

# FIND YOUR SPORT.

# FIND YOUR Y.

## Youth Sports Parent Handbook



**YMCA OF NORTHWEST NORTH CAROLINA**

**Our mission:** "Helping all people reach their  
God-given potential in spirit, mind and body."



**Dear Families:**

Welcome to another exciting season of YMCA Youth Sports! We are thrilled to have your child participating with us. Through YMCA sports, your child will build new skills, strengthen current abilities, and most importantly, learn valuable life lessons that extend far beyond the game.

At the YMCA, we believe sports are about more than competition. Our focus is on character development, teamwork, and sportsmanship, rooted in our core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility and Faith. These values guide how we coach, how we play and how we work together.

Our coaches and staff are committed to creating a positive, supportive and inclusive environment where every child feels encouraged to grow, succeed and have fun. We aim to help your child develop confidence both on and off the field through healthy competition and skill-building opportunities.

We recognize that parents and families\* are essential partners in this journey. We welcome your feedback, ideas and questions throughout the season so we can work together to provide the best possible experience for your child. By maintaining open communication, we ensure that every young athlete feels supported by a strong team of caring adults — coaches, staff and families — working together for their growth and well-being.

We believe every child is unique and progresses at their own pace. Our goal is to offer a variety of positive experiences that foster not just athletic skill but personal confidence, resilience and joy. We are here to help each child thrive. Thank you for choosing the YMCA as your partner in youth sports. Together, we'll make this a season full of growth, learning and lifelong memories.

Let's get ready for a fantastic season!

Sincerely,



Patrick Whitbred  
Executive Director of Sports  
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**YMCA MISSION**

"Helping all people reach their God-given potential in spirit, mind, and body."

**Our Goal** is to ensure youth are prepared for life by helping them achieve, build relationships and feel like they belong.

**Our Focus** at practice and games is to encourage players to meet their potential by demonstrating five key character traits: caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith.

**Our Purpose** is to provide a quality, Christian-oriented experience that is safe, convenient and affordable. Our programs present age- appropriate opportunities to participate in sports while having fun, making new friends and building good character.

\*We use the term parents and families throughout this handbook to refer to anyone filling a caretaking role for our athletes.

## YMCA SPORTS LEADERSHIP STAFF



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# REGISTRATION

## How to Register

Registration is available online, by phone or in person at the membership desk. Full payment is expected at the time of your registration. Early registration, as well as membership to the YMCA, often provides a discounted rate. Financial assistance is available for families who qualify. Financial assistance applications are available from the Member Services desk or online at [www.ymcanwnc.org/membership/open-doors](http://www.ymcanwnc.org/membership/open-doors). Please allow 7-10 business days for financial assistance approval.

## Age of Registrant

Your son or daughters' age on the first day of their first practice dictates the default division in which he/she will fall. In other words, do not base it on the age your child is at registration, but on the age they will be when the season you are registering for begins.

If your child is an exceptional athlete or is taller for their age you may prefer that they "play up" an age division. This is acceptable, but online registration is not available in this instance. Please register over-the-phone or in-person to play up an age division. Children are not allowed to "play down" an age division. If you believe you have a special circumstance, please contact your local sports program branch leader.

## Refunds

We understand that plans can change. Families may request to cancel or change their registration up until the first scheduled practice. Any cancellations made prior to the first practice are eligible for a full refund or transfer.

After the first practice has occurred, no refunds will be issued. However, exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis for circumstances such as medical issues or family relocation. These requests should be submitted to your local YMCA Sports Program Branch Leader. Documentation may help with your case for a refund.

Refunds will not be assessed for the following reasons: unhappy with team selection/assignment, weather cancellations, requests not honored (such as coach or teammate), among others.

# PRE-SEASON ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

## Jerseys & Equipment

All athletes will receive a jersey, which will be handed out by the second practice. At this time, we are unable to guarantee jersey sizes, but will work with you to ensure your athlete obtains a jersey that fits. Everyone should be dressed in comfortable athletic or play attire and should bring a water bottle to stay hydrated and cool. We also recommend you bring your own ball to practice only. All personal items need to be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name, in the instance it is lost or forgotten. Please check with the membership desk first when looking for lost or forgotten items. All necessary practice equipment will be provided on the field or court at the time of practice.

