



**i9** **SPORTS**

*The Way Youth Sports Should Be<sup>®</sup>*



***COACHING GUIDE***

# i9 Sports® Certified Coaching Standards

Thank you for your interest in becoming an i9 Sports youth coach. The league's success depends on interested parents and friends such as yourself to ensure that our children get the very best experience possible while playing in an i9 Sports program. Please take the time to read over the following material regarding coaching standards in an i9 Sports program.

As the coach of an i9 Sports program, we are far more interested in your ability to communicate with the children on your team to effectively impart a positive sports experience than we are in your ability to teach the nuances of the sacrifice bunt or the double reverse.

## **Benefits of Athletic Participation for Kids**

Research points out many benefits of getting kids to continue to participate in youth sports; noting that kids who stay in sports tend to, stay in school, get better grades and have fewer behavioral problems.

It is extremely important that coaches remember that a successful youth sports coach is defined *not* in terms of a win-loss record, but in terms of how many kids decide to return to play again next year!

## **Equal Playing Time**

The primary purpose of youth sports should be to teach fundamental sports skills in a non-threatening environment. That is, children should have the opportunity to learn new skills and improve previously learned skills and have fun doing it.

Coaches must create an environment both in practices and games where children are not afraid to make mistakes. Using fear of failure as a motivational technique is unacceptable. Mistakes happen as part of the learning process.

Children who hope to become better skilled so they can move on to more advanced levels of competition must be willing to take risks and experiment with more advanced skill techniques and strategies. They will not do this if they are afraid of making mistakes. All members of any team come to the team expecting equal opportunities. They have the right to expect equal quality and quantity of coaching in practice. They all must be given the same opportunity to try out what they learn in practices in game situations. In fact, games should be considered an extension of practices, another opportunity to learn. An athlete cannot learn much by sitting on the bench. Sports involve movement and physical skills. They are best learned by doing, not watching.



# Behaviors Connected with Positive Coaching

## Kids deserve praise for effort

The child chose to play a sport rather than hang out during free time. The youngster chose to sign up, come to practice and come to the games. We need to remind ourselves not to notice and praise kids only when they achieve. It's easy to praise the kids who do well in a sport. We also need to praise the youngsters who don't shine but who stay with a sport day in and day out.



## Make a BIG deal out of even the SMALLEST positives

Promoting a positive self-image in kids while they play sports is essential! Look for positives and then encourage them with animated praise. At practices and games, a good goal is to try and keep a healthy ratio of positives to negatives. The more positives to negatives the better!

Additionally, you want to be specific in your praise. "Atta-boy", while a good effort won't go quite as far in building up kids as a more specific compliment such as, "I like the way you kept hustling after that play."

Finally, it's equally important to "make a big deal" out of it, to praise with animation. Kids respond to public accolades, so the more animated as a coach you are when praising, the better. In fact, a good motto is: "Praise in public and criticize in private."

## Stay calm when mistakes happen, help kids learn from their mistakes

Dealing with a child after a mistake has been made is one of the most critical issues facing youth sports coaches. Ideally, youth sports offer kids great lessons in life:

- 1) It's OK to make a mistake,
- 2) Mistakes WILL happen and
- 3) Mistakes are stepping stones for learning.

When a youngster makes a mistake in a sport, one of two things can occur:

- 1) The youngster can learn from the mistake and try to improve the next time; or
- 2) the youngster can become preoccupied with the fear of making another mistake.

The coach is the focal point that will help determine which path the youngster will travel.

If a coach stays calm and tries to instruct the child, there's a chance that the child will see the mistake as an opportunity to learn. If the coach stays calm there's a chance that the kid will stay calm, focus on the mistake and learn from it.

Unfortunately, as human beings, we often tend to have more animation in our reactions to negatives than in our reactions to positives. It takes an extra effort on our part as coaches to remind ourselves to stay calm when mistakes occur.

