits!!!
- **Develop Self Confidence-** Through youth sports young players begin to accomplish goals and milestones (first catch, first touchdown, a strike out) that will help them develop confidence in themselves. We can play a vital role in helping to encourage them in these accomplishments.

Creating a Protective Shield

This youth sports program exists to help children in the development of positive life skills and self-concepts. Our goal is to provide safe, enjoyable recreation opportunities for participants.

We are against any forms of abuse or maltreatment of children in youth sports. We each have a responsibility to do what we can to prevent any and all forms of child abuse.

We intend to take reasonable and intentional action to protect participants from any form of abuse or maltreatment and to deal with any transgressions in a timely and appropriate manner.

The Lamar County Recreation Department uses all reasonable efforts to screen employees, and/or volunteers in order to avoid instances where young athletes may be endangered, neglected, or abused.

Although no organization can make every participant 100% safe from all forms of abuse, through screening, training, supervision, and steps to create a healthy environment for children to thrive in youth sports, we are taking critical steps toward protecting all of our participants. It is our mission to teach the basic skills which young people need to play sports in a safe a nurturing environment, where all children get an equal chance to play regardless of play level.

Every Child in our league has the right to have fun while participating in our programs.

We will not tolerate any abusive behaviors that may jeopardize a child's well-being.

Adopted from the National Alliance for Youth Sports Child Abuse and Youth Sports: A comprehensive Risk Management Program.

General Policies

Participation:

- Most Lamar County Recreation Department youth sports programs are participatory in nature and do not require participants to “try-out” to participate. Evaluations are held only to best divide teams.
- The focus of all sports is having fun, working on fundamentals, skill development, and physical fitness. Winning and losing is a part of the game, but not the focus.
- All forms must be completed and registration paid for players to participate
- All players should receive proper playing time as described in individual sports rules.

Sign-Ups

- Every sports league program has a registration deadlines and unique rules on how LCRD must assemble teams. The department will establish sign-up periods for each sport and will allow enough advance time for complete teams to be assembled before league registration deadlines.
- **Team Request**- LCRD realizes special request for certain team/coach for reasons of transportation, child care, friends, etc., would be appreciated by parents. **However, we do not honor special requests.** We are dedicated to the player rating system and making teams as balanced as possible. We will however honor siblings or coach’s kids.
- Because of team size restrictions, signing up does no guarantee a position on a team roster. Therefore, the department takes sign-ups on a first-come first serve bases. All reasonable efforts will be made to assure kids get to play.
- Team size- Team size minimums and maximums are governed by the different leagues as well as the LCRD desire to make sure teams are not oversized (playing time would be affected) or under sized (that would cause forfeitures.) We encourage all players to play within their age group.

A.) Players CANNOT play down unless special medical conditions would require. A Dr. note, approval of governing league, and rec approval would be necessary

B.) Parents from time to time request players to play up out of their league age. It is strongly encouraged for children to play within their appropriate age groups. However special permission may be granted to coach’s kids and/or if a child has been evaluated and have shown the skill set to play up, or if a team in their age group is not available. Parental permission will need to be signed. This is a decision that is made and approved by the recreation staff based on over-all number of players in said sport or division.

C.) If playing a child up hurts the age group (not allowing enough players for teams to form) the player is moving out of then the recreation department will not allow for the move to happen.

D.) There may be a time in efforts to form a division we ask players (with the ability) to play up.

Payments and Refunds

LCRD works hard to keep participation cost low and affordable to all parents. However, each sport does require a registration fee that participants are expected to have paid in full before being placed on a team. These fees cover the cost of uniform, equipment, umpires, field maintenance, etc. Current Fee Schedule listed below

- Soccer, Weeball, Teeball, Baseball, Softball, Basketball \$65.00
- Football, Cheer \$100.00

We do offer an early registration discount, multiple children discount (for 3 or more), as well as payment plan options. We will however also charge a late registration fee for anyone who signs up past the deadline.

Refunds will be considered on an individual basis.

- We do not refund money for players who drop because of not getting a coach/team the requested.
- We cannot refund money once uniforms have been ordered.
- If for any reason the Recreation Season gets cancelled once teams are formed and uniforms ordered, we cannot refund money for customized, worn, or otherwise unacceptable uniforms.
- Any granted refund must be picked up at the recreation department and signed for within 60 days of the request.

Creating Balanced Teams

Attention Parents/Guardians & Coaches: Please note, before you register a participant for this program, that the Recreation Department utilizes a “Draft” system to help ensure parity of teams. Only the HEAD coach’s son/daughter is guaranteed a slot on the team he/she is coaching. Siblings in the same age division will also be guaranteed a spot on the same team. We cannot accept requests or guarantee a specific coach, teams, or any other player in the league since this would take away from the purpose of the drafting system. **Thanks for your understanding and support.**

Team Formation Process:

When the LCRD has more than one team entered in the same classification/age group, the following criteria will be used to formulate team rosters; with the objective of creating evenly matched and diverse teams by distributing players equitably. We are sorry we cannot honor specific team, coach or carpool request. The only exception will be head coach’s kids and

siblings registered in the same age division. ONCE AGAIN NO OTHER EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.

