



Volunteer Coaching Manual – Rules and Guidelines

Welcome to the Northbrook Park District!

The Athletics Department would like to welcome you to the Northbrook Park District's team. Whether you are a beginning or returning coach, we appreciate your time and energy! We believe you will find your Volunteer Coaching position with the Park District to be very rewarding.

The programs, facilities and services are overseen by employees of the Park District. As volunteers of the Park District, you are providing a service for our residents, and we consider you as part of the Park District. The quality of Park District programs and services is directly affected by the performance of every district volunteer.

The Park District is represented by approximately 200 volunteers with a majority of the volunteers being coaches for our Youth Athletics programs. Our Volunteers provide thousands of hours of their valuable time each year to help enhance the recreational experiences of all participants.

The information in this manual will acquaint you with the Northbrook Park District and our Youth Athletic Leagues. Please feel free to contact your supervisor in charge of your program or Athletics Manager if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Northbrook Park District Athletics Department

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Winter Indoor & Spring Outdoor Youth Soccer Leagues

Fall Youth Soccer League

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Application for Coaching and Required Trainings

All coaches must complete the Volunteer Interest Form and are subject to a criminal background investigation. Both items must be submitted annually. If you coach multiple teams in the same year, each form must only be completed once. Scan the QR code below to learn more about volunteering and access the Volunteer Interest Form!



The following trainings/meetings are required for Volunteer Coaching. Staff will be doing annual audits to ensure all trainings have been completed and meetings have been attended. The Park District provides coaching credits at the end of each season to express our gratitude for the time and effort put into volunteering for the Athletics Department. Additional guidelines for coaching credits can be found on pages 10 & 11.

1. Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports – A free online course to help you recognize a concussion and how to respond if you think that your player might have a concussion.

Link to training: <https://www.train.org/cdctrain/course/1089818/>

2. Mandated Reporter – A free online course to help you perceive possible signs of abuse and understand the steps to take to protect your team’s children.

Link to training: <https://mr.dcfstraining.org>

3. CPR Certification Recommended
4. Pre-Season Coaches Meeting – Meetings are held on Zoom. The Recreation Supervisor who oversees your league will send a calendar invite along with the Zoom link.

Once you complete the trainings, please submit a copy of the certificate to the Supervisor who oversees the league you are participating in.

Code of Conduct

All coaches are expected to abide by reasonable standards while volunteering for the Northbrook Park District. Coaches must abide by all policies and guidelines listed in this handbook. Coaches are subject to disciplinary actions or dismissal for failing to abide by all policies and guidelines listed in the handbook.

Officials will be instructed and given the authority to ask players, coaches, or spectators to leave the park or facility in the event of any conduct violations. There will be no warnings. Failure to comply with officials' or staff members' requests may result in cancellation of games.

Conduct Guidelines:

- 1) Verbal or physical intimidation of any individual is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, all players, spectators, Northbrook Park District staff members, and other coaches.

- 2) **Foul language is strictly prohibited.**

- 3) **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

Coaches Code of Ethics Pledge

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

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

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

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

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

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

I will ensure that I am knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and that 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 coach and that the game is for children and not adults.

Team Formation

All teams will be formed according to the following guidelines and restrictions:

1. All participants will register for the program and will provide their grade and school they are attending.
2. Reciprocal friendship requests are accepted but must be submitted prior to the early bird registration deadline and will only be allowed to include one friend. Friendship requests may not be granted if registered or submitted after the deadline or includes multiple friends.
3. All participants who register prior to the registration deadline will be placed on the appropriate team.
4. Coaches are not allowed to send in a roster of players whom they wish to coach or be part of their team.
5. In the event a school's registration is too large or insufficient to form one school team, the following criteria will be used:
 - a. For schools with insufficient registration, children will be paired with others from additional schools in order to form a full team. Schools that are combined are at the discretion of the Park District.
 - b. For schools with large registration numbers, children will be split as evenly as possible into two or more groups and combined with other schools.
6. Teams will be selected within one week of the early bird registration deadline. Every effort will be made to form **full** teams after the deadline.
7. In the event a team is not full, children on the waiting list will be placed on the particular team with no consideration of school or geographic location.
8. If a child is offered the opportunity to be moved from the waiting list to a formed team and refused the offer, the child will be placed at the end of the waiting list, and the next child in line will be given the identical offer.
9. Under no circumstances will friendship requests be accepted or granted.
- 10. Under no circumstances will children be switched from one team to another unless a documented error in registration has occurred.**
11. Rosters will be made available to team coaches after they are formed.

