BUTTS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF LEISURE SERVICES
YOUTH SPORTS SOP

Youth Sports Philosophy

As a tax supported, public department, the focus of our youth sports program is on participation, learning skills, good sportsmanship and having fun. Every child that signs up during the normal registration period will be given the opportunity to participate. Those that register AFTER the normal registration period cannot be guaranteed a place on a team due to the fact that decisions regarding the number of teams, number of youths per team, necessary coaches, and equipment and uniform decisions must be made based on predetermined timelines. However, the names of the late registrants will be put on a waiting list and they will be placed on a team IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

Registration

Registration is open for each sport no less than one month prior to evaluation. Once registration ends the staff meets to determine the number of teams and number of players per team. If a league needs players to make a team whole, it will be announced that we need players for certain age groups. (Example: if 8U has 50 kids registered and we want 5 teams of 11 we will open registration up to the next 5 kids.) If a league is full, we will place kids on a waiting list. If we get enough kids in an age group to make another team, we will contact parents and register those kids. Once evaluation is complete, we will not accept any registration unless a child drops off and it is detrimental to the team. (Example: If a child drops from the team and causes the team to not have enough players to compete.)

Coaching

Coaches are chosen using the following guidelines: If you were a head coach in good standing (defined as displaying good sportsmanship throughout the season) You will be given the first opportunity to be a head coach in the same age division the following season. If you choose not to be a head coach the next season your assistant coach will be offered the position of head coach. If none of the coaches wish to coach the following season in that age division the department will reserve the right to assign a head coach. All coaches regardless of head or assistant must have a current coach's application and background check on file. All coaches are required to display their coach's badge while on the field for practices and games. Any required certifications must be completed before the beginning of the season.

Refunds

Full refunds are only made available if they are requested before the child has been placed on a team and uniform ordered. Once uniforms have been ordered we will issue a refund minus the cost of the uniform as well as any fees charged by the online registration system. The only exceptions for full refunds are if a child is on the waiting list and can wear the same size uniform and is detrimental to the team, we will place that child on the team and issue a full refund. A full refund will also be issued if the department does not get enough participants in a certain age group.

Fundraising

Fundraising of any kind is strictly forbidden. The Department of Leisure Services provides the necessary uniforms and equipment for each sport.

Age Grouping in Youth Sports

Age groups are established in our youth sports programs to help insure compatible physical development, emotional readiness & skill levels among participants. Age groupings will follow the governing rules of the recognized sport and/or association under which the department's youth program is being organized. Age groupings may cover one or more chronological years.

Age groupings are not to exceed two chronological years EXCEPT in age groupings where a small number of registered participants MAY require a wider age grouping.

Established "cut-off" dates, which are used to determine the player's age group for that program, are to be strictly followed. However, there are THREE circumstances under which a youth may be permitted to participate either up or down an age group.

1. ***playing down an age group:*** if the parent/guardian has requested it and the youth has a mental or physical condition that precludes successful participation with their age group, they may be allowed to play down an age group for in-house leagues with proper documentation of mental or physical condition.
2. ***playing up an age group:*** if the parent/guardian has requested it and the youth has physical development, emotional readiness and skills which allow/foster success at a high age group, they may be allowed to play up an age group.
3. ***playing before reaching minimum age:*** if the department cannot find enough volunteer HEAD coaches to coach in the youngest age grouping, a child whose birthday is within one year of the cut-off date, will be allowed to participate if their parent is willing and actively serves as the HEAD coach of a team with their child on the team. NOTE: if the parent fails to actively serve as the HEAD coach, the child's participation will be in jeopardy and, depending on circumstances, may not be allowed to complete the season.

   Each request will be reviewed using the following criteria:
   - Does the child's skill level allow for a safe transition for all concerned?
   - Is the child's maturity level appropriate for the age grouping?
   - Does the request cause balance problems for our leagues (skill levels, number of participants, etc.)?
   - Participants shall not be allowed to advance more than one age grouping.

NOTE: If, in the opinion of the Department Staff, the appropriateness and/or safety of the participants become jeopardized, for the youth playing up/down OR the other youth in the activity, the youth playing up/down will be removed from the age group. This will be a judgment decision made by Department Director and will not be subject to appeal.

