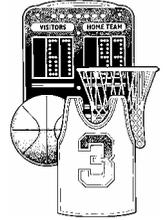




PARENT'S GUIDELINES



Welcome to Pulaski County Sports

Our objective for Pulaski County Youth Sports is to help young athletes not only become better players but also better people. We recognize that not every athlete can be on the winning team, but every kid can be a winner in Pulaski County.

Our Philosophy of Youth Sports

To run a successful sports program we believe the program must be structured around seven major goals.

- **Everyone Plays.** Everyone who registers by the deadline is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and as close as possible half of every game. Each child will start at least one quarter.
- **Safety First.** Although kids may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. Coaches make sure the equipment and facilities are safe, and they teach the sport so that the skills taught are appropriate for athlete's developmental levels. And coaches constantly supervise their players and stop any unsafe activities.
- **Fair Play.** Fair play is about more than playing by the rules. It's about coaches and players showing respect for all involved in Pulaski County sports. It's about coaches being role models of good sporting behavior and guiding their players to do the same.
- **Positive Competition.** We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. The right perspective is when adults make decisions that put the best interests of the players before winning the contest. Learning to compete is important for youngsters, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is essential lessons of life. Through Pulaski county sports we want to help kids learn these lessons.
- **Volunteer Involvement.** Pulaski County sports encourage parents to be involved appropriately in their child's participation in our sports programs. In addition to parents being helpful as volunteer coaches, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation.
- **Sport for Everyone.** Pulaski County sports programs are an "inclusive sports program." We offer programs to all youngsters regardless of their race, gender, religious creed, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the kids and parents to do the same.
- **Sport for Fun.** Sports are naturally fun for most kids. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sporting activities they over-organize and dominate the activities to the point that it destroys their enjoyment of them. If we take the fun out of sports for young athletes, we are in danger of the young athletes taking themselves out of sports.

Your Responsibilities as a Parent

All parents want their kids to do well and have fun in the activities they pursue. We want you to be actively involved in positive ways with your child's sport experiences in Pulaski County sports. To do that, you need to first understand your responsibilities as a parent of a child involved in sports.

1. Encourage your child to play sports, but don't pressure. Let your child choose to play-and to quit-if he or she wants.

2. Understand what your child wants from sports, and provide a supportive atmosphere for achieving these goals.
3. Set limits on your child's participation. Don't make sport everything in your child's life; make it a part of life.
4. Make sure the coach is qualified to guide your child through the sport experience.
5. Keep winning in perspective, and help your child do the same.
6. Help your child set challenging but realistic performance goals rather than focusing only on "winning the game."
7. Help your child understand the valuable lessons sports can teach.
8. Help your child meet responsibilities to the team and to the coach.
9. Turn your child over to the coach at practices and games-don't meddle or coach from the sidelines.
10. Supply the coach, with information on any allergies or special health conditions your child has. Make sure your child brings any necessary medications to practices and games.

Be Involved, But Not *Too* Involved

Pulaski County Recreation needs enthusiastic involvement from parents to be successful. Volunteering your time not only helps the program; it's also an enjoyable way to meet other adults and make new friends. Here are just a few ways to become involved:

- Be a coach or an assistant coach
- Be an official or umpire.
- Keep time or score.
- Maintain equipment or facilities.
- Coordinate registrations.
- Be an announcer.

A healthy involvement will usually be welcomed by both the coach and your son or daughter. However, no coach wants to be-or should be-second-guessed by parents on strategy moves or other coaching decisions. Signs of parents being too closely involved include these:

- You are overly concerned with the outcome of the game.
- You spend a lot of time talking with the coach about the game plan, player skill levels, and the way she or he conducts practices or games.
- Your son or daughter has stopped enjoying the sport or has asked you to stop coming to games and practices.
- You require your son or daughter to take extra practice.

Be involved, show interest, and help the coach where he or she needs help, encourage your child-and enjoy the sport yourself!

Pulaski County Parent's Code of Conduct

1. Remain in the spectator area during competitions.
2. Let coaches coach.
3. Keep comments positive to players, parents, officials, and coaches of either team.
4. Come to games sober, and refrain from drinking alcohol at contests.
5. Cheer for your team.
6. Show interest, enthusiasm, and support for your child.
7. Be in control of your emotions.
8. Help when you're asked to by a coach or an official.
9. Thank the coaches, officials, and other volunteers for their time and effort.

Helping Your Child Enjoy Sports

You can help your child enjoy sports by doing the following:

- **Developing a Winning Perspective**

Every decision parents make in guiding their children should be based first on what's best for the child and second on what may help the child win. Stated another way, **Athletes First, Winning Second.**

We're not saying winning is unimportant. Winning-or striving to win- is essential to enjoyable competition. Pursuing victory and achieving goals are sweet rewards of sport participation. But they can turn sour if, through losing, you or your child loses the proper perspective. An obsession with winning often produces a fear of failure, resulting in below average performances and upset children.

- **Building Your Child's Self Esteem**

Building self-esteem in your child is one of your most important parenting duties. It's not easy-and it's made even more difficult in sports by the prevailing attitude of "winning is everything." Athletes who find their self-worth through winning will go through tough times when they lose.

Building self-esteem in your child takes more than encouragement. You need to show your child unconditional approval and love. Don't praise dishonestly; children can see through that. If your child strikes out three times and makes an error in a softball game, don't tell her she played well. Just show the same amount of love and approval for her-not for her performance-which you showed before the game.

- **Emphasizing fun, skill development, and striving to win**

The reason you should emphasize fun is quite simple: without it, your child may not want to keep playing. Kids don't have fun when they stand around in practice or sit on the bench during games, when they feel pressure to win and don't improve or learn new skills. Conversely, they *do* have fun when practices are well organized, they get to play in games, they develop new skills, and the focus is on *striving* to win.

- **Helping your child set performance goals**

Performance goals-which emphasize individual skill improvement-are much better than the outcome goal of winning for two reasons:

1. Performance goals are in the athlete's control.
2. Performance goals help the athlete improve.

Performance goals should be specific, and they should be challenging but not too difficult to achieve. For example, if your child plays soccer, you might help him set the goals of making short, crisp passes; of staying between the ball and the goal on defense; and of giving his best effort throughout the game.

You (and your child's coach) should help your young athlete set such goals. And help your child focus on performance goals before a game; this focus will help sport participation be an enjoyable learning experience for your son or daughter.



Remember that not every kid can be on a winning team but every kid can be a winner!