Switching Players

Once team rosters are established by the Northbrook Park District, **they will not be changed**. Coaches are required to abide to the following guidelines:

1. Coaches may not ask another coach permission to switch rostered players.
2. Coaches may not offer a child or parent of a child on **(a)** another team **(b)** on the waiting list, or **(c)** a non-registered player the opportunity to switch to his/her team.
3. Coaches should direct **all** calls from players or parents who desire to switch or join teams to the Recreation Supervisor responsible for the youth athletic league.
4. Under no circumstance should a coach offer or insinuate agreement or desire to allow a child on his/her roster.

Coaches who do not abide by **all** of the above guidelines will be dismissed as volunteer coaches indefinitely. Any alleged violation will be investigated. If a coach is found to be in violation of even one small violation, that coach may be removed immediately.

Communication with Parents

Ongoing and open communication is essential for a positive experience for parents, coaches, and players. Here are some tips for effective communication between coaches and parents:

- Communicate via email to eliminate confusion.
- Send an introductory email to the team prior to the first day of practice introducing yourself and detailing Park District and team expectations and goals for the season. Talking about goals with parents and players can set the right tone for the season. Goals include:
 - Have fun
 - Learn new skills
 - Sportsmanship
 - Meet new friends
 - Do your best
- Communicate reminders about game times or other changes.
- Quick conversations or emails informing parents of how their child is doing is greatly appreciated by parents. This will also make it easier for coaches to approach a parent about a problem with a player should one arise during the season.

- Should you need to contact a parent regarding a safety, medical, or behavioral issue, it is important to document the conversation, so the Park District will have written records in case of a dispute or continued problem later in the season. Please reach out to the Supervisor if you need assistance with communication.

Additional Topics for Communication

- Introductions
- Coaching/Team management help
- Snack List
- Expectations for players and parents
- Attendance for games and practices

Games and Practices

Coaches are asked to attend all games and practices scheduled for them. Coaches are responsible for scheduling and conducting at least one practice per week. If a coach is unable to attend a game or practice, a competent substitute must be secured.

Medical Information, First Aid and Reporting Accidents/Injuries

1. Talk to parents about any medical information that may be needed for their child to have safe practices and games. Also, what to do in an emergency.
2. Explain what you will do in the event of an accident.
3. Coaches will be given a first aid kit with the equipment bag. Notify the Recreation Supervisor in charge of your league if you run low on supplies.
4. Report all accidents/injuries involving players, coaches, or spectators to available on-site staff or the Recreation Supervisor in charge of the league.
5. Do not diagnose injuries that occur during play. Only report the details of the incident using the Accident/Incident Form provided by the Park District.

Handling Player Absences from Practice

Procedure:

If a player misses practice without prior notification, the coaching staff will attempt to contact the parent or guardian to ascertain the reason for the absence using the following guidelines below:

1. Purpose of Contacting Parent:

- Clarification: Parents might have assumed their child was attending practice and can provide information.
- Reason for Absence: Seek clarification on the absence and understand the circumstances leading to it.

2. No Punishment for Child if Parental Error:

- In cases where the absence was due to parental miscommunication or misunderstanding, the child will not be penalized.
- Emphasis will be on resolving the issue and ensuring the player's return to regular practice.

3. Finding a Resolution:

- Encourage dialogue: Initiate a conversation with the parent or guardian to discuss ways to ensure the player attends future practices.
- Collaborative Solutions: Work together to find solutions that facilitate the player's consistent attendance.