## What's Included with Registration for Team Sports?

**JERSEYS:** All athletes receive a jersey for the season. For fall and spring seasons, athletes will receive a dri-fit shirt style jersey. For winter and summer basketball, they will receive a reversible tank top jersey. Rookie sports participants will receive a dri-fit shirt each season.

**TROPHIES:** Trophies are awarded to all age division 7 and under athletes. Some expectations may apply.

**PICTURE DAY:** Each season, we host a picture day for athletes to receive individual and team portraits. This does come at an additional cost if you choose to purchase the photos.

## What's Included with Registration for Academies?

Academies are designed to focus on skill development, player growth and building confidence in a fun, supportive environment. Registration for Academies includes coaching from trained and paid staff members who are experienced in teaching the sport and helping athletes improve. Throughout the season, athletes will participate in both skill sessions and scrimmages to introduce game-like scenarios and reinforce their learning. Jerseys, trophies and picture day are not included with Academy registration.

**Additional Equipment Recommended for Each Sport (not included in registration):**

Basketball: nothing additional required

Flag Football: mouth guard and cleats

Lacrosse: stick, gloves, helmet and mouth guard (stick only for sports camp)

Pickleball: paddle

Soccer: shin guards, socks that cover the shin guards, and cleats (tennis shoes for futsal)

T-Ball/Baseball: fitted baseball glove, helmet, bat and cleats (bat and helmets may be available to borrow on game day)

Volleyball: knee pads

**Lost Items**

In the event that a personal item becomes misplaced a sports employee will take it inside to the membership desk where it will be placed in the lost and found. Please go inside to the lobby and inquire about your specific item at the Member Services desk. Please provide as much detail as possible if it is not labeled.

**Playing Time**

All children are guaranteed 50 percent playing time regardless of team size or personal ability. If you believe that your coach is not adhering to this policy, please let your coach know or come to a member of the sports staff after the game. Mistakes do happen, but we will work with you to be sure that they do not become a regular part of your sport experience.

**League Rules**

All league rules are available on our website on the Coach Corner page at <https://ymcanwnc.org/sports/youth-sports/coach-corner>. You can also find information about ball size, goal dimensions, field size and court size.

**COACHES****Parent & Community Volunteers**

Our coaches are parent and community volunteers. This means they are not paid. It is one of the many ways we keep our prices low and maintain a clear focus on character development. We are always in need of coaches. If you would like to learn more about what it means to be a coach or would like to apply to be a coach, please visit [ymcanwnc.org/become-a-coach](https://ymcanwnc.org/become-a-coach).

**Coaches as Mentors**

Your coach is just like you, a parent or caring member of the community who wants to help children thrive. We ask that our coaches serve not just as a coach, but as a leader and mentor for their team. We entrust them to lead by example and build good character.

**Coach Requests**

There are no opportunities to request a coach. If there is a specific coach you would like to stay with year to year, we recommend that you request their personal contact information to coordinate their practice day and time with your choice of practice day and time at registration. Choosing your practice day and time is not available for sports that have drafts and evaluations.

**Need-A-Coach (NAC) Teams**

At the Y, we believe every child deserves the chance to play, even if a volunteer coach hasn't stepped up yet! If your child's team is listed as a Need-A-Coach (NAC) Team, don't worry, your season will still move forward. A YMCA staff member will be assigned to help lead fun drills, games, and scrimmages at your practices so the children can keep learning and playing. Staff members will vary week to week and please know that staff might not always be available on game day, as their first priority is officiating.

On game days when a staff member isn't available, we'll need a parent or two to help the team with substitutions and basic organization. Our officials will be happy to offer guidance along the way! We truly appreciate our volunteers! They make youth sports possible and we're always hopeful that one of our amazing parents will feel ready to step in as a coach during the season.