## Have reasonable, realistic, and reachable expectations

Trying to live up to expectations can be a major frustration for kids whether they are their own expectations, or those of adults in their lives. Even though they may not show it, kids have a strong desire for adult approval, the lack of which, can be a major source of low self-esteem. Since a coach



often plays a key role in the life of a youngster, it is important to keep expectations reasonable and attainable. A good coach's skill expectations are based on the knowledge that all youngsters are different in their physical skills, skill development potential, and growth rate, all of which can affect their coordination.

A good coach's motivation expectations are based on the awareness that there are three levels of motivation for kids in youth sports:

- 1) Some kids, especially the entry- level youngsters, are playing because their parents enrolled them
- 2) Some kids are playing because it's a social event allowing them to be with their friends
- 3) Some kids, are playing because they enjoy sports for sports' sake

A good coach's dedication expectations are based on the knowledge that the level of dedication to practice and mastery of skills depends upon the level of motivation in a youngster. A good coach also knows that dedication wanes when playing the sport is no longer fun.

### **Treat kids with respect. Do not tolerate put-downs, sarcasm, or ridicule**

When a youngster signs up to play sports, he/she deserves to be treated with respect. This means no put-downs, no sarcasm and no ridiculing by the coach, or fellow players. Any youth sports coach who volunteers to take on the job of guiding kids in any given sport needs to be careful of how he/she comes across to the youngsters.

### **Remind kids not to get down on themselves**

A youngster making a mistake is going to happen, and kids can go from the top of the world, to down in the dumps in a matter of moments. The key is not to let the child get down on himself for an error, but rather make a positive out of the mistake whenever possible.

A youngster misses a lay-up on a fast break. The coach substituted for the youngster. He then said to him, "Son, I didn't take you out because of the missed lay-up. I took you out because after you missed the lay-up you hung your head, delayed in getting back on defense and allowed your opponent to score an easy basket. If you get down on yourself after you make a mistake all it does is give your opponent an advantage. Now, get back in there, learn from your mistakes and quit beating yourself up!"

### **Remember not to take yourself too seriously during the game**

Remember, this is a volunteer position; nobody is being paid to pace the sidelines here. You don't need to make this your "life", too many times in youth sports, the same person who seems to have it all together away from the field, is a different person as a coach. Kids will respond much more positively to a coach that does not look at mistakes on the field as a poor reflection of his coaching ability and his team's preparedness. Rather, mistakes can be looked at by a coach as another opportunity to give encouraging feedback to a young athlete.



## **Maintain a Fun is #1 focus, with lots of laughter and sense of humor**

The #1 motivator for kids to play sports in the first place...FUN! If you ask a child his motivation for playing a given sport, you are not likely to hear "to increase my self- confidence" or "to learn sportsmanship", or "to better prepare me for life". Kids enjoy competing, but the fun is the act of competing, the excitement of competing, not just the winning.

The effective coach is the coach who learns what fun is for the kids by getting into their shoes and seeing the world from their point of view, the world of fun. The effective coach knows that fun, laughter, and humor are second nature to kids.

## **Emphasize teamwork, and help kids think "WE" instead of "ME"**

For these youngsters, self-esteem = a sense of belonging. Humans are a very social group and even our youngest members need to feel as though they belong to a group. Youth sports offer an automatic sense of belonging. Coaches are pivotal in making the "team" concept become a reality. The coach needs to ensure that ALL players are recognized, not just the best players. Parents should be encouraged to praise all the players on the team, not just their own.

## **Be a role model of good sportsmanship**

These days, sportsmanship has taken a distant back seat to the outcome of the contest. Coaches have a responsibility to promote sportsmanship and:

- 1) Win without gloating**
- 2) Lose without complaining**
- 3) Treat opponents and officials with fairness, generosity and courtesy**



# Traits of the Ideal Coach

A coach should be enthusiastic without being intimidating. He or she should be sensitive to the children's feelings and genuinely enjoy spending time with them. He or she should be dedicated to serving children and understand that youth sports provide physical and emotional growth for its participants.