- For sports that have a 4 and under division the recreation staff will divide players into teams by a random draft process.
- For ages 5 and up teams will be formed based on several criteria
 1. Players will be placed on teams in accordance to their age.
 2. Players will be able to return to a previous team for 1 season only.
 3. Evaluations will be held prior to each season. Rec personnel, coaches, and other volunteers will evaluate players. Based off of the evaluations teams will be formed to even out experience and skill level.

Practice and Game Schedules:

- Practices are scheduled based on field/court availability as well as the availability of the volunteer coach. Practice times and days may vary. We will not have exact times and days until after all registrations are complete and teams have been formed. *Please know sometimes the recreation department has to adjust practice days and times for various reasons.*
- Game schedules are not always done by our recreation department. Each sport has different organizations they play under and at times those organizations are responsible for scheduling games. We understand parents/guardians would like a schedule ASAP. We work very hard at helping to get that information out but sometimes it is out of our control.

Game Cancellations and Rescheduling

- If a game is canceled by the recreation department due to weather or other unforeseeable circumstances, all efforts will be made to reschedule that game
- However, due to time restraints and/or field usage conflicts, some games may not be rescheduled.
- If a game is canceled without the approval of the LCRD that game will be considered a forfeit and will not be made up.
- At no time should a team “quit” or forfeit once a game has begun unless the playing environment becomes unsafe and EVERY reasonable effort has been made to correct the situation. (speaking with official, park rep, other coach etc.) The referees being horrible is not a legitimate reason to quit.

Weather

- The safety of participants, officials, and spectators is the primary concern in cases of inclement weather.
- Once a game has started it is primarily the responsibility of the officials to remove players from the field if the conditions become extreme.
- If ordered to do so, please find a safe shelter in an automobile or building until instructed to return to the playing field or told that the game has been cancelled.
- In most programs games are played rain or shine. Cancellations occur only due to severe weather or resistant rain (where playing surfaces cannot be played on). All cancellations will be sent to head coaches and posted on our Face Book page.
- Cancellations of practices due to extreme heat or cold will be based on the guidelines set forth by national and league governing bodies. Our department keeps a close eye on and has a wet bulb meter in cases of extreme heat. Mortifications and cancellations will be given to the coaches.

League Rules

- Each sport has its league rules that govern that sport. Rules or links to rules can be found on our website at lamarcountyrec.org. Parents are encouraged to read and understand the rules governing the sport their child participates in. At any time upon request the rec office can give a copy or go over rules with parents.

Medical Emergencies

The LCRD strongly advises that a parent is at all practices and/or games to insure that incase of extreme emergency parental consent and treatment can be given in a timely manner. Emergency medical consent form are required to be filled out and signed by parent/guarding at the time of registration.

- For injuries or accidents that requires something other than a cleaning and covering with bandage or wrap coaches and parents should seek professional medical assistance through 911.
- If medical transportation is required, the charges incurred will be billed to the parents and or parent's/ guardian's insurance policy.
- In the event of a concussion or suspected concussion players need to have a medical release from a primary Dr. before returning to practices and/or games. Parents/coaches please do not ignore the signs of concussion. Information is given out to both parents and coaches prior to the season on recognizing concussions. You can also find information on the CDC website.
- Please notify the league if your child has a pre-existing medical condition (i.e. allergies, medications, physical impairments, social or behavioral impairments, etc.)

Photo Release and Team Photos

- At times the LCRD, coaches, and or other parents may take photos and use those for advertisements or promotion of the department or team. These photos sometimes are used in newspaper, social media, flyers, etc. If for any reason your child's photo cannot be used, please inform recreation staff and coach.
- Team and individual pictures will not be scheduled by the recreation department. However, we will give information to teams of local photographers that would be glad to assist them should they want pictures. The LCRD may ask to take a team picture for our local sponsors.

Trophies/Awards

Coaches are expected to have an end of the season party for their teams. The cost unless otherwise approved not to exceed \$25.00 per player. Parents are responsible for the cost of their player. At times the LCRD may award teams, coaches, and or players for good sportsmanship or special accomplishments.

Fundraising

- No individual fundraising efforts will be permitted
- All fundraising needs to be approved by the LCRD and any receipts where money was spent turned in to our office. Any left-over funds should be turned in to the rec office.
- Asking local businesses to fund individual teams is prohibited. As we use our local business to help fund all programs. We do not want them bombarded with being ask for donations because their support to our department is crucial to keeping our cost low.

