



SPRING 2024 JR. RUNNERS COACHING HANDBOOK



avonindiana.gov/sports | 866 S. Co. Rd. 625 E. Avon, IN 46123 | 317.839.5480

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SPORTS DIRECTOR MESSAGE



Justin Thompson
Avon Youth Sports

Thank you to all the coaches, coordinators, commissioners and other volunteers that make Jr. Runners a wonderful experience for our youth! The difference you make and the impact you have is critical in the development of these young athletes. You are greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

AYS AT A GLANCE

1. History

Avon Youth Sports (formerly AJAA) has created childhood memories for youth athletes since 1963! The organization started as a baseball organization and has grown to offer our community 21 sports programs, making it the largest youth sports organization in Hendricks County. Our participant numbers have grown to approximately 20% of the Avon community!

2. Mission

At Avon Youth Sports, there's a sport for everyone. AYS provides outstanding opportunities for Avon community youth to develop physically while encouraging growth in teamwork, effort, sportsmanship, and character by offering diverse and high-quality athletic programming and instruction through a single organization.

Do
WHAT IS
Right,
NOT WHAT IS
Easy.

It's
ALL
about the
KIDS!

Put the
FUN
back in
FUNDAMENTALS!

MEET THE TEAM!



JUSTIN THOMPSON

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ERIN TOOTHMAN

JR. RUNNERS COMMISSIONER

jrrunners@avonindiana.gov

CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

AYS serves over 4,000 participants each year. In order to best serve everyone (players, parents, coaches, and volunteers), please utilize the following chain of command for any questions or concerns.

01

Coach

Parents should first communicate directly with their child's coach.

02

League Coordinator

If a concern needs escalated, contact the player's League Coordinator.

03

League Commissioner

If the concern still needs escalated, please contact the appropriate League Commissioner.

04

AYS Staff

If assistance is still needed, please contact AYS Staff at sports@avonindiana.gov. We're here to help!

You may also reference the particular sport program page on avonindiana.gov/sports, which will have a current list of Committee Members with corresponding contact information.

JR. RUNNERS **TIMELINE**

March 1, 2024	Registration closes.
March 25, 2024	Teams rostered.
Week of April 1, 2024	Practices begin one night per week (Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday).
April 19, 2024	First meet.
Late May, 2024	Season ends.

ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS FOR KIDS



The power of sport is transformative. But what happens when financial obstacles become a barrier to participation? The Avon Youth Sports ASK program was born out of the notion that everyone deserves the opportunity to engage in athletic activities. It exists to remove financial obstacles that would otherwise prevent individuals and teams from participating in the noble pursuit of sport.

Qualifications for a Scholarship

In order to qualify for a scholarship, applicants must have an award letter from Avon Community School Corporation for Free/Reduced Lunch, be under assistance from Family Promise of Hendricks County, be under assistance from Sheltering Wings, or present a hardship case that is short-term. Applicants must live in Washington Township.

Application Process

Applicants should send an email with the player's first & last name, the program they want to sign them up for (for example: Basketball, Cheer, Baseball), the season and the league (for example: 8U, 3rd/4th grade, etc.) to ask@avonindiana.gov.

Fundraising

AYS accepts donations and applies for grants that directly support this program.

Recipients

Scholarship recipients must adhere to all AYS rules and policies. Violation of AYS policies may result in the removal of players and families from the program, and may impact future eligibility.

Additional information can be found at avonindiana.gov/sports.

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

Avon Youth Sports (AYS) Mission: To provide high quality athletic programming and instruction for youth athletes to develop physically and mentally by encouraging growth in teamwork, effort, skill, sportsmanship, and character.

This AYS Athletic Code of Conduct has been prepared as a guide to the expectations of AYS. This policy applies to all parties involved or present at AYS events, regardless of their role or affiliation. The Code of Conduct is to be read and understood by all coaches, assistant coaches, managers, players, and parents.

The Town of Avon, Indiana Sports supports youth sport activity that is governed by a strong sense of individual and team sportsmanship. Value and emphasis on sportsmanship, character building, and positive conduct are a requirement of our athletic participants. Persons unwilling to abide by this Code should reconsider their involvement in AYS activities.