NOTE: No child will be allowed to play up or down an age group until an ***AGE GROUP/PARTICIPATION SPECIAL REQUEST FORM*** has been completed, signed by the parent/guardian, submitted and approved by the Director of the Parks & Recreation Department.

NOTE: After submission of the ***AGE GROUP/PARTICIPATION SPECIAL REQUEST FORM*** , the parent must arrange for an evaluation, by the Department's Athletic Staff or Director, of their child's

readiness & skill level. Proof of a limiting mental/physical condition will be required of any participant requesting to play down an age group.

NOTE: Youth moving up or down are not eligible to participate in any post-season or all-star activities. See related All-Star Policies & Procedures.

Youth Sports Player Skill Evaluations

Our youth sports program focuses more on participation than on competition. However, as the youth become older, the role of competition does increase. Depending on the sport, beginning at age eight (8) or older, competition & winning are recognized by the Department through season standings, end of the season individual & team awards and post-season all-stars. For these age groupings, parity among teams becomes very important. For that purpose, skill evaluations are required for individual players before they are eligible to be placed on a team. Each player will run through a series of skill assessments with each skill rated. Individual ratings are added to provide an overall rating for each player. Overall ratings will be: three (3) for exceptionally skilled impact players; two (2) for average skilled players and one (1) for beginning skilled players. These ratings will be used in the team assignment (drafting) process to help insure parity among teams in the leagues. Currently, skill evaluations are required as follows: Basketball = 8 & Older; Baseball = 8 & Older; Football = 7 & Older; Soccer = 8 & Older and Softball = 9 & Older.

Team Special Request

During the registration process, a Team Special Request Form will be available. The purpose of this Team Special Request Form is to; (1)help staff identify brothers/sisters or step brother/sisters that need to be placed on the same team; (2) make staff aware of any extenuating circumstances regarding the welfare of your child as it relates to participation in the program. This Form needs to be filled out & signed by the parent & stapled to the youth registration form of the youth affected. The form can also be completed online during the registration process.

Team Roster Limits

The day after registration closes, participant numbers will be evaluated by the Department's Staff. If the number of participants is less than the Roster Limit, the Department will accept the number of players that will meet their Roster Limit. (i.e. The Roster Limit is 13 and 10 players are registered, 3 players will be accepted.)

If the number of participants is more than the Roster Limit but not enough to form two teams, the Department will place ALL registered participants who signed up on time, on a team.

If participants are late to sign up, they will be placed on a waiting list. If Roster Limit's allow it, waiting list participants will be placed on a team. If Roster's are full, a waiting list participant may be moved to a team only if a player from that team drops and the waiting list participant wears the same size uniform. Once teams are drafted and uniforms are ordered, no players will be added unless a team drops below the required number of participants to play.

Roster Limit's are as follows and are not subject to appeal:

- Youth Softball: 13
- Youth Baseball: 13
- Youth Basketball: 10
- Youth Football: 22

- Youth Flag Football: 10
- Youth Soccer (U6): 8
- Youth Soccer (U8): 9
- Youth Soccer (U10): 10
- Youth Soccer (U12): 16
- Youth Soccer (U14, U16, U19): 18
- Youth Cheer: No Limit

Freezing Players

Youth Basketball "Freezing Players" Procedures

Purpose: The purpose of freezing players is to allow the children and coaches to play and grow together through multiple seasons in order to create a strong team environment.

1) General Rules
   a) Coaches can only freeze players that were on their roster in the previous season. If a player was NOT on their roster, they must attempt to draft them as normal.
   b) The final decision will come down to the parents. The parents will be contacted by BCDLS Staff and informed that a coach would like to freeze their child. The parent then has the decision to pick which coach they want or decline all requests and have the child be put into the regular draft.
   c) Head Coaches can freeze players from season to season.
   d) If an assistant coach decides to become a head coach in the next season, he/she may pick players from the roster to freeze AFTER the original head coach has his/her choice. If a head coach decides not to coach, then the assistant coach can have first choice from the roster.
   e) Frozen Players do NOT include the head coaches' child unless there are multiple children.
      i) If a coach has multiple children, only one child will count as the "coaches' child", the remaining children will be considered "frozen players".
      ii) These children are automatically placed on their respective teams.
   f) Assistant Coaches' child(ren) DO COUNT as freeze players.
2) Amount of Frozen Players
   a) Coaches may freeze 3 players (plus one Head Coaches' Child) = 4 frozen players
3) Procedure
   a) All coaches planning on freezing players must do the following:
      i) Complete the Freezing Players form
      ii) Turn in via email or in person to Athletic Coordinator a week prior to your scheduled draft