4. Attendance Record and Playing Time:

- Practice attendance will be documented by the coaching staff.
- The attendance record will factor into the allocation of playing time, encouraging consistent attendance as an essential aspect of team commitment.

5. Pre-Season Meeting Communication:

- Communicate this clearly during the pre-season meeting with players and parents to set expectations and ensure understanding.

Time Limits

All games in the Park District in-house programs will have time limits. Time limits serve two purposes. First, they provide a timely procedure for proper scheduling. People arrive to play or watch a game, expecting it to start at a designated time. The proper starting of the game should be a feature of a well-run program. Second, players should learn that hustle and focus on the game are important lessons.

Treatment of Officials

The officials for our in-house programs will be, for the most part, the youth of our community or assigned referee's. It is a very difficult job. Please understand that our referees are trying to do the best they can. Our assigned referees are trained professionals whom we trust to make the right call during games. We ask coaches to conduct themselves in a manner that will not bring discredit to the officials or to themselves. If you have constructive criticism about an official, please find an opportune time to contact the Recreation Supervisor in charge of the league. The Park District is offering training and supervision to help improve our officials.

Expectations of Parents

1. Stress timeliness for games and practices. You are donating your time and should expect parents and players to be on time. Do not set unrealistic pre-game times. For most leagues, 15 minutes before a game should allow enough warm-ups. Stress to parents the need to pick up players on time after practices. Do not get into the habit of running players home. Parents have responsibility for their children.
2. Talk about times and locations of practice with the parents.
3. Discuss the role or need for a team manager. Roles a team manager could fulfill:
 - Create a calling tree or similar method to notify players and parents of practice changes or game reschedules. Coaches should not be expected to have to call everyone.
 - Distribute a list of all phone numbers and have a number where you can be reached during the day and at night.
 - Assist players on and off the field or to the gymnasium.
 - Handle first aid and player injuries.

Expectations of the Players

1. Stress importance of timeliness for games and practices.
2. Instill in players their responsibility to notify you if they will miss a practice or game.
3. Each player should have a water bottle.
4. Players' names should be on water bottles and equipment.

Parent and Player Expectations of the Coach

1. Timeliness. Start and end practices on time. Do not try to take another 10 minutes. Parents expect practices to be finished at a certain time. Respect that. Try not to get into the habit of waiting for more players. Respect and reward those who arrive on time by starting on time.
2. Fairness. Northbrook Park District has requirements for participation. All coaches must adhere to these requirements.
3. Do not forget **your** family. Your coaching assignment will take a lot of your time. Save time for your family. Balance is the key.

Season Wrap-Up

Plan a team party.

Early in the season, establish a date, time, and place, if possible, for the end-of-season celebration. Let the team manager get involved and plan it. Use team parents and resources in the community.

End-of-Season Surveys

Please encourage parents to fill out program surveys. We take these seriously and use them in our planning for the next season. A link to the surveys is sent via email during the final week of the season.

Equipment Return

To help with inventory and ensure that equipment is cleaned and properly stored, please return the equipment as soon as possible to the Northbrook Sports Center, 1730 Pfungsten Road, unless Recreation Supervisor notifies coaches of alternative location. It is essential that coaches turn in all equipment at the completion of the season to ensure that enough practice equipment is available for next year's programs.

Volunteer Coaches' Credit

At the end of each season, coaches will be given a \$50 coaches credit for Fall Soccer, Flag Football, Basketball and Winter Indoor Soccer and \$75 for Winter Basketball and Spring Soccer to their Park District account for volunteering as a youth league coach. In order to receive this credit, the following stipulations must be met.

1. Passed Park District Background Check within 365 days
2. Completion of Volunteer Interest Form
3. Provide certificate of completion for Center for Disease Control's Concussion in Youth Sports program and DCFS Mandated Reporter program
4. Coaches must have attended more than 75% of games and practices.
5. The equipment bag must be returned.

No more than two coaches per team can receive credit.

Please note: Coaching credits will be removed from account exactly one year after receiving.