Principles and Expectations:

- **AYS believes in the principles of fair play, ethical behavior, and the right of every individual to fully enjoy sport without undue interference from others.**
- **AYS recognizes competitive sport activities are a source of strong feelings which may lead to misunderstandings, disagreements, and other related conflicts.**
- **AYS believes that every participant has a requirement to respect the right of competitors to hold conflicting points of view or opinions.**
- **AYS expects its coaches, players, referees, families, and spectators to deal with conflicts in a positive and respectful manner, with focus on good sportsmanship.**
- **AYS expects its coaches, players, referees, families, and spectators to cooperate in promoting the enjoyment of sports, over the victory of any game, to the greatest extent possible for the development of the player.**
- **AYS expects adherence to both the spirit and the letter of its rules of the Game. Illegal, unfair, rowdy, violent, dangerous, and unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated, whether on the field of play, over social media, or any place away from the playing area.**
- **AYS expects all participants to show respect for players and opponents, regardless of their skill.**
- **AYS expects most activities to involve children from a very young age. Children are influenced by the behavior of adults, so adult participants will be held to the very highest standards of conduct.**
- **AYS discourages demonstrations and protests which may disrupt or disturb other members or delay the start of organized play.**
- **AYS will not permit any player or volunteer registered for a program to play with pending or previous criminal charges. Releasing a player during a program season due to pending charges will forfeit any refunds.**

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT (CONTINUED)

Unacceptable Conduct (Not All-Inclusive):

- **Vulgarity by coaches, players, or spectators**
- **Harassment of referees, coaches, and/or spectators (Verbal or Physical)**
- **Verbal or physical Assault/Violence or Threat of Violence**
 - **Physical assault is defined as the initiation of any physical contact.**
- **Consumption of alcohol, tobacco, or use of illegal drugs at a Town of Avon, Indiana Sports facility or any facility used to host AYS activities.**
- **Obscene gestures**
 - **Gestures may include or indicate the threat of physical violence (e.g. Punching gesture; neck slit gesture)**
- **Angry tone of voice with elevated volume.**
 - **May include continued yelling or raised voice towards coach, player, parent, or umpire.**
- **Negative coaching style**
 - **Intentionally or repeatedly ignoring AYS rules**
 - **Sacrificing player development for victory**
- **Any type of bullying behavior**
 - **Examples of bullying include:**
 - **Physical- hitting, pushing, punching, biting, striking, kicking, spitting, slapping, and/or throwing objects.**
 - **Verbal- ridiculing, taunting, name calling, intimidating, or threatening to cause someone harm.**
 - **Social- Use of rumors or false statements about someone to diminish their reputation; using electronic communications or other social media platform technology to harass, frighten, intimidate, or humiliate someone.**
 - **Sexual- ridiculing or taunting based on gender or sexual orientation (real or perceived), gender traits or behavior, or teasing someone about their looks.**

Code of Conduct Violation:

1st Offense: 1st offenses may be subject to a verbal and/or written reminder of expectations and agreement related to the Code of Conduct.

2nd Offense: 2nd offenses may be subject to a written warning of violation to the Code of Conduct and resolution plan put in place to avoid future incidents.

3rd Offense: 3rd offense may be subject to removal of AYS sports programs for a 1 calendar year period.

4th Offense: 4th Offenses may be subject to permanent removal of all AYS sporting events and activities.

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT (CONTINUED)

Please Note: Any violation may be subject to escalation and omission of violation resolution steps depending on review of reporting, witnesses, and severity of the offense. This is up to the discretion of the Avon Youth Sports leadership.

I do hereby affirm and acknowledge that I have been fully informed of the AYS Athletic Code of Conduct associated with Avon Youth Sports ("AYS") and agree to abide by all policy obligations and requirements.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

SAFE PLAY POLICY

AYS desires safe play for all athletes on and off the field. Below, you will find a list of protocols concerning injury and illness. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to adhere to these guidelines to keep his or her player, and the player's family, safe.