iii) Wait for approval

iv) Bring approval to draft

Youth Baseball/Softball "Freezing Players" Procedures

Purpose: The purpose of freezing players is to allow the children and coaches to play and grow together through multiple seasons in order to create a strong team environment.

1) General Rules
   a) Coaches can only freeze players that were on their roster in the previous season. If a player was NOT on their roster, they must attempt to draft them as normal.
   b) The final decision will come down to the parents. The parents will be contacted by BCDLS Staff and informed that a coach would like to freeze their child. The parent then has the decision to accept or decline the request. If the parent declines, then the child will be put into the regular draft.
   c) Head Coaches can freeze players from season to season.
   d) If an assistant coach decides to become a head coach and the head coach is no longer coaching or becomes the assistant coach in the next season, he/she may pick players from the roster to freeze.
   e) If an assistant coach becomes a head coach and the head coach remains a head coach the original head coach would be given the first choice to freeze players from the previous seasons roster. The assistant coach moving up to a head coaching position can then choose from the remaining players or players that declined to be frozen on that roster.
   f) Frozen Players DO include the head coaches' and assistant coaches' child(ren).
      i) These children are automatically placed on their respective teams.
2) Amount of Frozen Players
   a) Coaches may freeze 5 players (this will include the Head and Assistant coaches' child(ren).
3) Procedure
   a) All coaches planning on freezing players must do the following:
      i) Complete the Freezing Players form
      ii) Turn in to Athletic Coordinator at the end of your scheduled evaluation.

Youth Soccer "Freezing Players" Procedures

Purpose: The purpose of freezing players is to allow the children and coaches to play and grow together through multiple seasons in order to create a strong team environment.

1) General Rules

    a. Head Coaches can freeze players from season to season.
    b. If a head coach skips a season, he/she may freeze players from the previous season that they coached as long as that player skipped a season as well.
        i. Example: Joe coaches Spring 2017 soccer and has Jesse on his team. Both Joe and Jesse take Fall 2017 soccer season off. Joe may request to freeze Jesse in Spring 2018 soccer season. But if Jesse plays Fall 2017 soccer season, Joe may NOT request to freeze Jesse for Spring 2018 soccer season.
    c. If an assistant coach decides to become a head coach in the next season, he/she may pick players from the roster to freeze AFTER the original head coach has his/her choice.
    d. Frozen Players do NOT include the head coaches' child unless there are multiple children.
        i. If a coach has multiple children, only one child will count as the "coaches' child", the remaining children will be considered "frozen players".
        ii. These children are automatically placed on their respective teams.
    e. Assistant Coaches' child(ren) DO COUNT as freeze players.

2) Amount of Frozen Players

    a. The number of frozen players depends on the age group of the current season.
    b. Age Groups:

        i. 6U: Players cannot be frozen
        ii. 8U: up to 2 players may be frozen, not including 1 head coach's child
        iii. 10U: up to 3 players may be frozen, not including 1 head coach's child
        iv. 12U: up to 4 players may be frozen, not including 1 head coach's child

3) Procedure

    a. All coaches planning on freezing players must do the following:

        i. Complete the Freezing Players form
        ii. Turn in via email or in person to Jillian Bouchard a week prior to your scheduled draft
        iii. Wait for approval
        iv. Bring approval to draft

Player Team Assignment (Draft)

Players will be assigned to teams following the procedures below:

- Prior to each draft, the Department will compile a MASTER DRAFT SHEET of all registered players in single age groups. Each individual player within each age group will be assigned a number on this master sheet. This master sheet will contain names and ages, as well as, individual skill assessment scores and the overall rating score where appropriate.
- Also, on the MASTER DRAFT SHEET, any Special Request (team or age group/participation) and Frozen Players will be noted beside the affected player's name.
- Each head coach participating in the draft will be given a copy of the MASTER DRAFT SHEET.
- Freeze forms will be discussed. Frozen players will be automatically placed on the appropriate team.

