

## **St. Anthony Sports Boosters Coaches Guidelines**

### **PURPOSE OF ST. ANTHONY SPORTS BOOSTERS**

St. Anthony Sports Boosters strongly believe that young athletes should be challenged at a level which is proportional to their skill and ability. We believe that the young athlete is best served in an environment where concerns for physical and emotional well being are key considerations.

St. Anthony Sports Boosters defines a successful athletic experience as one in which skills, development, good sportsmanship, and good, clean competition are vigorously promoted, and that winning and losing are a learning experience rather than factors to determine self-worth.

### **Code of Ethics for coaches**

1. I will treat each individual player, opposing coach, official, & administrator with respect and dignity.
2. I will do my best to learn the fundamental skills, teaching techniques and strategies of the game.
3. I will become familiar with the rules of the game.
4. I will become familiar with the objectives, rules, & regulations of the Saint Anthony Sports Boosters.
5. I will uphold the authority of the officials assigned to the contest in which I coach and I will assist them in every way to conduct fair and impartial competitive contests.
6. I will learn the strengths and weaknesses of my players in order that I might place them into situations where they have maximum opportunities to achieve success.
7. I will be patient and supportive and take the time to work with each player regardless of ability or potential.
8. I will encourage my players to report physical injury or pain without fear of ridicule or loss of self esteem.
9. I will be a supportive listener to my players when they respectfully voice their opinions or ask questions about technique and strategy.

10. I will conduct my practices and games so that players have an opportunity to improve their skill level through active participation.
11. I will communicate to my players their rights and responsibilities.
12. I will report any irregularities that violate sound, competitive practices.
13. I will protect the health and safety of my players by insisting that all of the activities under my control are conducted for their psychological and physiological welfare rather than the vicarious interests of adults.

### **Relations with Parents**

The “athletic triangle” consisting of coach, player, & parent, is an inevitable aspect of youth sports. And, because it is unavoidable, your role in dealing with parents is of considerable importance to the success of your community’s program. Many parents will want to have varying degrees of involvement. Hopefully, you will find it possible to channel their genuine concerns and good intentions in a way that supports what you are trying to accomplish.

All parents identify with their children to some extent, and thus want them to do well. Unfortunately, for some parents, this identification process goes too far and the player literally becomes an extension of themselves. When this happens, they begin to define their own self-worth in terms of how successful their child is. They become “winners” or “losers” through their children, which creates enormous pressure on the player. The child must succeed or their own self-image is threatened. For such parents, much more is at stake than just a game, and the child of such a parent carries a heavy burden.

As a coach, you may be able to counteract this tendency in two major ways: (1) by communicating to your players that the important thing is that they enjoy playing the game and developing their skills, not that they must win or be a “star”; and (2) by communicating to parents that by placing excessive pressure on their child, they can detract from the potential that youth sports can have for enjoyment and personal growth.

Sometimes parents may disagree with what you are doing. The main thing is not to get defensive. Listen to what they have to say. You may find some of the suggestions helpful. But even if you don’t agree, you can at least listen while recognizing that you are the coach and have the final say. Remember that no coach can please everyone, and no one can ask more of you than that you be the best coach you can be.

### **Maintaining Order & Discipline**

Preventing misbehavior during games and practices is one of the most difficult problems a coach may have to deal with. It can become a very serious problem unless the coach learns to deal with it early in the season.

It is important to remember that young athletes are not miniature adults. It is an unusual child who wants to sit still during vigorous play activity. Remember, young athletes want clearly defined limits and structure. They don't like unpredictability and inconsistency. You, as coach, can, and should, attempt to create an atmosphere in which kids can have plenty of freedom and fun with reasonable limits.

Here are some important considerations to assist you in maintaining order and discipline:

1. Young athletes will live by the rules if you give them an opportunity to help formulate them.
2. Too many rules can have an adverse effect. Rules against horseplay, talking when they should be listening, coming late for practices or games are usually all that are necessary.
3. Maintain order by establishing clear expectations. Emphasize that during a game, all members of the team are part of the game, even those on the sidelines. Don't get into a position of having to constantly nag or threaten players in order to prevent chaos. Don't be a drill sergeant. If a player refuses to cooperate, deprive them of something valued. The idea here is that if you establish clear behavioral guidelines early and work to build team spirit in achieving them, you can avoid having to repeatedly keep control.
4. If a rule is broken, the player should be given an opportunity to explain his/her actions. Do not show anger, embarrass the player or begin to lecture. Simply remind him/her that he/she has broken a rule that he/she has agreed to follow, and as a result, must automatically pay the penalty.

## **Conducting Practice Sessions**

In general, each coach should:

1. Know and implement the Code of Ethics, your community's rules and regulations and the rules and regulations of the league in which you are playing.
- 2 Promptly after receiving your roster talk by phone or in person with the player/parent assigned to your team to introduce yourself as the coach and to inform the player of the starting and ending time and the location of the first practice, the equipment the player should bring, and the type of clothing the player should wear to practice.
3. Set the first practice at the earliest possible time after receiving your roster.
4. Set up a parents meeting at the site of the first practice session to inform them of your plans for the season and how you will determine playing time. Also inform them that they can feel free to discuss any issues relative to the team and that you will listen to their

concerns. As any long time coach will tell you, the biggest problem they face each year is in dealing with irate parents over playing time. Explain up front and you'll avoid many problems later.