A coach needs to realize that he or she is a teacher, not a drill sergeant. He or she should help children learn and work to improve their skills. Personal gains are never a consideration. The job does not depend on winning. The best interest of the child transforms into the best interests of the game.

The safety and welfare of the children never can be compromised. A coach will consider these factors above all others.

A coach needs a tremendous amount of patience. Don't push children beyond limits regarding practice. Children have many daily pressures and their sports experience should not be one of them. Playing sports is supposed to be fun.

A coach should care more about the players as people than as athletes. The i9 Sports program is a means to an end, not an end to itself.

A coach should encourage his players to dream and set lofty goals. It is important to remain positive and refrain from discouraging remarks. Negative comments are remembered far more often than positive affirmations.

A coach needs to remember that the rules of the game are designed to protect the participants, as well as to set a standard for competition. He or she never should circumvent or take advantage of the rules by teaching deliberate misconduct. A coach who puts his or her opponents' team at risk should not be involved with children.

A coach should be the first person to demonstrate good sportsmanship. He or she should take a low profile during the game and allow the kids to be the center of attention.

Parents and players place a lot of trust and confidence in the coach. The coach has a key role in molding the athletic experience of the child.

A coach can measure success by the respect he gets from his or her players, regardless of victories or defeats. Children who mature socially and physically while participating in sports are the best indication of good coaching.



# i9 Sports® Core Principles

1. **Fun.** We believe that the primary reason children play sports is to have fun. They love mastering new skills, developing friendships, and healthy competition. We avoid spoiling the fun by focusing more on skills development and enjoyment of the game than on the score or outcome.
2. **Age Appropriate Instruction.** We believe in providing instruction in game fundamentals best suited for each stage of development. i9 Sports provides instruction and resources to ensure our coaches teach skills and drills designed for each age division.
3. **Healthy Competition.** We believe that while winning and losing is part of the game, it shouldn't be the primary focus. Our families commit to the "i9 Sports Parental Pledge" which prohibits sideline negativity and promotes a healthy atmosphere for learning and fun while our "Coaches Pledge" creates a culture of teamwork and fair play.
4. **Inclusivity.** That's our word for everyone's right to play and have fun. Our program is for everyone, regardless of race, gender, religion, or ability level. No child will ever be excluded by a try-out, be made to feel like they aren't good enough because of a league draft, or be cut from a team. We endeavor to play every child at least half of every game.
5. **Safety.** We believe your child's safety is paramount. As such, we background check each of the adults supervising your children and hire trained officials for each game to ensure that "safe play" is enforced.
6. **Good Sportsmanship.** We believe that learning to play the game is only half the equation. Helping children develop character is the other half. The value of teaching children teamwork, fair play and good sportsmanship goes far beyond the game.





# Coaching Responsibilities

- Participate in Coaches Meetings and Clinics (Pre-Season Meeting &/or Mid-Season)
- Support the i9 Sports® Youth Philosophy and Coaching Standards
- Introduce yourself to parents and serve as a point of contact for players/parents as needed. Provide them with a contact number as soon as teams are assigned.
- So that players and parents can identify you, wear your Coaches T-Shirt at all games. On colder days, feel free to wear long sleeve shirt/sweatshirt under Coaches T-shirt.
- Download the i9 Sports Mobile Coach App to review practice plans and other resources, including videos, whiteboards to create your own drills, stat sheets, and much more.
- Review the Rulebook available on i9Sports.com
- Check in with the Site Manager before each game to pick up any needed items, including the Weekly Sportsmanship Medal.
- Lead all practices and games for the entire season
  - Help players understand the rules and fundamentals of the game
  - Develop and teach basic skills
  - Introduce and reinforce sportsmanship values
  - In the event of an unanticipated absence or emergency, please provide advance notice to the Program Director and delegate to your Assistant Coach. If you do not have an AC, find a person who can fill in.
- Present Weekly Sportsmanship Value Medals
- Ensure that players remove any trash before leaving the field