Illness

- If your player is showing any symptoms of illness, they should be excluded from play and stay home.
- If someone in your household is sick, it is best that you do not send your player to practice or games if the ill person is contagious.
- If anyone in your household has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, you should contact the Hendricks County Health Department on guidance for quarantine.
- Any communicable illness, such as COVID-19, that is diagnosed in an AYS household should be reported to the AYS office for keeping records and possible contact tracing.
- Any player suspected of being symptomatic without a report may be subject to removal for the season.
- Any communicable illness, such as COVID-19 that has not been reported to the AYS office that is subject to contact tracing may be considered grounds for removal for the season.
- Player roster information may be shared with Hendricks County Health Department, upon request, for contact tracing.
- Parents should communicate with the head coach of the player's team, as well as the AYS office, if there are reasons listed above for exclusion from play.
- If a player is symptomatic during a season, they must self-quarantine based on Health Department guidelines or produce a negative test result prior to return to play.

Injuries

- Injuries should be reported to the head coach immediately, as well as the AYS office.
- A player who suffers an injury will need a full medical release before returning to play.
- Any release containing limitations on practice or play must be followed by a full release to eliminate the restrictions laid out in the original release.
- In the event of a head injury, it is preferred that a sports medicine doctor with specialty in head injuries treat the player to reduce the risk of re-injury.
- All releases are subject to review and verification by AYS office.
- Players participating in collision sports must sign a waiver for treatment, and a consent to treat form by athletic trainers with our partners at Hendricks Regional Health.
- Physical limitations and pre-existing conditions
- Any physical limitations or pre-existing conditions should be reported to the head coach and the AYS office.
- Certain limitations may prevent players from participating in programming without express written consent from a physician.
- If players have allergies to environmental risks that require emergency therapeutics, the player or parent are required to bring the therapeutics to practice and games. (Including, but not limited to: rescue inhaler, EpiPen, etc.)

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This policy provides guidelines for Employees, Commissioners, Coordinators, Coaches, Parents, Players, Volunteers & Contractors (“AIS Employees and Volunteers”) use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

PROCEDURE

The following principles apply to professional and personal use of social media on behalf of AIS or when referencing the Town of Avon, Indiana Sports or Avon Youth Sports.

- Employees, Commissioners, Coordinators, Coaches, Parents, Players, & Contractors (“AIS Employees and Volunteers”) need to know and must adhere to the AIS Code of Conduct, Employee Handbook, and other company policies when using social media in reference to AIS as a condition of their involvement with AIS.
- AIS Employees and Volunteers should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as AIS’ image. The information that employees post or publish is public information forever.
- AIS Employees and Volunteers should be aware that AIS may observe content and information made available through social media. AIS Employees and Volunteers should use their best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to AIS, its employees, its volunteers, or its participants.
- Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, material that can create a hostile work environment, or which may be characterized as a personal attack on employees, volunteers or participants.
- AIS Employees and Volunteers are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public.
- Social media networks, blogs, and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. AIS Employees and Volunteers should refer these inquiries to the Town of Avon, Indiana Sports Director or the Town of Avon Parks & Recreation Director if he/she is unavailable.
- If AIS Employees and Volunteers find or encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of the AIS Sports Director.
- AIS Employees and Volunteers should get appropriate permission before they refer to or post images of current or former employees, members, vendors, suppliers, volunteers, and the like. Additionally, AIS Employees and Volunteers should get appropriate permission to use a third party’s copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.

SOCIAL MEDIA **POLICY** (CONTINUED)

- If AIS Employees and Volunteers publish content after-hours that involves work or subjects associated with AIS, a disclaimer should be used, such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and may not represent AIS's positions, strategies or opinions."
- AIS Employees and Volunteers may not advertise for fundraisers or other AIS related events unless the fundraiser or event has been approved by the Sports Director and is in compliance with the AIS Travel and All-Star Financial Policy.
- Any and all websites and other web content, brand names and intellectual property belonging to AIS, whether on AIS' individual website, its Facebook page, or any page it manages, including but not limited to Avon Youth Basketball Club, Avon Youth Baseball Club, Avon Jr. Orioles Football, Orioles Softball Club, etc. shall remain the sole property of and under the sole direction and management of AIS. Employees and Volunteers who are granted access to provide content do not, under any circumstances, receive any ownership interest in said content or ownership of AIS managed pages.
- AIS Staff shall have the authority to monitor and enforce this Social Media Policy.
- The failure of any AIS Member to adhere to this Social Media Policy shall be considered a violation of the AIS Code of Conduct, and any AIS Member who fails to adhere to this Social Media Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of such individual's involvement in AIS, in accordance with the AIS Disciplinary Procedures.
- I agree to comply with the terms of the AIS Social Media Policy and understand that my participation in AIS/AYS is conditioned thereon.

