



Montpelier Youth Sports Program Philosophy: Athletes First, Winning Second

Every action adults take should be based first in what is best for young athletes, both improving skills and maintaining a love of the sport. Winning is not our program objective and should take a back seat to teaching kids basic skills, having fun, and learning to play as part of a team. This program is for players of all abilities and levels of interest. This does not mean we do not try to win but winning should take a back seat to what is best for the overall enjoyment of the sport for the entire team. At this age the most important thing is for the athletes to play the game and learn through play.

I. Athlete Participation Guideline

1. Athletes must be age or grade eligible for the sport they wish to participate in. No players will play up a division.
2. One parent/guardian of an athlete must live in Montpelier or Roxbury. Roxbury Participants must attend school in Montpelier to be eligible.
3. All athletes must be registered through the Recreation Department at the time they begin the sport.
4. If parents/guardians cannot afford the registration fee, they need to contact the Recreation Department for a fee waiver or we can offer a payment plan. They still need to be registered.
5. Children do not need a medical exam prior to playing a sport, however if a child comes off the field or court injured (i.e. broken arm, finger, concussion or other injury), a doctor's note needs to be given to the coach and the Recreation Department needs to be notified.
6. Children with various disabilities are eligible to participate in the sports offered. They are subject to the same evaluation as other children when being placed on a team.

II. Coach Eligibility

1. The minimum age to be eligible to be a coach in charge of any practice or game is 18 years of age and he/she must have graduated from high school.
2. All coaches are encouraged to attend coach's trainings as offered, and to also use resources provided.
3. Experience playing the sport is helpful, but not necessary.
4. All coaches are required to undergo necessary background check paperwork.

III. Referee/Official Eligibility

1. Middle school students and up may participate as officials under the supervision of an adult. (i.e. coach, referee)
2. Referees/officials must have participated in or have been involved in the sport they officiate or they have taken a course for that sport.
3. Officials do not need to be certified, but they need to know the rules to the sport.
4. For grades 3-4 basketball all officials will be patched officials.

IV. Player Selection

1. Individuals will be assigned to teams through a draft process that includes both coaches and the Recreation Department.
2. Skill and ability will be factors used to balance teams. We also need to balance teams by age.
3. As a practice, we do not cut athletes from our sports programs. We find the child a place on a team that is age or grade eligible.

4. Participants may request to be assigned to a certain team or make scheduling conflicts known at the beginning of the sport prior to draft selection. This request may be denied if another player of equal ability cannot be traded to replace that player, or if it causes an imbalance in the league.
5. Teams will be finalized at the coaches meeting. After the meeting changes must be approved by all coaches and the Recreation Coordinator.

V. Equipment Policies

1. Montpelier Recreation Department will supply all team equipment. Individual equipment based on the sport should be provided for by parents or guardian (i.e. Gloves, cleats & shin guards).
 2. All fields and facilities are kept to all safety standards. Coaches are responsible to inspect all equipment periodically over the course of the season. The Recreation Dept. is responsible for inspecting the equipment prior to the start of the season. Coaches and parents should ask that proper safety gear be worn at all times of play.
 3. Equipment, provided by the Recreation Department, is loaned to coaches for the season and is expected to be returned at the end. All equipment should be returned including worn out items.
- After proper inventory has been taken to ensure replacements will be obtained they will be discarded.

VI. Facility Policies

1. Facility usage should be scheduled ahead of time to ensure space availability for organized practices or games for coaches, athletes and their parents. Everyone should be respectful to each other and keep parking lots, bleachers, locker rooms, rest rooms, and fields/courts clean.
2. Coaches are responsible for checking for any risks or hazards before using a field or indoor facility to insure the safety of the participants. If coaches cannot remove the risk or hazard they must contact the Recreation Department so the risk or hazard can be amended.
3. If field or indoor conditions are not safe due to the weather or other potential hazards, the coach will cancel the practice or contest to avoid putting athletes at risk.

VII. Practice Policies

1. Coaches will decide days and time of practice at the coaches meeting before the start of the season.
2. 3rd-6th grade Practices will be held one or two nights per week at the discretion of the coaches and the department. Not team should exceed two practices per week, unless approved by the program coordinator. K-2 will be held on Saturdays and for 1st -2nd graders possibly one night per week depending on the sport.
3. The coaching staff must be present at practices and games. However, if they need to cancel practice due to weather or any other reason, coaches will make every attempt to contact players as soon as they know they need to cancel.

VIII. Contest Policies

1. Athletes usually only participate in one contest a day. Tournaments or round robin are the only exception. Maximum length of contest will be addressed at the coaches meeting and be passed on to the specific sport and/or age group.
2. No contest will take place in stormy weather or after dark on a field outside without lights.
3. In any case of a team's inability to field a full team, the opposing team may allow some of their athletes to play for the other team so a game may take place.
4. Score is not as important as building athlete's confidence and skills so refrain from running up the score.
5. Every player should get time to practice their skills for the wellbeing of the athletes through a balance of playing time in scrimmages or games, equal play time opportunities for all payers.
6. Coaches may ask that player arrive no more than 1/2 hour prior to the start time for the game.

IX. Participant Behavior Policies

1. Cheating, verbal, and physical violence, drug and alcohol use are unacceptable behaviors and will not be tolerated.

2. Harassment, smoking, swearing, and using derogatory language and gestures are also considered unacceptable behavior.
3. Unacceptable behavior during practice is subject to punishment of coaches choice, during games coaches and officials have the authority to remove players and fans if need be.
4. Coaches may give a verbal warning to the player for a first offence; at the second offence, have them sit out and tell the parents. If this inappropriate behavior continues, the player may be asked to not come back. In cases sever enough banning may be an appropriate course of action.
5. Coaches and parents should be instilling the importance of good sportsmanship to their players.

X. Adult Participant Behavior Polices

1. Coaches, officials, other volunteers, and parents need to be held accountable to certain standards of behaviors just as young athletes are.
2. Cheating, verbal and/or physical violence, drug and alcohol use are unacceptable behaviors and shall not be tolerated.
3. Harassment, smoking, swearing, and using derogatory language and gestures are behaviors also considered unacceptable.
4. Failure to exhibit acceptable behavior by any adult, be it a Coach, Official, or Parent, may result in a verbal warning by an official or asked to leave the event could result in being banned from attending future events depending on the severity of the behavior. Permanent banning from future contests is a judgement that will be made by the Recreation Department after an investigation of the incident has taken place. The immediate contest does not continue until the situation is resolved by one of the above actions.
5. Parental concerns and complaints about coaches and officials shall be brought to the attention of the Program Director and should be in a written documentation by the person who is making the complaint.

XI. Health and Safety Policies

1. All athletes must where the safety equipment necessary for the sport they are participating in.
2. No jewelry of any kind may be worn for the safety of all athletes.
3. Any athletes injured during a contest that forces them to see a Doctor should have a doctor's note before returning to playing. (Especially any head injury.)
4. Please be mindful of children's allergies. Keep equipment and hands clean. Please throw away food wrappers.