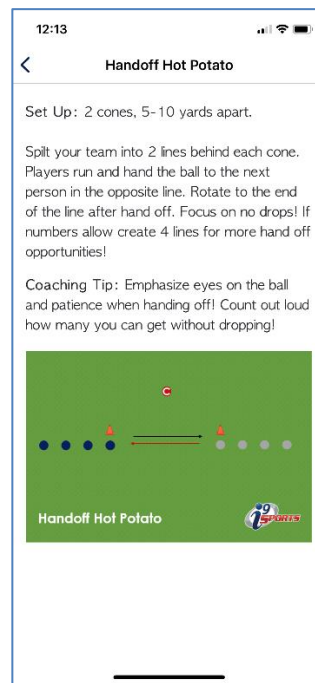
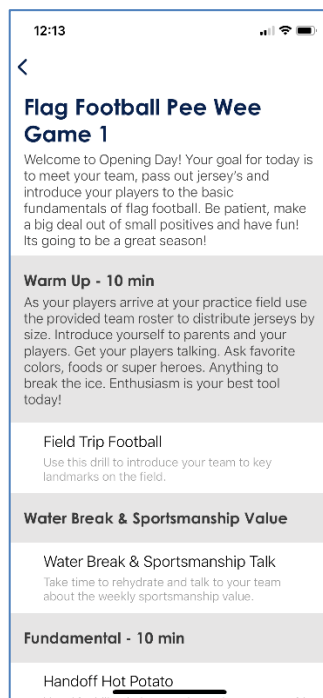
# i9 Sports® Practice Plans

To ease you into the roll of coach, i9 Sports® will provide you with age-appropriate practice plans to use each week. One of the best ways to enhance the experience of our players during practice is to be prepared for that day's practice.

Five days prior to your game day, you will receive via e-mail a plan for that day's practice. Covering each minute of practice, this plan will include:

- Warm-up
- Drills and Skills with a diagram, animated play card and/or video.
- Dedicated water break and Sportsmanship talk time
- Coaching Tips and Tricks

While Practice Plans will be sent directly to your email each week, you can also access them whenever, wherever from our i9 Sports Mobile Coach App.



## Here is an example of the e-mail you will receive:

As a coach, you are able to click on the links within this e-mail in order to get all of the information you will need in order to be successful during practice and on game day.

Information included via hyper link include:

- Practice plan for the day
- Sportsmanship Value
- Talking points for you to use to help explain the Sportsmanship Value

If you have any questions about the information found within the e-mail, the i9 Sports Staff is always there to help make your experience as a coach the best we possibly can.



Ken.

[Click here](#) for your practice plan for your 1st game with ST14 on 6/19/2021 .

This week's sportsmanship value is [Listening](#). To learn more about the value and how to discuss it with your team, [click here](#).

Please note you can always access your practice plans on [i9sports.com](#) by viewing your schedule.

**Did you know we have an app to make coaching even more easy and fun?**

**i9 Sports® Mobile Coach** is a one stop shop for all things you need to be a superhero coach each time you walk onto the field or court. i9 Sports Mobile Coach helps you:

- Review and execute your weekly i9 Sports practice plans.
- Make your own practice plan in an easy to use template.
- Get new Ideas and coaching tips.
- Customize plays using the whiteboard feature.
- And so much more!

Download the i9 Sports® Mobile Coach App Today!



## i9 Sports® Mobile Coach

Get coaching resources anytime, anywhere with the i9 Sports Mobile Coach App. The Mobile Coach App provides FREE resources to all of our coaches, including:

- i9 Sports Official Practice Plans by sport and age
- Practice Plan Template so you can create your own
- Videos, diagrams and animated play cards
- A whiteboard so you can draw plays out for your team
- Coaching Tips and Tricks
- Stat, score and rotation sheets
- And so much more!

Download it from your App store today or visit [i9sports.coach](#) from your desktop.

