



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# PARENT & COACH SPORTS HANDBOOK



**BRING YOUR GAME!**

**North Canton Community Building YMCA**

200 South Main Street

North Canton, Ohio 44720

(P): (330)499-2587

[www.ymcastark.org](http://www.ymcastark.org)

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## Things to Remember

Can't reach a YMCA associate or your coach?

Visit [www.northcantonymcasports.org](http://www.northcantonymcasports.org) for copies of packets, schedules, forms, or cancellations related to your current sport. Stay connected with all of our youth sports via Facebook by following our sports page at

Food and drinks

Thank you for helping keep our facilities and ground clean by discarding trash into trash receptacles.

Safety

All sporting activities will be monitored by YMCA staff who are trained in CPR and First Aid. First Aid kits are available at all sites.

Weather Information/Cancellations

For severe weather conditions, go to [www.northcantonymcasports.org](http://www.northcantonymcasports.org). It has the latest information regarding game day cancellations and weather related information. Cancelled practices will not be made up. Cancelled games will only be made up if the schedule allows. Coaches and parents will be notified within one-week of a cancellation on the make-up status.

Your opinion matters to us!

A survey will be sent to you via email before the end of the season. If your email is not on file with us, visit our Member Services Desk to have it added.

**Thank you for participation in our YMCA Sports Program!**

## Developmental Assets

The Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development – known as Developmental Assets – that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. We encourage families to practice these assets and lead by example.

<b>External Assets</b>	<b>Support</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Family support</b>—Family life provides high levels of love and support.</li> <li>2. <b>Positive family communication</b>—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).</li> <li>3. <b>Other adult relationships</b>—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).</li> <li>4. <b>Caring neighborhood</b>—Child experiences caring neighbors.</li> <li>5. <b>Caring school climate</b>—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment.</li> <li>6. <b>Parent involvement in schooling</b>—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.</li> </ol>	
	<b>Empowerment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. <b>Community values children</b>—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.</li> <li>8. <b>Children as resources</b>—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.</li> <li>9. <b>Service to others</b>—Child has opportunities to help others in the community.</li> <li>10. <b>Safety</b>—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood.</li> </ol>	
	<b>Boundaries &amp; Expectations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. <b>Family boundaries</b>—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child’s whereabouts.</li> <li>12. <b>School Boundaries</b>—School provides clear rules and consequences.</li> <li>13. <b>Neighborhood boundaries</b>—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child’s behavior.</li> <li>14. <b>Adult role models</b>—Parent(s) and other adults in the child’s family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.</li> <li>15. <b>Positive peer influence</b>—Child’s closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.</li> <li>16. <b>High expectations</b>—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.</li> </ol>	
	<b>Constructive Use of Time</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. <b>Creative activities</b>—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.</li> <li>18. <b>Child programs</b>—Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children..</li> <li>19. <b>Religious community</b>—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.</li> <li>20. <b>Time at home</b>—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.</li> </ol>	
	<b>Internal Assets</b>	<b>Commitment to Learning</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. <b>Achievement Motivation</b>—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.</li> <li>22. <b>Learning Engagement</b>—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.</li> <li>23. <b>Homework</b>—Child usually hands in homework on time.</li> <li>24. <b>Bonding to school</b>—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.</li> <li>25. <b>Reading for Pleasure</b>—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.</li> </ol>
		<b>Positive Values</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26. <b>Caring</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.</li> <li>27. <b>Equality and social justice</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.</li> <li>28. <b>Integrity</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one’s beliefs.</li> <li>29. <b>Honesty</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.</li> <li>30. <b>Responsibility</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.</li> <li>31. <b>Healthy Lifestyle</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.</li> </ol>
		<b>Social Competencies</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32. <b>Planning and decision making</b>—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.</li> <li>33. <b>Interpersonal Competence</b>—Child cares about and is affected by other people’s feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.</li> <li>34. <b>Cultural Competence</b>—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.</li> <li>35. <b>Resistance skills</b>—Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.</li> <li>36. <b>Peaceful conflict resolution</b>—Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.</li> </ol>
		<b>Positive Identity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>37. <b>Personal power</b>—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.</li> <li>38. <b>Self-esteem</b>—Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is.</li> <li>39. <b>Sense of purpose</b>—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.</li> <li>40. <b>Positive view of personal future</b>—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.</li> </ol>

## How many quarters can I play my team?

**If I have 10 players:** All players play 2 quarters

**If I have 9 players:** 2 kids play 3 quarters  
7 kids play 2 quarters

**If I have 8 players:** 4 kids play 3 quarters  
4 kids play 2 quarters

**If I have 7 players:** 6 kids play 3 quarters  
1 kid plays 2 quarters

**If I have 6 players:** 2 kids play 4 quarter  
4 kids play 3 quarters

## Letter to Parents

Dear Parents and Participants,

The [North Canton YMCA](#) welcomes you to the Youth Sports Program! A goal of [North Canton YMCA](#) is for all youth sports participants, both parents and children, to have an enjoyable sporting experience. Skill development is the main component of all YMCA Youth Sports. Non-competitive games are a part of every season, and each child will play an equal amount of time in every game (as close as possible based on roster of team.) Of course, a fun and friendly environment is characteristic of all YMCA programs.

