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Mason Parks & Recreation Department

**YOUTH SPORTS
POLICY MANUAL**

October 11, 2007

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I. PHILOSOPHY OF MASON PARKS AND RECREATION YOUTH SPORTS

Mason Parks and Recreation (“MPR”) youth sports programs are designed to allow all children an opportunity to have fun, participate, and learn fundamental sports skills. We are committed to providing both educational and recreational programs and services. Participants will learn sportsmanship, respect, teamwork, fair play and self-confidence. The sports environment will be safe and well maintained. Prudent behavior by adults is mandatory. Mason Parks and Recreation youth sports policies and procedures have been developed for:

- Mason Parks and Recreation youth sports programs
- Requirements for organizations that use Mason Parks and Recreation properties for youth sports
- Implementation and monitoring program for volunteer coach’s certifications and training.

SEVEN ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF MASON PARKS AND RECREATION YOUTH SPORTS PHILOSOPHY

1. All children in our community who meet the basic program registration requirements have a right to participate in MPR youth sports programs.
2. MPR will offer programs at a reasonable cost, while providing quality facilities, and recognition to both volunteers and participants.
3. MPR Staff will recruit volunteers who have the ability to act as role models, mentors and facilitators.
4. All participants in MPR youth sport programs shall be treated fairly, and without regard to race, color, disability, religion, sex or national origin.
5. Youth sport program practices and games should be an enjoyable, challenging, and learning experience for all participants.
6. Those people in coaching and leadership positions in youth sport programs shall lead by example through the promotion of fair play and sportsmanship.
7. Youth sports programs focus on the enjoyment of the sport-NOT the score.

PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to formalize the policies, procedures and philosophies of the Mason Parks and Recreation Youth Sports Programs. This manual is to be used by both youth sport programs organized by Mason Parks and Recreation and youth sports programs organized by partnering organizations that use Mason Parks and Recreation property.

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II. REQUIREMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

It is required that each team's Head Coach be NYSCA certified. It is also highly recommended that each team have a minimum one coach at all times (practices and games) NYSCA certified.

Any leagues or groups interested in using City of Mason Parks & Recreation for an organized youth sports program is required to complete a Youth Sports User Group Application (See Appendix 1) and a Field Request Form (See Appendix 2). The Youth Sports User Group Application has the following requirements:

- List with names and addresses of the youth sports organization Board of Directors and/or leadership.
- Documentation of \$1,000,000 liability insurance naming the City of Mason, its agents, officers, employees and volunteers as an additional insured.
- Verification through the form of an organization resolution or letter acknowledging that the organization will abide by the policies and procedures established in this manual.
- Verification of NYSCA training for Board of Directors.
- Verification of NYSCA training for the Head Coach and coaches for each team.

City of Mason Parks & Recreation facility use will only be granted to those youth sports groups who abide by and enforce the written policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

Screening Procedures – MPR will complete background checks on volunteer coaches in the programs supervised by the City of Mason. The City of Mason Volunteer Coordinator works closely with the Recreation Supervisor to provide volunteer applications filled out by the City of Mason coaches, which includes a fingerprint analysis completed by the City of Mason Police Department. MPR volunteer coaches may begin coaching once the screening procedures have been completed. A cost is associated with the screening procedures. It is highly recommended that youth sports organizations complete background checks on their officials, coaches and volunteers.

III. GENERAL POLICIES

MPR Parent Orientation Meeting- Prior to the start of each season, each youth sport operated by Mason Parks & Recreation will offer a Parent Orientation Meeting. It is highly recommended that one or both of the parents/guardians attend one of the meetings. The Policies and Procedures will be passed out and discussed, and other important information will be distributed.

MPR Payments- Payments are due for all programs at time of registration.

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Medical Emergencies- For any injury or accident that requires something other than a cleaning and covering with a bandage, staff, coaches and/or parents are required to call 911 to seek professional medical assistance. Parents or guardians must be contacted. Any injury or accident involving professional medical assistance and/or EMS needs to be reported to the Parks & Recreation Department.

Note- If medical transportation is required, the charges incurred will be billed to the parents and/or the parent's insurance policy. Please notify the league if your child has a pre-existing medical condition (i.e. allergies, medications, physical impairments, etc.) on the registration form. The league will then inform the coach of the situation. This is essential in order to determine the severity of an accident and to assist the medical personnel who respond to the scene.