At this point, those ages that:

- DO NOT require skill assessment scores will follow Draft Procedure A.
- REQUIRE skill assessments scores will follow Draft Procedure B.

Draft Procedure A:

1. Head & Assistant Coaches will be identified. Lots will be drawn by the Head Coaches to determine the drafting order, TEAM PRACTICE SCHEDULE and uniform choices.

2. If necessary, Head coaches will draw for sponsor assignments if children/coaches linked to sponsors.

3. After the draw, the Head Coach's names will be listed, in corresponding order (1,2,3…), on the TEAM ASSIGNMENT FORM and TEAM PRACTICE SCHEDULES.

4. At this point Staff will pass out copies and explain the pre-set Team Practice Schedule for that age group. Following the practice schedule explanation, Head Coaches will be given an opportunity to swap, decline or substitute practices times for their team based on field availability. NOTE: Staff & staff support for pitching machines, etc. MAY NOT be available for Saturdays.

5. Staff will document on the TEAM PRACTICE SCHEDULE MASTER COPY, the resulting assignment of teams to practice times.

6. Coaches will review the MASTER DRAFT SHEETS, starting with the oldest age group, and identify all coach's sons/daughters/grandsons/granddaughters and freeze players. Upon identification, the corresponding coach's team number (1,2,3….) will be placed, by Staff, in that players team assignment box on the MASTER DRAFT SHEET.

7. Next, any TEAM SPECIAL REQUEST FORMS, will be presented by Staff. Brothers/sisters and/or sponsor's children will be shown as "linked" for drafting purposes. Any other special request that the Staff present, AND the Coaches agree to honor, will also be shown on the MASTER DRAFT SHEET as "linked" for drafting purposes.

8. The Staff member will then record, on the TEAM ASSIGNMENT FORM, the players draft number in the appropriate box for each of the sons/daughters/freeze players that has been assigned to each team.

9. Then, following the drafting order, beginning with the oldest age group, Head Coaches will select unassigned players until each team has the same number of players. EXAMPLE: If team one had three coach's sons/daughters, each of the other teams would select players, in drafting order, until ALL teams had three players.

NOTE: Staff will record the selection of ALL players in two (2) places: one, on the MASTER DRAFT SHEET where the player's team assignment number will be recorded; and second, on the TEAM ASSIGNMENT FORM where the assignment will be recorded as a check mark (player assigned) for that team AND the player number, written in the ratings box.

10. Once coach's sons/daughters/freeze players have been assigned AND all teams have the same number of players, the draft will restart in the original drafting order with Head Coaches selecting players in turn. **NOTE:** When a coach selects one of the "linked" players, all those "linked" players will be assigned to that team at that time. Coaches selecting two or more "linked" players would be skipped in the drafting order until the normal balance among all teams has been returned.

11. This process will continue until all players, oldest to youngest, have been assigned to teams.

12. After assigning all players, the staff person will confirm & announce how many players are on each team.

13. Participation reports will be given to head coaches for their respective players.

14. Once separated, coaches will be asked to confirm the count of players assigned to their team by counting the yellow youth release forms.

15. Staff will remind coaches to review the participation reports for phone numbers and any special medical needs/information that the parents may have listed. Coaches will be told the date by which they will be expected to call each player and inform them of the mandatory coach/player/parent meeting.

16. Staff will then organize & return the MASTER DRAFT SHEET, the TEAM ASSIGNMENT FORM and the PRACTICE SCHEDULE MASTER COPY to the Department Office.

Draft Procedure B (For Age Groups that require skill evaluations)

1. Head & Assistant Coaches will be identified. Lots will be drawn by the Head Coaches to determine the drafting order, team practice schedule and uniform choices.

2. If necessary, Head coaches will draw for sponsor assignments if children/coaches are linked to sponsors.

3. After the draw, the Head Coach's names and sponsor's names will be listed, in corresponding order (1,2,3…), on the TEAM ASSIGNMENT FORM AND TEAM PRACTICE SCHEDULES.