This is the Youth Sports Parent & Coach Handbook. It describes the [North Canton YMCA's](#) youth sports program. Please take a few minutes and read the information inside this handbook. This material may answer some of your questions, as well as give you the Youth Sports Philosophy and YMCA mission statement.

Youth Sports programs are possible by the dedication of volunteer workers. Many volunteers put in several hours of work to make the YMCA programs a success. Thank you to all of the YMCA volunteers who invest time and energy into the lives of young people today. If you are interested in future volunteer opportunities, please contact us.

Families are very important to [North Canton YMCA](#)! Please take an interest in your child by participating with him/her during the practices and games. Also, time spent with your child at home in sports skills development builds confidence and parent-child relationships.

Thanks for your participation. We look forward to serving you and your child in our Youth Sports program. If you have any comments or questions, please call the [North Canton YMCA](#) team at [\(330\)499-2587](tel:3304992587).

Sincerely,

[Heather Penrod](#)

[Sports and Recreation Director](#)

&

[Mark Humphrey](#)

[Sports Coordinator](#)

# Parent & Coach Youth Sports Handbook

## YMCA of Central Stark County

North Canton Community Building YMCA

### YMCA of Central Stark County Mission Statement

The Y is a cause-driven organization that is for youth development, for healthy living and for social responsibility. That's because a strong community can only be achieved when we invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors.

#### Defining our areas of focus:

1. **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:** Nurturing the potential of every child and teen.
2. **HEALTHY LIVING:** Improving the nation's health and well-being.
3. **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Giving back and providing support to our neighbors.

#### Opportunities for All

The Y is for everyone. Our programs, services and initiatives enable kids to realize their potential, prepare teens for college, offer ways for families to have fun together, empower people to be healthier in spirit, mind and body; prepare people for employment, welcome and embrace newcomers and help foster a nationwide service ethic. And that's just the beginning

### Core Values of Character Development

Trustworthiness

Respect

Responsibility

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

### Youth Sports Philosophy:

Building Winners for Life! It is the program that develops kids' skills, fitness, and character – for today and for life.

— As a Coach —

### YMCA Sports – Coach Code of Conduct

Our objective for YMCA Youth Sports is to help young people not only become better players but also become better people. We recognize that not every child can win the contest, but every kid can be a winner in YMCA Youth Sports.

We want to help our young athletes learn to care about others, to be trustworthy and fair, to show respect, and to be responsible. Of course, sport doesn't automatically teach these values to our youth. Sports provide them with an opportunity to learn and develop these values when skillful leadership is demonstrated by adults.

1. **Everyone plays.** We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from YMCA Youth Sports. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays at least half of every game.
2. **Safety first.** Although some children may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. We ask you to take time to check that the equipment and facilities are safe and to teach the sport as we've prescribed, so that the skills taught are appropriate for children's developmental level. We also

ask you to develop your players' fitness levels gradually so they are conditioned for the sport. And we ask you to constantly supervise your young players so that you can stop any unsafe activities.

3. **Fair play.** Fair play is about more than playing by the rules. It's about you and your players showing respect for all who are involved in YMCA Youth Sports. It's about you being a role model of good sportsmanship and guiding your players to do the same. Remember, we're more interested in developing children's character through sport than in developing a few highly skilled players.
4. **Positive competition.** We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. Learning to compete is important for children, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. The "right perspective" means adults make decisions that put the best interests of the children above winning the contest. These are the lessons we want to teach through YMCA Youth Sports.
5. **Family involvement.** YMCA Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately along with their child participating in our sport 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.
6. **Sport for all.** YMCA Youth Sports is an inclusive sport program. That means that children who differ in various characteristics are to be included rather than excluded from participation. We offer sport programs for children who differ in physical abilities by matching them with children of similar abilities and modifying their sport. We offer programs to all children regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. We ask our adult leaders to support and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the children and their parents to do the same. We do not forfeit games; instead, we share players and proceed with planned game.
7. **Sport for fun.** Sport is naturally fun for most children. They love the challenge of mastering the skills of the game, playing with their friends, and competing with their peers. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sport, they over-organize and dominate the activity to the point of spoiling children's enjoyment of the sport. If we take the fun out of sport, we are in danger of our children taking themselves out of sport. Remember, that these sports are for the kids; make sure the kids are having fun.