Coaches must walk the playing area prior to the beginning of any game or practice to look for dangerous materials or hazards and report and/or remedy the hazard prior to the start of any play.

Any and all accidents in an MPR program should be reported to the Parks & Recreation Department using a City of Mason incident/accident report form.

Weather- The safety of the participants, officials, and spectators is the primary concern in cases of inclement weather. League Administrators, Game Officials or Coaches, will have the responsibility to remove the players from the field if the conditions become extreme. If ordered to do so, please find shelter until instructed to return to the playing field or told that the game has been canceled.

Game Cancellations and Rescheduling- If a game is canceled due to weather or other unforeseeable circumstances, efforts will be made to reschedule that game. However due to time restraints and/or field usage conflicts, some games may not be made up. It will be the decision of the League Administration when and if the games are made up. Special circumstances may be taken into consideration.

League schedulers must contact and inform the Recreation Manager or designee of updates or changes to the league schedules. The City of Mason hotline is the official cancellation communication. Hotline telephone number is 513-229-8502. Press #5 for MPR programs and #6 for field scheduling. The hotline is updated by 3:00 pm during inclement or weather events. For severe weather situations, cancellations may be updated on the City of Mason web site www.imagemason.org.

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V. COACHES SECTION

Mason Parks and Recreation requires that all volunteers who want to coach youth sports complete the National Youth Sport Coaches Association (NYSCA) certification course or an approved equal certification course. This is done in an effort to properly prepare volunteers for the responsibility of coaching as well as to protect the child, the coach and MPR. This program costs the coach \$25.00 a year for one sport certification and it can easily be done on-line. Each additional sport cost only \$5.00.

Program Description

NYSCA is designed to “sensitize” volunteer coaches to their responsibilities when working with children in sports and hold them accountable to a strict CODE OF CONDUCT defined by the NYSCA Coaches” Code of Ethics pledge. More than one million coaches have been certified worldwide through more than 2,200 NYSCA chapters that exist among parks and recreation departments, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs/YWCAs, church recreation program, PAL’s, Optimist Clubs, and military youth activities. The clinics feature information on the psychology of coaching children, maximizing athletic performance, first aid, nutrition, safety, organizing fun and interesting practices, how to teach fundamentals of the sport, plus many other important areas. Coaches who complete the program receive a variety of benefits.

MEMBER BENEFITS

Stage 1: Introduction to Coaching Youth Sports

Benefits include:

- Interactive Clinic
- Introduction to Coaching Youth Sports publication
- YOUTH SPORTS JOURNAL (Four Seasonal Issues)
- \$1,000,000 Excess Liability Insurance
- Membership Card
- Discounts for selected hotels, car rentals
- Discount on FIELDTEX coaches first aid kits

Stage 2: Continuing Education Program

Benefits include:

- YOUTH SPORTS JOURNAL (Four Seasonal Issues)
- \$2,000,000 Excess Liability Insurance
- \$250,000 Excess Accident/Medical Insurance (\$50 deductible) for injuries sustained while performing coaching
- Membership Card and member decal
- Discounts for selected hotels, car rentals
- Discount on FIELDTEX coaches first aid kits

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Coaches' Code of Conduct

I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.

Expected Behavior:

- Using appropriate language in appropriate tones when interacting with players, league officials, game officials, parents and spectators.
- Including all players in team activities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, ability, or any other legally protected classification.
- Treating all players, league officials, game officials, parents and spectators with dignity and respect.
- Playing all players according to participation rules established by the league and the spirit of those rules.
- Encouraging youth to participate in other sports and activities to promote all aspects of their development.
- Allowing reasonable absences from practice.

I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.

Expected Behavior:

- Recognizing the differences of each child and treating each player as an individual while demonstrating concern for their individual needs and well-being.
- Encouraging all players, regardless of skill level, to be included as a member of the team and to remain involved in physical activity.
- Recognizing that some physical tasks, drills and demands are not appropriate for all youth.
- Recognizing that youth may vary greatly in physical, social and emotional maturation and considering these factors when setting up competitions and when interacting with youth.

I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Maintaining a high level of awareness of potentially unsafe conditions.
- Protecting players from sexual molestation, assault and physical or emotional abuse.
- Correcting or avoiding unsafe practice or playing conditions.
- Using appropriate safety equipment necessary to protect all players.
- Seeing that the players are provided with adequate adult supervision while under the coach's care.