4. At this point Staff will pass out copies and explain the pre-set Team Practice Schedule for that age group. Following the practice schedule explanation, Head Coaches will be given an opportunity to swap, decline or substitute practices times for their team based on field availability. NOTE: Staff & staff support for pitching machines, etc. MAY NOT be available for Saturdays.

5. Staff will document on the PRACTICE SCHEDULE MASTER COPY, the resulting assignment of teams to practice times.

6. Coaches will review the MASTER DRAFT SHEETS, starting with the oldest age group, and identify all coach's sons/daughters/grandsons/granddaughters/frozen players. Upon identification, the corresponding coach's team number (1,2,3….) will be placed and CIRCLED, by Staff, BESIDE that players team assignment box on the MASTER DRAFT SHEET.

7. Next, any TEAM SPECIAL REQUEST FORMS, will be presented by Staff. Brothers/sisters and/or sponsor's children will be shown as "linked" for drafting purposes. Any other special request that the Staff present, AND the Coaches agree to honor, will also be shown on the MASTER DRAFT SHEET as "linked" for drafting purposes. "Linking's" will be noted by color or alphabetical coding on the MASTER DRAFT SHEET.

8. Next, the overall skill assessment ratings for each individual player will be reviewed. Any Coach that feels that a rating is not accurate shall bring the matter to Staff attention. Staff & all coaches will provide input and based on collective agreement, overall ratings may be adjusted.

9. With the exception of coach's sons/daughters/frozen players., players that did not attend skill evaluations WILL NOT BE RATED and will be drafted last in the order.

NOTE: In certain sports, skilled positions players (such as pitchers) MUST be spread out among the teams if parity is to be achieved. For these sports, identified skill positions players will be assigned to teams BEFORE any other players are assigned. Assigned skill position players will automatically be rated as 3" s. See the team assignments for skilled positions section for details by sport.

10. Next, if required, skilled position players are assigned.

11. Next, following the drafting order, beginning with the oldest age group, Head Coaches will select their players. Top skill rated players (#3's), followed by 2's then 1's, will be selected until all rated players have been assigned. Coaches must select their child(ren) and frozen players in their respective evaluation rating group.

NOTE: Staff will record the selection of ALL players in two (2) places: one, on the MASTER DRAFT SHEET where the player's team assignment number will be recorded; and second, on

the TEAM ASSIGNMENT FORM where the assignment will be recorded as a 1) a check mark (player assigned) AND 2) the players draft number; AND 3) as age group verification; AND 4) as a point value for that team.

12. The Staff member will ensure the Team Assignment Form is filled in as the selecting continues. Staff will monitor team parity by ensuring that the team(s) with the lowest total point value(s) AFTER EACH ROUND get the first selection(s) for the coming round.

13. After all the pre-rated players have been assigned to teams, those players that did not attend skill evaluations will be reviewed and assigned an overall skill rating. For those players that are known to any of the staff or coaches, overall ratings of #3, #2 or #1 may be assigned. For those players that are unknown to any of the staff or coaches, EACH of these players will receive an overall rating of #2.

14. Next, picking up where the rated player draft ended, following the same procedures as outlined in paragraph #8 above, these players will be assigned to teams.

15. After assigning all players, the staff person will confirm & announce how many players are on each team.

16. Participation reports will be given to the head coaches for their respective players.

17. Once separated, coaches will be asked to confirm the count of players assigned to their team by counting the yellow youth release forms.

18. Staff will remind coaches to review the participation reports for phone numbers and any special medical needs/information that the parents may have listed. Coaches will be told the date by which they will be expected to call each player and inform them of the mandatory coach/player/parent meeting.

19. Staff will then organize & return the MASTER DRAFT SHEET, the TEAM ASSIGNMENT FORM # and the PRACTICE SCHEDULE MASTER COPY to the Department Office.