# Game Day Operations

## Opening Day Organization

So that we can ease you into to the i9 Sports® League and attempt to create equitable competition, Opening Day will follow a different format. This is a less-formal practice day and will give everyone a chance to get to know each other.

## Regular Season Game Day Procedures

- Go to the i9 Sports red canopy to check in with the i9 Sports Site Manager **at least 15 minutes prior to your team's practice time!**
  - Receive your team's jerseys, weekly value, statistics sheet, stickers (youngest age groups only) and any other important league information
- Required Apparel: i9 Sports® Certified Coach Red T-Shirt
- Equipment Check
  - Balls
  - Cones (if needed)
  - Flag Belts (flag football only)
- Go over the Weekly Sportsmanship Value with your team
- Lead practice for designated time frame
- Participate in scheduled game
- At the conclusion of the game
  - Confirm the score with the referee
  - Relay any necessary information to the parents
  - Present the Weekly Sportsmanship Value Medal to player(s)





# Concussions in Youth Sports

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost.

The potential for concussions is greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common. Concussions can occur, however, in **any** organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity. As many as 3.8 million sports- and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year. Recognition and proper management of concussions when they **first occur** can help prevent further injury.

<b>Signs and Symptoms</b>	
<b>Symptoms Reported by Athlete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appears dazed or stunned</li><li>• Is confused about assignment or position</li><li>• Forgets sports plays</li><li>• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent</li><li>• Moves clumsily</li><li>• Answers questions slowly</li><li>• Loses consciousness (even briefly)</li><li>• Shows behavior or personality changes</li><li>• Can't recall events prior to hit or fall</li><li>• Can't recall events after hit or fall</li></ul>	<b>Symptoms Reported by Athlete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache or “pressure” in head</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li><li>• Double or blurry vision</li><li>• Sensitivity to light</li><li>• Sensitivity to noise</li><li>• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy</li><li>• Concentration or memory problems</li><li>• Confusion</li><li>• Does not “feel right”</li></ul>

# i9 Sports® Weekly Sportsmanship Values

As an i9 Sports Coach, you play a critical role in reminding our youth (and their parents) of the importance of maintaining the fundamental values of good sportsmanship. These values are essential not just to sports, but to the social fabric of our entire society.

Because we're living in an age in which traditional values are often forgotten, we cannot assume that all children are being taught these values at home. As you know, we believe that teaching kids how to play the game is only half of our job... helping them develop character is the other half.



We have provided you with two tools to help you drive home the importance of good sportsmanship:

## 1) **For Parents: The i9 Sports Parental Pledge**

The purpose of reviewing the i9 Sports Parental Pledge with parents is to heighten parents' awareness of their role in modeling good sportsmanship, to educate them on what type of behavior is expected of them, and to give you the license to address situations in which a parent may be allowing their competitive spirit to interfere with i9 Sports' focus on fun.

## 2) **For Youth: Talking Points for a Weekly Sportsmanship Value**

To help you teach youth players what good sportsmanship is all about, we have developed a one page talking point outline for you to use each week for a team discussion. By focusing on one key value each game, you can use moments from the game to teach about that specific value.

Suggestions for using the weekly values:

- Take a few minutes to review the value with the team before the practice or game. Your message will be fresh in the players' minds and you can use the events of the game to reinforce your points.
- Make the discussion interactive by asking questions and giving examples.
- In the practices or games, watch for instances when players exhibit the right kinds of behavior. Recognize frequently and openly. Make a big deal of giving positive feedback!
- When you observe negative behavior, it is important that you address it directly with the player in a manner that will not embarrass him/her in front of others. Your goal should be to constructively correct; never to humiliate. The best way to handle a negative situation is to call the player to the sidelines and deal with the issue privately one-to-one.
- Don't forget that you are the kids' best role model for good sportsmanship. Be very mindful of how you respond to game officials and/or to disagreements with other coaches. Your players will take their lead from you... they're always watching!
- Remember that "Having Fun is #1!"