5. Inform your players in advance of each practice session exactly where and when each practice will start and end. Always start and end on time and never wait for a player who is late. Remember, consistency strengthens both your image as a coach and the respect your players will have for you.
6. Plan in advance of each practice session a schedule of exactly what the team will do and for how long, and stick to the predetermined schedule.
7. Keep all players active during practice. If possible, recruit two or three parents to assist you. Delegate teaching responsibility to them if they are qualified. An example would be to appoint an infield coach to handle infield drills, an outfield coach to work with outfielders, and a pitching coach to work with pitchers and catchers. The key is to keep everyone active to prevent boredom. Make it clear to your assistants that the final decision on all matters is yours.
8. Understand the most important practices you will have all season are the practices before your first game. What you accomplish, or fail to accomplish in these practices will largely determine the kind of season your team will have.
9. Never use practice time to demonstrate your own athletic ability.
10. Establish a procedure for canceling practices due to inclement weather or for other reasons. One good way is to give a list of the names of all your players to your team captains or other designees. The coach then has only to call his captains or designees who in turn call the rest of the players.
11. Be completely fair in your dealings with your players. Give everyone a chance to try-out for a position if they want to. If a player is not good enough to play a certain position, they will know it. The player will also know that you were fair with giving the player a chance.
12. Keep attendance records of all your practices.

## **Health & Safety**

Protecting a player from injury places a heavy burden on you as coach. The outcome of a contest should never influence you from acting in the best interest of the player. If there is any doubt about a player's physical status, the player should not play.

1. Conduct thorough & proper warm-ups.
2. Use good quality equipment and well fitted equipment.
3. Conduct well planned and relatively short practice sessions, usually extending

to no more than 1 1/2 hours.

4. Never expose a player to undue risk of injury or aggravation of an existing injury.

### **Putting Winning into Perspective**

Young athletes can learn from both winning and losing. But for this to occur, winning must be put in a healthy perspective. If your players leave your program having enjoyed relating to you and to their teammates, feeling better about themselves, having improved their skills, then something far more important than a winning record or a league championship has been achieved. Your players should be taught that success is found in striving to do your best.

The important concept is that success is related to effort. Players have complete control over the amount of effort they put forth, but they have only limited control of the outcome of the contest. No one is a loser if they have put forth maximum effort.

### **Relating Effectively to Young Athletes**

1. Reacting to game situations: Reward good plays immediately. Let the players know that you appreciate and value their efforts.
2. Use of rewards: The positive approach to coaching is characterized by the liberal use of reward.
3. Responding to mistakes - errors: Give encouragement immediately after a mistake is made. Players know when they make mistakes. They don't need to be publicly humiliated. Do give corrective instruction, but always do so in an encouraging manner. Do this by emphasizing not the bad things that just happened, but the good things that will happen if the player follows your instruction. This will make the player positively self-motivated to correct the mistake or flubbed play rather than negatively motivated to avoid failure or disapproval.

### **Disciplinary Process**

1. Athletes who demonstrates problem behavior:  
Coach should discuss issue with the player, reduce playing time if necessary, but contact parents *before* playing time is reduced. If the situation continues, the coach may dismiss the player from the team after first consulting with the sport specific commissioner.
2. Coach who demonstrates problem behavior:  
The issue should immediately be forwarded to the sport specific commissioner who should investigate and initiate corrective action which may include bringing the matter to the attention of the St. Anthony Sports Boosters' board.

**Commissioners will bring all parent complaints to the next board meeting.**

**Historically, the greatest amount of friction in the programs of the Saint Anthony Sports Boosters has occurred as a result of a player's or parent's belief that a player is not getting "fair" playing time.**

### **Participation and Playing Time**

The amount of playing time per player is always a major concern for players, parents, coaches, and the Saint Anthony Sports Boosters. The following guidelines should be implemented by coaches in all programs sponsored by the Saint Anthony Sports Boosters:

1. Playing time should be reasonably balanced per game if the team member demonstrates good attendance for practices and games; shows respect towards teammates, coaches and others; and listens and tries to improve skills throughout the season.
2. Skill variation should have no bearing on playing time. The goal should be to win or loose as a team and improve as a team.
3. If a coach feels that a team member is not demonstrating the behavior listed in #1 above, the coach must follow the steps in the Disciplinary Process outlined in these Coaches Guidelines *before* playing time for the team member is affected.

### **Zero Tolerance Rules**

1. A Coach and player will refrain from the use of abusive or vulgar language when dealing with a player, coach, or official in any game or practice.
2. A Coach and player will refrain from any inappropriate physical contact when dealing with a player, coach, or official in any game or practice.

-----

I HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO FOLLOW THE  
ST. ANTHONY  
SPORTS BOOSTERS COACHING GUIDELINES.

COACH \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

COMMISSIONER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_