I will promise to review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Keeping basic first aid supplies available in all practice and game situations.

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- Recognizing and administering proper first aid to an injured player.
- Demonstrating concern for an injured player, notifying parents and cooperating with medical authorities.
- Protecting the players' well being by removing them from activity when injured and not returning them to activity if they are compromised by injury.

I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Establishing practice plans that are interesting, varied, productive and aimed at improving all players' skills and individual abilities.
- Devoting appropriate time to the individual improvement of each player.
- Conducting practices of reasonable length and intensity appropriate for the age and conditioning of the players.

I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Adopting the position, teaching and demonstrating that it is our basic moral code to treat others, as we would like to be treated.
- Abiding by and supporting the rules of the game as well as the spirit of the rules.
- Providing an environment conducive to fair and equitable competition.
- Using the influential position of youth coach as an opportunity to promote, teach and expect sportsmanship and fair play.

I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all Mason Parks and Recreation youth sports events.

Expected Behavior:

- Being alcohol and drug free at all team activities or in the presence of players at games and practices.
- Refraining from the use of any type of tobacco products at all team activities or in the presence of players at games and practices.
- Refraining from providing any type of alcohol, drug or tobacco products to any of your players
- Encouraging parents to refrain from the public use of tobacco products or alcohol at team activities.

I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Becoming knowledgeable, understanding and supportive of all applicable game rules, league rules, regulations and policies.
- Teaching and requiring compliance of these rules among players.

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I will use those coaching techniques for each of the skills that I teach.

Expected Behavior:

- Teaching techniques that reduce the risk of injury to both the coach's own players and their opponents.
- Discouraging illegal contact or intentional dangerous play and administering swift and equitable discipline to players involved in such activity.

I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.

Expected Behavior:

- Maintaining a positive, helpful and supportive attitude.
- Exercising your authority/influence to control the behavior of the fans and spectators.
- Exhibiting gracious acceptance of defeat or victory.
- Accepting and adhering to all league rules and policies related to the participation of adults and youth.
- Fulfilling the expected role of a youth coach to adopt a "children first" philosophy.
- Allowing and encouraging the players to listen, learn and play hard within the rules.
- Placing the emphasis on fun and participation.

NYSCA COACHES' CODE OF ETHICS PLEDGE

- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I will promise to review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.
- I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.
- I hereby pledge to live up to my membership as a NYSCA coach by following the NYSCA Coaches' Code of Ethics.

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Enforcement of the Code Of Conduct

Mason Parks and Recreation, along with the NYSCA, is dedicated to raising the standard of service to youth in sports through the enforcement of this Code of Conduct in youth sport programs.

This Code of Conduct defines the expectations for individuals serving as coaches in youth sports and provides the tools to be used by MPR and local youth athletic organizations, when necessary, to check behavior and to protect all children from the psychological, emotional, physical or social abuses that can be perpetrated against them by youth sport coaches.

Mason Parks and Recreation and NYSCA firmly believe that for the sports experience to be positive, safe and a learning experience for youth, volunteer coaches must be trained and held accountable for their behavior when working with and around children. Every NYSCA coach is required to sign and adhere to a Coaches' Code of Ethics Pledge. It is the duty of Mason Parks and Recreation, as a NYSCA Chapter, to be responsible for certifying all coaches involved with City of Mason facilities. It is also the duty of the MPR to respond to complaints against a NYSCA coach in a MPR youth sports program. This is accomplished by initiating the "Complaint Against a Coach Procedure" detailed in the next section. The purpose of this procedure is to hear the complaints and to determine what, if any, action should be taken towards correcting the MPR coach's behavior.

It is highly recommended that youth sports organizations adopt similar "Complaint Against a Coach Procedure". It is expected that all youth sports organizations respond to complaints against an NYSCA coach within their organization.

In order to provide Mason Parks and Recreation the flexibility to take appropriate action when an NYSCA coach is found to have violated the Coaches' Code of Ethics, a range of possible actions have been developed to accompany the Code of Conduct.