Selection of Volunteers

To ensure the safety of all participants all staff, coaches, assistant coaches, team parents, etc. must have an up to date back ground check turned in to the rec office. Back ground checks must be resubmitted yearly.

- After review of applications and back ground checks coaches will be selected by recreation staff.
- Previous coaches coaching in the same age group will be considered first.
- An Assistant coach from the previous year in the same age group will be considered second.
- All new coaches will be selected by the rec based on experience, recommendations, and submission time of application.

The recreation staff reserves the right to choose the volunteers or deny a volunteer the ability to coach.

Grievances

Any participant, parent, or volunteer may file a grievance when necessary. All grievances should be written and directed through the following sequence of authorities: Coach; Program Coordinator; Programs Manager; Recreation Director.

- The first step to resolving any issues should be to speak with the head coach in an attempt to try to correct the issue. Parents should understand before, during, or after a game is not the best time to approach the coach. Parents should request a time that is convenient to both parties to discuss concerns.
- If the issue/concern cannot be worked out with the coach, then a formal complaint can be filed through the rec office. A written complaint with exact details, the policy you feel has been violated, and any witness or others that can be contacted. You may also email the complaint to lamarcorec@yahoo.com. Please allow 24 to 48 hours for rec staff to review the complaint and get back with you.
- If necessary, a meeting with the program coordinator, programs manager, and/ or rec director will be scheduled.
- It may also be necessary at times to have a meeting with both parties, and or team to help resolve problems.
- As a reminder the rec director has an open door policy and will schedule a time for you to discuss any concerns about the team, coach, and or programs.

Game Protests

- No regular season games will be protested
- Decisions of officials on the field will stand

Safety

- It is our goal to keep all participants as safe as possible. Any field, equipment, or situations that a coach/parent feel is unsafe should be reported to the recreation staff ASAP.
- Coaches will be given an incident report. Any and all accidents should be written up and given to the recreation staff ASAP.

Weather

- The safety of participants, officials, and spectators is the primary concern in cases of inclement weather
- Once games have started the officials have the responsibility to remove players from the field if weather or conditions become extreme
- The recreation staff will work in conjunction with the officials to make decisions to delay or suspend games.
- During scheduled practices a rec staff member will inform coaches when weather conditions become unsafe.

- As a reminder in most programs games are played rain or shine. Game cancellations are typically when too much rain has made playing surfaces unsafe or severe weather is expected. Information is usually given to the coaches and then posted to our Facebook Page.

Alcoholic Beverages/illegal drugs

- Alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs are not permitted in public parks.
- No coach or other volunteer shall participate in any Lamar Co. Rec sponsored or related event including practices, games, on or off site tournaments while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Player/Parent Section:

Participant Responsibility

The participation in youth sports programs can have a lifelong and meaningful effect on children's lives. For this reason, it is our goal at the Lamar County Recreation Department to provide the highest quality of athletic programs possible. Our goal is to ensure to the best of our ability that a child's experience with youth sports is a positive one. However, we cannot do this alone. This is a team effort that involves everyone including the participant. Below are a list of reasonable expectations and responsibilities that participants in our programs are to adhere to:

- Players will listen to their coaches and be respectful of their position of authority.
- Players will take care of the facilities, equipment, and uniforms.
- Players will avoid all types of taunting, belittling, and/or bullying.
- Players will show sportsmanship at all times, win or lose.
- Players will refrain from horseplay and all other dangerous activities, in which they may become hurt or hurt others.

Parent Responsibility

Parents you play a vital role in your child's participation in youth sports. You are required to adjust family routines to ensure your child makes practices and games. It now becomes your job to work sports into an already busy life of school, family time, and other life activities. You will set on the sidelines and beam with pride as they accomplish new milestones, but also feel their sadness and disappointments when faced with the adversities of the game. How you respond in these moments are crucial in how they will view themselves and youth sport.

Responsibilities

- Parents are responsible for getting their child to and from all practices and games on time.
- Parents are responsible for letting the coach know in a timely manner if a player will be late or absent from practice and/or games.

- Parents are responsible for practicing important fundamentals and skills with their child at home.
- Parents are responsible for being encouraging and should refrain from negativity of any kind.
- Parents should understand coaches are volunteers and your support of their time and effort is crucial.
- Parents should never criticize a coach in the presence of their children or other parents. Any disagreements or concerns should be addressed in an appropriate time and setting.
- Because league officials cannot be at every event it is a parent's responsibility to make sure his/her behavior is representative of the league in a positive manner. But to also report and abusive behavior or any other situation that needs to be addressed by the league.
- Parents are responsible for making sure their child has proper and safe playing equipment.