Team Assignments for Skilled Positions

In certain sports, skilled positions (such as pitchers) MUST be spread out among the teams if parity is to be achieved. For these sports, identified skill positions players will be assigned to teams BEFORE any other players are assigned. The sports & procedures for these assignments will be as follows:

- Sports that will use skill position assignments will include:
    - Baseball, ages 8 & older, for pitchers
    - Softball, ages 9 & older, for pitchers
- Procedures that must be in place for assignments of skilled positions will include a specialize rating at the skill evaluation. Using this skill rating, the names of the skilled pitchers available in the draft will be identified. A number, pre-determined by Staff, will be explained and each team will by as balanced as possible with skilled pitchers BEFORE any other players are assigned. For Team assignment purposes, skilled position players will all have an overall rating of #3.

Sponsor's Children/Coaches:
A sponsor may request their child, ONE per sponsor PER age group, be placed on the team they sponsor. OR, sponsors may request an approved coach that they want to coach the team they are sponsoring. NOTE: they cannot request both children & coach. The requested children/coach will be assigned by staff, during the draft, using the Special Request Form & process.

Mandatory Meeting & 1st Practice:
ALL coaches should call their players and tell parents there will be a mandatory practice for all players & PARENTS. At this meeting coaches should meet parents, inform them of practice days/times, team rules AND discuss & GET SIGNED the player parent agreements regarding sportsmanship.

Equipment Pick-Up:
Equipment will not be issued to any coaches until AFTER the team has its Player/Parent meeting and turns in the signed Player/Parent Agreement Form.

Team Names:
Rec League Teams will first be named after the Sponsor that is sponsoring the team. Baseball teams are named second after major league baseball (i.e. Jackson Progress Argus Braves) Softball teams are named second after college teams (i.e. American Woodmark Bulldogs) Soccer local teams will be named second after the color of the uniform (i.e. United Bank Orange). Basketball Teams will be named second after NBA teams (i.e. Chuck's Tire Hawks). Football/Cheer Teams, which includes Flag Football, will be named Red Devils. Travel teams and Select teams can choose team names First the sponsor name and second a name of their choice. All teams' names must be approved by the Director. Director has the right to deny choice of team name if it in any way can be deemed as racist, inappropriate or could possibly be viewed as controversial. The decision of the director is not subject to appeal.

Scholarships for Youth Sports:
When funds are available, scholarships will be made available for youth of families in financial need. Scholarships may cover a part or the entire normal registration fee. The policies and procedures which govern the scholarship process are:

1. Unless special funds are made available, scholarships will be available only for youth sports programs.
2. Only full-time residents of Butts County will be eligible for scholarships.
3. A SCHOLARSHIP REQUEST FORM must be completed by the parent/guardian of the child. **ALL** requested information must be submitted BEFORE a scholarship application will be considered.
4. Scholarships will ONLY be available for the first two weeks of the normal registration period.
5. The parent/guardian must complete the Registration and give normally required information such as uniform sizes, etc.
6. **Staff** will then explain the scholarship expectations to the parent/guardian AND give them a copy of the SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIMELINE & EXPECTATIONS. IMMEDIATELY AFTER EXPLAINING THE TIMELINE & EXPECTATIONS, HAVE THE

PARENT SIGN (ON THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION) THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THEIR EXPECTATION.

7. The Director will review all scholarship requests and prioritize based on financial need.
8. Scholarships shall be awarded, on the discretion of the Director, based on these prioritizations and the availability of scholarship funds.
9. Parents/guardians are responsible for contacting the Office, following the dates/times listed on the SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIMELINE & EXPECTATIONS, to find out if their application was approved.
10. If the scholarship request has been denied or only partially funded, the PARENT/GUARDIAN must return to the Office and pay the registration fees IF they want their child to participate. FAILURE to return to the Office and pay required fees by the DEADLINE listed on the SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIMELINE & EXPECTATIONS form will result in a VOIDING of the scholarship offer AND the space being reserved for the child to participate.
11. STAFF must be sure to highlight the name of the child on the SCHOLARSHIP APPROVAL LIST that will be created & available in the office for each sport. **NOTE: It is critical that STAFF who answer a call from a parent, regarding a scholarship, HIGHLIGHT that child's name on the SCHOLARSHIP APPROVAL LIST. Failure to do so could result in a child losing a scholarship & WILL RESULT a reprimand to that STAFF member failing to do so.**
12. If a parents/guardian that receives a scholarship and does not bring the child to practices and games without medical reasons they will no longer be able to apply for a scholarship.