Dated: _____

Signed: _____

Title: _____

COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

- Coaches have the knowledge and preparation to lead their teams.
- Coaches are to conform to the spirit and intent of applicable rules at all times.
- Coaches are responsible for their own conduct as well as the conduct of their assistant coaches, players and spectators.
- Coaches are responsible to ensure that the health, well-being and development of athletes take precedence over the win/loss record.
- Coaches accept that they do serve as role models and there must be congruency between their actions and words.
- Coaches provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for practices and competition.
- Coaches exemplify honesty, integrity, fair play, and sportsmanship regardless of the impact that might have upon the outcome of the competition.
- Coaches maintain a professional demeanor in their relationships with athletes, officials, colleagues, administrators and the public and treat them with respect and dignity.
- Coaches maintain confidentiality when appropriate and avoid situations that would potentially create a conflict of interest or exploit the athlete.
- Coaches are committed to the education of their athletes and should encourage academic achievement.
- Coaches are committed to the safety and well-being of each athlete.
- Coaches discourage the use of performance enhancing substances and dietary supplements.
- Coaches prohibit the use of any illegal or recreational drugs.
- Coaches follow current safe training and conditioning techniques.
- Coaches exhibit sound injury and risk management practices.
- Coaches demonstrate an understanding of growth and developmental stages of their athletes.
- Coaches place the athlete's needs and interests before their own.
- Coaches remember that competition should be healthy and enjoyable for all. I understand that I represent not only my team, but the Town of Avon, Indiana Sports Division and Avon Youth Sports. I will conduct myself according to the standards presented in the AYS Code of Conduct. I understand that the other coaches, players, parents and AYS will hold me accountable for the actions and behavior of myself as well as my players, parents, and assistants. I acknowledge that I am held accountable to the AYS Code of Conduct, and that failure to abide by the AYS Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary actions.

PARENT/PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT

Parents and players are expected to conduct themselves according to the highest standards of social and ethical behavior.

By agreeing to participate, I acknowledge that I will:

- Encourage and participate in fair play
- Cheer in a positive manner for all participants
- Avoid negative or harsh criticism of any player or team performance
- Show respect for all players, coaches and referees
- Display good sportsmanship at all times
- Abstain from criticizing opponents
- Contribute to a positive environment where kids can play, learn and have fun

I understand that I represent not only my team, but also Avon Youth Sports. I will conduct myself according to the standards presented in the AYS Code of Conduct. I understand that the coach, other players, parents and AYS will hold me accountable for my actions and behavior. I acknowledge that I am held accountable to the AYS Code of Conduct, that failure to abide by the AYS Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary actions.

EMERGENCIES

Emergencies Requiring First Aid: How to Respond

During sporting events, the coaching staff is responsible for administering first aid to any ill or injured AYS athlete, unless an AYS affiliated athletic trainer is present. If an AYS affiliated athletic trainer is present, they will assume responsibility for care and for all return to play decisions. The coach must follow the training protocols they have been instructed on.

The first responder to the situation needs to be the highest certified and trained person on site where the injury occurs. The first responder will most often be the specific team Head Coach, although other personnel may fill this role if their certification and training is greater than that of the Head Coach (i.e. if the bystander is a Certified Nurse, Emergency Medical Technician, Doctor). It is vital that first responders keep the environment calm so that athletes don't panic. Coaches should also make sure they complete all the steps on the First Aid Checklist below. By following this procedure, coaches allow medical personnel to easily respond to the scene and help care for the athlete.

First Aid Checklist

- 1. Check the surroundings for safety hazards and stop all activity near the emergency.**
- 2. Check the injured athlete's injury and determine a plan of action.**
- 3. Do not move the athlete if there is a possibility of head or neck injury or if the athlete is unconscious.**
- 4. Have someone contact a parent/guardian. Some cases may also require 911 to be contacted. Coaches should use their training to properly judge the severity of the situation.**
- 5. If EMS responders determine that the athlete is in an emergency, a coach can transport the injured athlete.**

Emergency Phone Number: Mike Clark, AYS Facilities Manager | (317)671-0075

Please utilize this number only in the case of an emergency.