Individuals who have been removed from coaching duties are not eligible for coaching credit. If you prefer to give the coaches' credit to another coach, please notify us prior to the last game of the season.

Severe Weather Protocol

The Northbrook Park District has two lightning warning systems. One is located at Heritage Oaks Golf Club with ancillary units at West Park and Wood Oaks Green Park. The other unit is located at Village Green with ancillary units in Meadowhill Park and Techny Prairie Park & Fields as listed below.

Strike Guard-West

Horn and strobe light locations

Heritage Oaks Golf Club:

- Horn/strobe light located on the golf clubhouse (sensor on golf maintenance building)
- On the pumphouse near 17th hole
- #5 green/#11 tee on the 18-hole course
- Pumphouse on the Legacy-9 course

West Park:

- Horn/strobe light located on the Sports Center RTU (NE corner)
- Solar strobe light on light pole in west parking lot
- Light pole along pathway by ballfields and storage shed in center of West Park

Wood Oaks:

- Horn/strobe light located on the south end of the tennis building in the middle of the park

Strike Guard-East

Horn and strobe light locations

Village Green:

- Horn/strobe light located on top of the Village Green Center
- Strobe light on the scoreboard at the ballfield
- Strobe light on a light post next to the playground

Techny Prairie Park and Fields:

- Horn/strobe light located on a post next to Techny Prairie Center
- Horn/strobe light located on the warming shelter building by the sled hill
- Strobe light on the batting cage control building
- Strobe light on a pole on the golf course

Meadowhill Park:

- Horn/strobe light located on top of the Chalet next to the Velodrome
- Strobe light at Meadowhill Aquatic Center
- Strobe light at ballfield #2 in Meadowhill Park

The siren will sound a wavering noise for 15-seconds and the strobe will go off after the Strike Guard system determines conditions are safe. Activities may resume only after the all-clear siren and strobe turns off.

Be vigilant in monitoring threatening weather and always err on the side of caution. Seek shelter immediately if:

- You hear one long siren.
- You hear thunder (regardless of siren).
- You see lightning (regardless of siren).

Avoid open areas, water, tall trees, metal fences, overhead wires, power lines, elevated ground, golf carts, mowers, cellular phones, and radios.

30/30 Lightning Safety Rule:

Go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.

The Northbrook Park District strives to provide a safe environment for participation in all activities.

What to Do During a Thunderstorm

If you are:	Then:
In an open area	Go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods.
Anywhere you feel your hair stand on end (which indicates that lightning is about to strike)	Squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. DO NOT lie flat on the ground.
Park District Facilities	
Greenfield Park	Return to your vehicle
Indian Ridge Park	Seek shelter in the Leisure Center or return to your vehicle
Meadowhill Park	Seek shelter in the Chalet, MAC locker rooms, depending on which is closest. If not open, return to your vehicle.
Stonegate Park	Return to your vehicle

Techny Prairie Park and Fields	Seek shelter in the Techny Prairie Activity Center, restrooms or the Shelter Restroom facilities at the bottom of the sled hill
Tower Rink	Return to your vehicle
Village Green	Seek shelter in Village Green Center or Pavilion restrooms. DO NOT seek shelter in the gazebo. If not open, return to your vehicle
Velodrome	Seek shelter in the Chalet. If not open, return to your vehicle.
Wescott Park	Return to your vehicle
West Park	Seek shelter in the Sport Center. If not open, return to your vehicle.
Williamsburg Square Park	Return to your vehicle
Wood Oaks Green	Seek shelter in the tennis building. If not open, return to your vehicle.



Volunteer Coaching Manual – Coaching Excellence

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"I define success as peace of mind, which can be attained only through self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to be the best of which you are capable."

- **John Wooden**

As leaders for our youth leagues, we ask that you uphold this mentality as you coach your team. Notice that John Wooden does not mention winning as a mark of success. We are looking for our teams to showcase teamwork, respect, and equal opportunity so that every player can build their skills as both athletes and individuals while enjoying their experience together.