# TEAM FORMATION GUIDELINES

## “Play with Friends” Recreation League

- No evaluations and drafts.
- These leagues are usually for soccer, flag football, t-ball/baseball, futsal (all ages) and basketball (divisions ages 5-8).
- You choose your team at the time of registration by registering for a specific practice day and time.
- If you would like to play with a particular coach or friend, it is your responsibility to contact the other party to coordinate and register for the same team.
- Early registration is strongly recommended to meet specific day and time constraints or to guarantee play with a specific friend or coach.
- No waiting lists will be formed once a team is full. You must check the website or call the branch to find out if an opening on a team has occurred.

## Skill Evaluations and Draft Recreational Leagues

- All players will attend a skills evaluation. After the evaluation, teams will be assembled by a coaches’ draft. Team assignments will be sent the Thursday prior to the start of the program.
- These leagues are usually for volleyball (all ages) and basketball (division ages 9-17).
- The goal is to create as balanced. Therefore, we cannot honor teammate or coach requests.
- Players that do not attend skills evaluations will not be assigned to a team.
- Refunds will not be given on account of a request not being granted or any other circumstance such as practice time or location.

\*Team Formation Guidelines are subject to change.

## Team Consolidation

Each sport has a required number of players to form a team. If a team is below the minimum number of players nearing the end of registration ALL members of that team will be moved to another team if there is space for all the players. We do this to provide every registered child the opportunity to play as well as to provide ample time to recruit coaches. We will try our best to keep those who signed up together on the same team (applies to non-drafted teams only). You will hear from your sports program branch leader if a change is necessary. If your new team has a practice day and time that is not convenient for your family, please call the Sports Office and we will work with you to find a better option or you may request a refund.

# SEASON LOGISTICS AND DETAILS

## Practice and Game Locations

Due to the size of our program and some local YMCAs gym and field capacity, your child may have practices and games at nearby schools or churches (no more than 20 minutes away from your local branch). Please note that pets and smoking (including vaping) are not allowed at any facility. Please note it is not possible for you to choose your location as they are pre-determined prior to the season. Off-site locations for each branch include:

**Kernersville Family YMCA:** East Forsyth Middle, Kernersville Middle School and Southeast Middle School

**Jerry Long Family YMCA:** Clemmons Middle School, Konnoak Middle School, Morgan Elementary School, Meadowlark Middle School, Lewisville Middle School, Flat Rock Middle School and South Fork Elementary School.

**Stokes Family YMCA:** King Elementary School and Poplar Springs Elementary School

**Statesville Family YMCA:** Cloverleaf Elementary School and St. John’s Lutheran Church

**William G. White, Jr. Family YMCA:** Fulton Family YMCA, Hanes Park, Jefferson Middle School, Konnoak Middle School, South Fork Elementary School, Wiley Middle School, Whitaker Elementary School

## Game Days

Please arrive ten to 15 minutes early to allow ample time for parking, finding the correct field or court and seeing to any last minute needs prior to the beginning of the game.

### **Inclement Weather and Cancellations**

Our goal is always to hold every practice and game as scheduled. However, the safety and well-being of our participants, volunteers, staff, and officials is our top priority. Field conditions and field integrity are also key factors in our decisions.

We will communicate any cancellations through multiple channels to ensure the message reaches you. Cancelled practices will not be rescheduled. While we aim to make up as many games as possible, only one game or session is guaranteed to be made up at the end of the season.

Please note: Any game that reaches halftime will be considered a full game and will not be rescheduled.

### **Parental Oversight**

It is our expectation that you will stay on campus during both practice and games. No one is able to take on the individual responsibility of your child so for the safety and well-being of your child, please stay nearby. You are permitted to have another adult chaperone your son or daughter. This can be a sibling or other relative as well as caregivers over the age of 16. If your child is 12 or older they can attend practice and games without individual adult supervision.