Incident Reports

In the case of any incident requiring first aid, an incident form must be completed within 24 hours. This incident form is available on the AYS website and included in your coaching handbook. Incident reports need to be completed by a person who witnesses the situation unfold and not by someone who arrived after the incident occurred. If no witness is available to provide a detailed account of the situation, then AYS will allow the individual who experienced the situation to complete the incident report and will allow a time extension on a case-by-case basis.

INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE

AYS' Incident Report Form is used to properly record any incident that occurs when utilizing the AYS property, during games/practices, and/or any other reporting that should be noted to the organization's administration. It is extremely important to report any and all incidents, so that proper documentation and details may be recorded promptly. This is helpful to report accidents to our insurance carrier for liability purposes, to accurately document any incidents with all witness details, to watch for any future occurrences, and to know when management needs to help facilitate an issue, etc.

Examples of when to use this form:

- **When a player is injured during practice or games**
- **When an altercation happens between players, parents, coaches, umpires, or any event that should be documented for witness purposes.**

Please know that all documentation is extremely important to ensure that all details can be recorded accurately and helps for our leadership to continue to be in the know during all activities.

Upon completion of the form, please immediately take to the AYS office or email sports@avonindiana.gov.



Town of Avon, Indiana Sports (Home of Avon Youth Sports)
Incident Reporting Form

IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION	
Name :	
Date of Hire:	
Address :	
Date of Birth :	
Telephone :	
Name of Physician :	
Name of Hospital, if hospitalized :	

INCIDENT REPORTING INFORMATION	
Date of Incident:	
Location:	
Time:	
Type of Incident:	
Equipment Involved:	
Event or Task:	
If Injured, what injury:	
Part of Body Affected:	



Town of Avon, Indiana Sports (Home of Avon Youth Sports)
Incident Reporting Form

MACHINERY/EQUIPMENT INVOLVED (IF APPLICABLE)	
Manufacturer :	
Equipment Age :	
Serial Number :	
Model :	
Any Modification to Equipment :	
Machine Guarding in Place :	

REPORTING MEMBER STATEMENT	
<p>Description of Accident/Incident:</p> <p>Include Factors that Led to Incident:</p> <p>Include Any Equipment Involved:</p>	



Town of Avon, Indiana Sports (Home of Avon Youth Sports)
Incident Reporting Form

WITNESS STATEMENT, IF APPLICABLE	
<p>Witness Description of Accident/Incident:</p> <p>Include Factors that Led to Incident:</p> <p>Include Any Equipment Involved:</p>	

TOWN OF AVON, INDIANA SPORTS EMPLOYER REVIEW AND STATEMENT	
<p>AIS Description of Accident/Incident:</p> <p>Include Factors that Led to Incident:</p> <p>Include Any Equipment Involved:</p>	



Town of Avon, Indiana Sports (Home of Avon Youth Sports)
Incident Reporting Form

For any additional documentation, photos, or statements, please attach separately to this form or utilize the space below.

Reporting Member Signature and Date: _____

Witness Signature and Date: _____

Employer Signature and Date: _____

AVON JUNIOR RUNNERS

A stylized illustration of a black and white running shoe with a yellow and blue logo on the side, positioned to the left of the text.

COACHING RESOURCES

GAME CHANGER APP.

AYS coaches will utilize the GameChanger app. to communicate with players and their families. Please download the GameChanger app. on your smartphone.

Game changer actions:

- Import your team
- Add schedule
- Team messaging



GameChanger Help:

- Email help@gc.com
- Online help/resource center
 - <https://teammanager.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/sections/115001142103-General-Infodesk.com>



16 Tips for the First Time Coach

Coaches have the opportunity to create a positive sport experience that has a lasting impact on their players. Sports led by a supportive, intentional coach helps players build connections with others, develop new skills, learn to overcome challenges, and have fun!

As a first time coach, it can be overwhelming to think about where to start and how to help your players get the most out of the sport. Follow these tips below to get a head start on creating a positive, impactful sports experience for your team!

