



Volunteer Coach Information

Background Screenings

Every coach will be subject to a background screening before being allowed to coach in any Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Athletics Program.

Coaches Job Description

Any coach that works under the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation, regardless if paid or volunteer, is considered an associate of the City. With this in mind, job descriptions have been provided for the Youth Sports Coach volunteer position.

Title: Youth Sports Coach

Service Area: City of Harrisonburg

Purpose: Provide instruction, leadership and supervision to children ages 5-12 in a variety of sports including soccer, baseball, softball, football, basketball and cheerleading.

Duties: Plan, organize and supervise practice sessions; assist coordinator with planning, organizing, distributing and collecting uniforms and equipment; organize and supervise game situations; communicate information with parents regarding their child's athletic experience and behavior; work closely with Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Department staff to ensure all department and sport specific rules and policies are being observed; performs related tasks as required.

Qualifications: Ability to work well with children of various ages; basic knowledge of the sport or activity to which they are assigned; willingness to learn and follow department rules and guidelines regarding youth sports; prior coaching experience helpful but not required; must pass a background check.

Time Commitment: 2-10 hours per week depending on practice and game schedules; as a general rule, practices are held Monday-Saturday with limits on the number of practices per week set in each sport; 1-2 games per week; 2 games in one week is rare but possible.

Supervisor: League Administrator from the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation.

Additional Coaching Expectations

1. No coach shall leave practice until all players have been picked-up by a parent or guardian.
2. 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 participants. Remember, youth sports are for the children.

3. 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.
4. The safety and welfare of the children never can be compromised. A coach will consider these factors above all others.
5. A coach needs a tremendous amount of patience. Don't push children beyond limits in regards to practice. Children have many daily pressures and the youth sports experience should not be one of them. Playing sports is meant to be fun.
6. A coach should care more about the players as people than as athletes. The youth sports program is a means to an end, not an end to itself.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Parents and players place a lot of trust and confidence in the coach. The coach has an important role in molding the athletic experience of the child.
11. A coach can measure success by the respect he or she gets from the players, regardless of victories or defeats. Children who mature socially and physically while participating in sports are the best indication of good coaching.
12. A coach must always Be Early, Be Prepared and Make It Fun! It is your leadership as a coach that children will remember over the games themselves.
13. Coaches are required to keep emergency phone numbers and medical information on their players at all times.

NYSCA Coaches Certification

The National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) is a membership organization and the most widely used volunteer coach training program in the nation. The NYSCA volunteer coach training program is designed to sensitize volunteer coaches to their responsibilities and hold them accountable to a strict Code of Conduct defined by the NYSCA Coaches Code of Ethics Pledge. In order to complete the program, coaches must read and agree to this code of ethics pledge. This certification is required for all coaches. Certifications are available online at www.nays.org. Coaches' certifications are active for twelve months from the time the coach views the videos, pays their \$20 membership fee and receives a certification card. After 12 months, a coach only has to update their membership by submitting the \$20 renewal fee. If a coach has interest in becoming NYSCA certified an additional sport, they need only to view the additional sport specific video.