Possible actions include:

- Warning to and/or Apology from the coach
- Probation
- One Game Suspension
- Multiple Game Suspension
- Season Suspension
- Permanent Revocation of Certification

Factors that might suggest a more lenient sanction include:

- First Offense
- Remorse
- Apparent Desire to Reform
- Other Good Coaching Attributes
- Dedication to Youth Sports

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Factors that might suggest a harsher sanction include:

- Child Endangerment
- Violation of Law
- Prior Complaints/Review Action
- Lack of Remorse
- Number of Ethics Canons Violated
- Number of Expected Behaviors Violated
- Breach of Duties as a Role Model
- Extraordinarily Poor Judgment Around Children

All the above actions and factors are highly recommended for all youth sports organizations using City of Mason Parks & Recreation properties.

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Mason Parks & Recreation **Complaint Against an MPR Coach Procedures**

This section outlines the procedures Mason Parks & Recreation will use when the Department receives a complaint against a coach in a Mason Parks & Recreation program.

When Mason receives a complaint about an NYSCA coach, within seven (7) days the Mason Parks and Recreation Department which includes MPR's certified NYSCA Chapter Director (currently the Recreation Manager), will initiate a review process that includes:

1. Gather information and document eyewitness accounts of the event(s) that took place from interested parties involved to determine if a violation of the letter or intent of the Coaches' Code of Ethics Pledge has occurred. This may include the site supervisor, game officials, other coaches, parents and children.
2. Require the coach to attend a meeting with the league supervisor to address the complaint and to offer his/her side of the incident. This meeting will be documented.
3. The Mason Parks & Recreation Department has the authority to determine the severity of the situation and whether or not the affected coach has violated the expected behaviors outlined under each of the canons of the Code of Ethics Pledge that comprise the NYSCA Code of Conduct.
4. The Chapter Director, after approval from Mason Parks & Recreation Department, has the authority to enforce the appropriate range of disciplinary actions outlined in the NYSCA Coaches' Code of Conduct. If disciplinary action is taken then the Chapter Director will report to the NYSCA in brief, the nature of the complaint, the findings of the investigation, and the sanction applied to the member coach. This information will be logged in the member's file.
5. If the Mason Parks & Recreation Department decides to revoke a coach's certification, NYSCA Headquarters will notify the coach of both the revocation and the procedures to appeal to the National Executive Board. The Chapter Director will be sent a copy of the correspondence. This information will also be logged in the coach's file.

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Youth Sports Organizations **Complaint Against a Coach Procedures**

This section outlines the procedures youth sports organizations will use when they receive a complaint against a coach.

When any organization receives a complaint about an NYSCA coach or board member that violates the expected behaviors outlined in the Code of Ethics Pledge, they need to communicate the issue within twenty-four (24) hours to the NYSCA Chapter Director (currently the Recreation Manager in the Parks & Recreation Department). This should be accomplished through a voice mail and/or e-mail.

It is required that the youth sports organizations initiate a review process within their own organization adopting similar procedures listed on the previous page eleven.

It is also expected that youth sports organizations gather information and document eyewitness accounts of the event(s) that took place from interested parties involved to determine if a violation of the letter or intent of the Coaches' Code of Ethics Pledge has occurred. This may include the site supervisor, game officials, other coaches, parents and children.

If the youth sports organizations determine that the severity of the situation violated the expected behaviors outlined under the Code of Ethics Pledge that compromise the NYSCA Code of Conduct, they will contact the NYSCA Chapter Director with the recommended course of disciplinary action.

The Chapter Director will report to the NYSCA in brief, the nature of the complaint, the finding of the organization's investigation, and the sanction applied to the NYSCA coach, if any.

If the youth sports organization decides to revoke a coach's certification, NYSCA Headquarters will notify the coach of both the revocation and the procedures to appeal to the National Executive Board. The Chapter Director will be sent a copy of the correspondence. This information will be logged in the coach's file.

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**Mason Parks & Recreation Department
Youth Sports User Group Application**

Name of
Organization/Group_____

Describe Program Scope (include number and age of children served)

Mailing Address_____

Primary Contact Person_____

Address_____

Telephone_____

E-mail_____

Secondary Contact Person_____

Address_____

Telephone_____

E-mail_____

Requested Facility_____

Required Attachments:

- ✓ List of organization Board of Directors
- ✓ Documentation of \$1,000,000 liability coverage naming the City of Mason, its agents, officers, employees and volunteers as an additional insured.
- ✓ Verification in a resolution or letter acknowledging that the organization will abide by the policies and procedures in this manual.
- ✓ Verification of NYSCA training for Board of Directors and Coaches