- 1. Build trusting relationships both with and amongst your players.** Trusting relationships are the foundation upon which a positive sports culture is built, and help players feel supported, engaged, and that they belong. They are also essential in helping athletes develop skills both on and off the field.
- 2. Develop a coaching philosophy and goals for the season.** Why are you coaching? What does success look like? How can you achieve this success? How will you create a positive sports culture where players develop life skills and grow as competitors? By spending time answering these questions you create a guide post for how you want to lead throughout the season.
- 3. Share your coaching philosophy and goals with your players and their parents from the start.** Start the season with a parent and player meeting to set clear expectations for what you are trying to achieve and how you will approach coaching. Collaborate with players by receiving their input on season goals to give them more ownership and connection to the team.
- 4. Invite the parents to help.** It often helps to have some parents pitch in at practices and games. If you invite them directly, they will likely support you with a few extra hands. Getting them involved at your practices also helps them feel more connected to their child's sports experience.
- 5. Welcome each player by name at every practice and game.** Learn the names that players prefer to be called early and use those names often, especially when giving feedback. When players arrive to coaches who are smiling and greeting them by name, they feel welcome and positive from the start.





16 Tips for the First Time Coach (continued)

6. **Plan practice ahead of time.** When you are prepared and have a plan for practice, you'll be able to focus on your players and not thinking about what to do next. Use a practice model to shape each practice in a similar way. The familiarity of a consistent practice structure will help players know what to expect and feel more comfortable.
7. **Start practice with an opening circle.** Use the opening circle to check in on how your players are doing (thumb up for a good day, middle for an ok day, down for a bad day) and make sure they know that you appreciate them coming no matter where their thumb is at. Tell them that you are available to talk if they need that. You can also use the opening circle to introduce the skill you'll be focusing on.
8. **Pick 1-2 areas of focus per practice/game.** Pick one skill/concept to introduce and progress it throughout the practice - starting with an introductory drill, then moving to a game to practice the drill, and finally focusing on using the skill/concept within a scrimmage. At the start of practice, you might say: "Today is going to be all about passing." Then, each time you bring players in, ask them "What is our focus today?" Whenever you see it being executed well, acknowledge the player and their effort.
9. **Design practices that keep kids active.** When players are moving and active, they are more likely to stay focused. At the younger ages, avoid lines. Find games/drills that give players a lot of repeated practice of the skills.
10. **Be mindful of your body language and tone.** Players will feed off of your body language and tone. Your enthusiasm will spread and make their experience more enjoyable. Things like getting down on a knee to get to their level and using positive energy will keep them engaged and excited to participate on your team.
11. **Use clear, concise instructions.** When talking to your team, be as clear as you can about what you expect out of them and keep the talking to a minimum. Players are at practice to play, learn, and grow, not sit around listening to instructions. Always make sure to confirm they know what to do before starting a drill or game.





16 Tips for the First Time Coach [continued]

- 12. Provide detailed, specific skill based suggestions.** When you need to provide skill based suggestions, be specific about what you are looking for. Confirm with a player that they are ready to hear it and look towards the future using 'feed-forward': "Next time, when you are going to trap the ball with your right foot, make sure your plant foot is firmly in the ground."
- 13. Create a team cheer and do it often.** Young players love having adults who are willing to be silly with them. Collaborate with your players to create a cheer and bring them in multiple times during practice to do their cheer. Make sure they see and hear you as an active participant.
- 14. End practice/competition on a positive note.** At the end of a practice or competition, call in all of the players and their parents. Check in on how players are doing and ask the players: "Who saw one of your teammates do something well?" Acknowledge what positive things you saw out of the team as well.
- 15. Reflect on your practices and game.** Spend some time after practices and games to reflect on how practices/games went. Were there drills you could have explained differently? Were players particularly engaged in a specific game? Use this opportunity to also reflect on the interactions you had with your players. Was there an interaction you think you could improve upon next time? Is there a player you need to get to know more?
- 16. Don't forget, this can be hard.** Most first-time coaches are surprised by how hard it is to feel successful coaching. We go in with very high expectations and we don't have control over the outcome. You are not alone. Find other coaches who have been doing this for a while, and share your challenges. They can serve as a wonderful resource.

PCA thanks you for being a coach! Without you, kids would not have the opportunity to play. When you're in the thick of it, remember that as long as you consistently show up, are intentional about how you interact with your players, and put effort into creating a positive youth sports culture, you'll be setting your players up for a fun time where they learn and grow as individuals and as a team.