## Coaches Training

Anyone interested in volunteering as a youth sports coach is required to participate in the **YMCA Coaches Training sessions prior to the start of each season.** The coach's trainings are not just another "meeting," but much more than that, offering leadership for volunteer coaches, learning the YMCA way of youth sports, skill development, and program development. Trainings are held prior to the start of each sports season. It is important that coaches are aware of YMCA Sports principles, making certain that positive competition in youth sports is a positive experience for kids, parents, coaches, referees, and spectators. Most importantly, parents and their children are depending on you.

## Sports Pledge

**"I pledge to play the game, the best I can, to be a team player, to respect my opponents, rules and officials, and to improve myself in mind, body, and spirit."**

## Coach's Responsibilities and Expectations:

1. Be welcoming! Contact players prior to your first practice to welcome them and confirm practice times/dates/location.
2. Be accessible and approachable to players and parents before and after practices and games. Arrive early to help build relationships.

3. Be informative and distribute all printed materials and communicate any changes in the schedule or special announcements, such as Picture Day and Trophy Day information.
4. Take attendance and call players who have missed two practices or games in a row.
5. Promote good sportsmanship and respect for others regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
6. Assure safe and fair play at all times.
7. Dress appropriately.
8. Plan practice sessions and game plans.
9. Encourage and be positive in correcting and instructing.
10. Know emergency procedures.
11. Listen to players.
12. Know the rules of the game and pass that knowledge on to other players.
13. Make it a rewarding and worthwhile experience.
14. Be drug, tobacco and alcohol free during all team events.
15. Understand that you are a representative of the YMCA during all events.
16. Lead by example among program parents to support the duties and responsibilities of the referees and league leadership.
17. Remember you are a role model spiritually, mentally and physically.
18. Be aware of the Youth Sports Philosophy and support it!
19. Have fun!

## — As a Parent —

### Parent Code of Conduct

1. I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child participating in YMCA Youth Sports.
2. I will remember that the game is for youth – not for adults.
3. I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, instructors, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.
4. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
5. I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
6. I will support the Sports Director, coaches, instructors and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
7. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all YMCA Youth Sports events.
8. I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
9. I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, instructors, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
10. I promise to help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectable fan or assisting with coaching if needed.
11. I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sports coach and that the coach fulfills his/her responsibilities.
12. I will strive to fulfill the mission of the YMCA and demonstrate and adhere to the YMCA Youth Sports philosophy.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are the KEY to YMCA Youth Sports! Without the help of volunteers, youth sports programs would not exist! You don't have to be a coach to volunteer in YMCA Youth Sports. Some of the things parents can do include:

1. Coaching
2. Officiating
3. Act as "Team Mom or Dad" to assist with team activities (i.e. coordinate snacks, make call, etc.)
4. Help maintain game and practice facilities
5. Help distribute information to teams
6. Help in the sports clinics

## **Volunteer Coaching**

Want to develop a closer, more meaningful relationship with your son/daughter? Become a volunteer coach. The YMCA promotes family, leadership, relationship, and community through coaching youth sports. We can always use good role models.

## **Parent's Responsibilities and Expectations:**

1. Read and use all printed material provided by the YMCA.
2. Make sure your player arrives on time to all practices and games.
3. Ensure the player is properly equipped with shoes, shorts/sweats and team t-shirts.
4. Stay at practices and games whenever possible and support your player and team.
5. Volunteer to help the coach whenever possible, perhaps assisting in practice and sitting on the bench with players.
6. Inform the coach if the player is unable to attend practice or game.
7. Encourage your child and team; but not insult or discourage the other team. Encourage good sportsmanship.
8. Encourage your child to treat others with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
9. Spend time at home practicing with your child on his/her skill development.
10. Acknowledge the other team's accomplishments.
11. Support and not criticize the coach.
12. Support and not criticize the referees.
13. Be positive at all times!
14. Enjoy the games and have fun!
15. Be drug, tobacco and alcohol free during all team events.
16. Be aware of the Youth Sports Philosophy and support it!

## **— As a Player —**

## **Player's Responsibilities and Expectations:**

1. Be ready to practice and play!
2. Perform up to your potential and have fun learning youth sports!
3. Arrive at practice and games on time.
4. Show respect for your coach, adult volunteers and other players at all times. Ask questions when appropriate.
5. Show respect to the other team and officials.
6. Have lots of fun!

## **Young Athlete's Bill of Rights**

1. The right to determine when to participate and in what sports and to what degree of intensity and involvement.
2. The right to play in every game no matter what their degree of physical ability or the relative importance of the game in terms of league competition.