Important Don'ts for parents

- Don't put yourself in the place of your child. Let it be his/her game not yours.
- Don't talk about the "BIG GAME" all day or week. Chances are it's not as important to your child as it is to you. This causes too much pressure and anxiety and players typically under perform.
- Don't criticize your child or other children on the team or other teams.
- Don't yell instructions to your child; That is the coaches job. This causes confusion and anxiety and actually teaches children to undermine authority.
- Don't start analyzing your child's performance right after a game. Chances are your child wants a little time to think of something else and eat.
- Don't criticize the volunteer coach. Even if it is apparent that he doesn't understand the game. Remember before you complain are you willing to give up your valuable free time to step into the shoes of the coach. If not don't complain.
- Don't criticize or verbally abuse the officials. This shows lack of respect for authority, teaches kids bad sportsmanship, incites the crowd. Reminder this type of behavior can also lead to ejections from a game. One key thing to remember. Many of our officials as well as other parks are teenagers or young college students. Many may be intimidated by screaming adults. So the more you scream and carry on the worse they will probably do. They are human and not perfect they will make mistakes.
- Don't use curse words. This is a youth event and can actually bring about legal charges.
- Don't forget to encourage all players even the opposing team.
- Don't decide your child's future for playing professional sports today. Don't write him off either, but remember children develop at different paces and their interest will change as they grow. Let their dream be their dream.
- Don't take the game so seriously let the kids have fun!!!

Important Do's for parents

- Do help your child master necessary skills.
- Do be encouraging even when they haven't played their best.
- Do support your child's coach and help out in any way possible.
- Do set back and enjoy the game!

Corrective Action Policy

Players:

Players who fail to adhere to the expected participant's responsibility may be subject to the following disciplinary action. This is a guide to help assist coaches and the Lamar Recreation Department run a quality program. Our policy is designed to forgive a mistake but to firmly address chronic misbehavior.

Step 1-	Verbal Warning	Coach will discuss undesirable conduct with player and parents and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated.
Step 2-	Written Warning	The coach will once again discuss behavior with parent. However, this time a written statement of behavior will be submitted to the recreation department with signature of coach, parent, and player (if applicable). Knowledge that further corrective action will take place if behavior is not addressed.
Step 3-	Period Suspension	The coach will bench the offending player for 1 period of time during a game when he/she should be playing. Coach will inform the recreation director of the problem and why the player will be sitting.
Step 4-	Game Suspension	Coach will bench the offending player for 1 entire game. This will be a fourth offense and a meeting with the coach, parent, and recreation director may be called to see how the behavior can be corrected.
Step-5	League Expulsion	When steps 1-4 cannot be used to correct misbehavior then the recreation department will have the player expelled for the remainder of the season.

These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with all behavioral problems. Severe situations could merit immediate harsher sanctions against participant.

Corrective action policy

Parents:

Parents who do not adhere to the parent responsibility section set forth in this policy may be subject to the following corrective action/s. As a rule, the Lamar County Recreation Department will not punish a child because of the actions of a parent.

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| Step 1- | Verbal Warning | The coach will speak to the parent about the behavior. The coach can direct the parent back to this portion of our policy as a reminder of the expectations set forth by the department. |
| Step 2- | Written Warning | The coach will notify the programs manager and recreation director of the behavior. A written report will be sent to the rec office. The coordinator, programs manager, and/or recreation director will contact the parent about the behavior. |
| Step 3- | Game Suspension | The parent will be suspended for one game. |
| Step 4- | Season Suspension | When a parent's behavior cannot fall in line with the guidelines set forth by this department and refusing to be corrective with the above mentioned actions. The league will make a decision for suspend the parent for the remainder of the season. |

Parents should know these guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations could merit harsher sanctions against parents. Violent or extremely abusive behavior may result in arrest and legal actions taken against violator.

Corrective Action policy

Coaches:

When a formal grievance is filed through the recreation office, the programs manager and recreation director will review the code of conduct violation. As often as we can we do keep the confidentiality of parents who file a grievance. There may be times however a meeting with the coach and/or parents is needed to help resolve the situation. When necessary the following actions will be followed to correct a coach's conduct.

Step 1-	Verbal Warning	The recreation staff will speak with the coach about the grievance that has been filed. Discussions will take place of how to correct the concerns of parent/guardian or spectator.
Step 2-	Written Warning	The coach will be called into the office and discuss how to resolve the matter. A written report will be filed and kept at the rec office.
Step 3-	Game Suspension	The coach may be ask to set out for a game.
Step 4-	Season Suspension	The coach will be removed from coaching for the Season

These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. The recreation director has the authority to enforce the appropriate range of disciplinary actions. It is in extreme circumstances only do we remove a coach from coaching due to confusion this brings to children. However severe situations could result in immediate suspension as well as criminal and legal action.