How to be a Great Coach

As coaches, you can impact the lives of every player you encounter. Here are some general leadership guidelines to help maximize you and your team's experience.

1. Speak as though you have something important to say and the players will believe that you do.
2. Exhibit energy and enthusiasm.
3. Keep players' attention by changing your tone and volume.
4. Use humor and be natural. Boys and girls will notice your ease of manner and be at ease with you.
5. Learn players' names and speak with respect, while ensuring that they do the same.
6. Start on time. Make sure your first activity at each practice is fun and exciting to set the tone.
7. Give out positive reinforcement and appreciation to players (even on the opposing team), parents, league volunteers and staff. Encourage players to do the same.
8. **Remember that coaches are leaders and have a tremendous impact on how much a player enjoys their experience.**

Practices

The more time you spend planning practices, the more can be accomplished. Write down what you will do. Remember your goal is to keep all players active.

- **Make them fun.** Try to do different drills to involve everyone. Try not to have players standing around – keep everyone involved and as active as possible including the parents. Talk to other coaches about their practices. Discuss problems or concerns you are experiencing. Other coaches may have helpful ideas and solutions.

- **Start and end on time.** This is very important to parents. Even if you think “Just five more minutes and I’ll be done,” don’t. Your good graces with parents are more important than those five minutes.
- **Before planning practices, decide the purpose of the practice.** Is it to get to know the skill level of the players, to improve a particular weakness, or to introduce a new skill?
- **Be realistic about how much information players can handle.** Choose 2-4 key points that you want to make and choose activities that reinforce those points.
- **Plan the progression of your practices.** Progressions should include past skill warm-up, new skill training, team training, scrimmages and cool down. Water breaks are recommended after new skill training and team training. This allows for players to rest as well as give coaches time to set up for the next drill or activity.
- **Coaches must make sure all players leave with their designated adult from all practices and games.**

Additional Tools for Practices

- Keep players moving. Avoid having players stand in long lines.
- Have players handle the equipment as much as possible so they become more comfortable with it.
- Change activities every 5-7 minutes. Note the ones your team responds well to and those they don’t.
- Change the pace. Mix walking, jogging, running, and sprinting.
- Keep instructions short and sweet and be careful to not over-coach. Try to demonstrate what you want to do as opposed to telling them, while involving the players.
- Use direct language instead of terminology (Ex: “Kick it away” vs. “Clear it”) unless you have already familiarized the team with that terminology.
- Create opportunities to be successful and balance challenges with reality. When players feel successful, they will be more likely to try something new. Realize that progress moves differently for everybody.

Player Personalities

Working with players with challenging personalities can be difficult but also rewarding. Below are some tips for working with some of the most common personality traits that coaches may struggle with.

- **The Shy Players** - These players may not want to participate in some of the drills or interact much with the other players. Let these children work things out at their own pace while you establish trust with them. Ask the children and the parents what would help them feel more comfortable. If they want to sit out, allow them (where the coach can still supervise) and, without forcing it, try to understand them and help them feel ready to re-join. Generally, they will get more comfortable when they have warmed up to the group a bit. Coach enthusiasm and an emphasis on teamwork will help speed this up.
- **The Talkative Players** - These players always have something to say. Try to channel this energy into something positive by encouraging them to communicate with their teammates. For example, they should tell their teammates “Good job” or encourage each other on the court. Coaches will not be able to stop the chatter, so they should try to put it to good use instead.
- **The Scared Players** - These players seem to like coming to practice, but they do not want to risk falling down or making a mistake. Let these players participate on their own terms and do not draw attention to their nerves. Instead, be sure to praise these players when they do take a risk even if the outcome of the play is negative. After enough positive reinforcement, their confidence generally comes around.
- **The Helpful Players** - These players are always at the coach’s side, offering to help. Allow them! These players can always pick up balls or lay down cones. Keep them engaged and let them know you appreciate their willingness to help out.
- **The Go-Getters** – These players are always excited to get the ball and make something happen. Encourage them to use that energy unselfishly by making plays happen for their teammates as well, and praise that teamwork.