### **Staffing**

A YMCA director or coordinator supervises all of our sports. All staff members are required to attend over 10 hours of training prior to the beginning of the season, which includes First Aid and CPR training. In the event of an emergency, trained YMCA staff will initiate emergency care by activating the chain of survival, which includes calling 911. Emergency care and transportation will be handled by 911 and local emergency services.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Pre-Season**

You will begin receiving communication from the sports department two weeks prior to the season beginning (one week for academies and pre-school sports). The emails you receive from the sports staff will have everything you need to know. Be sure to check your spam folder as the initial email often ends up there.

### **In-Season**

You will receive a weekly email update from the sports staff (leagues only). Each update will include a brief summary of the previous week, information for the week ahead and the word of the week. Any reported issues or changes will be shared via this communication if needed.

## **PLAYERSPACE**

PLAYERSPACE is our league management system that manages team schedules, rosters and parent communication. Prior to the season, you will receive an email inviting you to create a log-in (if you do not already have an account). Upon log-in, you will receive communication from the YMCA and your coach through the PLAYERSPACE platform. You will also be able to view your teams' schedule, teammates and be able to communicate with your coach.

You may also receive text message alerts from PLAYERSPACE. It is very important we have your correct email and mobile number on file to ensure you are receiving communication. If you feel as though you never received a log in email or are not receiving updates, please check your trash and junk mail and be sure to add noreply@playerspace.com to your address book.

In addition to using PLAYERSPACE on your computer, you can also download the app and sign up to receive text message alerts. For help and tips on how to use PLAYERSPACE, please visit their Help Center. Then, use the side bar and click "For Parents".



## BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

It is our expectation that children and adults will treat one another with respect and kindness. If a child or adult partakes in bullying, name calling, teasing and other unsportsmanlike conduct they will receive one warning. Following that warning, they may be asked to leave the field or court. It is at the discretion of the site supervisor to determine the severity of the issue. If the problem continues past a single practice or game, it will be at the discretion of the Sports Branch Program Leader to determine a proper course of action which may include ending the season early for a child or prohibiting an adult for further game and practice attendance.

## YOUTH SPORTS PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

YMCA Youth Sports Philosophy: YMCA Youth Sports are based on certain beliefs and philosophies: participation and everyone plays. The YMCA encourages having a healthy spirit, mind and body, meaning the development of the whole person. The YMCA also emphasizes fundamentals, teamwork, fair play, cooperation and respect for the officials, one's self, one's team-mates and the other team. Our philosophy is simple: EVERYONE PLAYS EVERYONE WINS. Every decision you make and every behavior you display is based first on what you think is best for your athletes, and second, on what can be accomplished to have everyone become a winner.

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in the Youth Sports Program by following this Parent Code of Conduct:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all participants, coaches and officials.
- I will do my best to make this program fun for my child.
- I will keep winning in perspective. A child usually forgets the outcome of the game: it is the adults that have a tendency to stress the win/loss record.
- I will ask my child to treat other participants, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators with respect regardless, of race, age, sex, creed or ability.
- I will treat officials and coaches with respect. They are there to provide your child with a safe and healthy learning environment. Officials and coaches deserve the same type of environment from the parents and spectators.
- I will strive to be a good role model for my child and the other children in the program. I will encourage my child to learn to lose with dignity and win with grace.
- I will respect my child's coach and do my best to have my child at all practices and games on time.
- I will recognize the importance of volunteer coaches.
- I realize they are important to the development of my child and the program.
- I will communicate with them and support their decisions.

### Sunscreen & Bug Spray

In order to comply with our child abuse prevention guidelines, the application of topical products will need to be completed by a parent. Our coaches and staff are not to apply by hand or spray any topical product.

### Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, trained YMCA staff will initiate emergency care by activating the chain of survival, which includes calling 911. Emergency care and transportation will be handled by 911 and local emergency services.

## SPORTS CAMPS

The YMCA offers half-day sports camps at various branch locations throughout the summer, providing participants with a fun and active camp experience focused on skill development, teamwork and sportsmanship.

In addition to the policies outlined in this handbook, our sports camps also follow all guidelines and procedures detailed in the YMCA of NWNC Summer Day Camp Parent Handbook, which is available on our website for your reference.