3. The right to be taught the fundamentals of the sport by a teacher or coach and play with rules that have been adjusted for children.
4. The right to be coached by those who have been trained in or who have been made aware of the various stages of emotional and psychological development in children, and to be treated on a level equivalent to their emotional and physical maturity – not by standards of collegiate or professional sports.
5. The right to have a coach who places the child first, the team second, himself or herself third, and winning fourth; to feel free to laugh after a defeat and to have fun participating even while playing on a losing team; to be able to use play as an opportunity to test life; and not to be subjected to adult-imposed pressures to win.
6. The right to have a coach who is patient and supportive, as opposed to one who believes in a harsh, negative, “professional” approach; a coach who takes time to work with each athlete, regardless of ability or potential.
7. The right to be treated as a member of a democracy, not a dictatorship, including the freedom to voice opinions openly to the coach without fear or repercussion.
8. The right to play in a safe and supportive atmosphere.
9. The right to report to a coach or parent any physical pain or emotional concerns such as fear or rejection without fear of ridicule or loss of esteem.
10. The right to freedom from physical and emotional punishment by their parents or the coach. Punishment leads only to fear and inhibition. The purpose of sports should be to help a child grow, feel expansive, and realize his or her potential.

### **General Youth Sports Information:**

1. All siblings can be placed on the same team, provided they are in the same age grouping. Please indicate this request on the youth sports registration form.
2. Player and coach requests are accepted; however, no guarantees are made. Please indicate this request on the youth sports registration form.
3. All outdoor games are played in the rain. Games are canceled due to severe weather. A decision to games status is made one hour prior to the first game time scheduled. If a cancellation occurs, make-ups will be scheduled at the end of the season (if possible).
4. Schedules will be available to pick-up at Meet Your Team Day and at the [North Canton YMCA](#) prior to first game/practice.
5. Shirts will be handed out before the first game.
6. End of season awards will be given to coaches to present during the last game.
7. Pictures are taken for most youth sports programs and will be passed out to the coach to pass out to the players. Purchasing your pictures is an option, not an obligation. However, please have your child present for the team photo. All picture concerns are handled by the photographer.
8. All children in youth sports should wear comfortable athletic clothing.
9. Team t-shirts should be worn on picture days and at all games. Please have your child dress appropriately for the sport and the weather.
10. We ask parents to provide snacks for post-game treats which are usually coordinated by the team parents. The coach should assist in assigning the team snack, if help is needed.
11. For many of our youth sport programs, we rent/use “off-site” facilities. We ask that you would be respectful to the property. Please do not smoke on the premises. If a mess of any kind is made, please clean it up prior to leaving. Some locations do not have trash containers available, so please bring trash bags if you are in charge of team snacks.
12. All parents have the opportunity to evaluate programs. Please take the time to do this. Thanks!

13.A Program Membership allows a participant to take a class for a fee for a specific length of time. It does not allow the use of the facilities other than for the class. \*The difference between a Program Member's fee and a Member's fee may be applied to a YMCA membership any time before the last class of the session or game of the league in which you are enrolled. All Program Members must present their receipt to gain access to the facility for classes.

## Safe Nutrition

Hints for keeping happy, healthy, HOT kids hydrated!

As the kids explode out of doors and indoors, make sure they are prepared. Drink WATER! Water is a vital ingredient for keeping body temperature in check. Water lost as sweat needs to be replaced to avoid dehydration. Thirst doesn't kick in until approximately 2% of body weight is lost as sweat, so make sure that kids are drinking BEFORE they get thirsty! Dehydration, left untreated, can lead to heat cramps, heat exhaustion and very serious heat stroke. Closely watch kids for signs of dehydration - including fatigue; dry lips and tongue; low energy; grayish skin; and lack of tears. Since children's body temperature rises faster than adults, it is essential that kids get plenty of fluids to keep them cool - especially in higher temperatures

### What you can do to keep kids hydrated.

- Make sure that kids drink fluids at every meal and snack time throughout the day, and during every period of physical activity.
- During physical activity (and *especially* on hot days), make sure that kids drink frequently, even if they are not thirsty. Every 20 minutes, give younger kids 5 ounces of cold water (about the size of a small juice box—or 10 gulps), and give teens about 9 ounces.
- Offer cold water – it's absorbed faster! Avoid sugar-sweetened drinks – these are absorbed more slowly.

### Choose wisely to really beat the heat!

Cold Water!

Water flavored with fruit slices or frozen fruit

Juice ice cubes

Sodium-Free Seltzer

Diluted 100% Juice (4oz water and 4oz juice)

Juice Spritzers (juice and seltzer water)

Why not juice, soda or sports drinks?

- Because they often contain sugar, caffeine, phosphorus and artificial sweeteners.
- Even very small amounts of sugar slow down fluid absorption by the body. The acid in juice can cause stomach upset, especially when combined with heat and exertion.
- Caffeine increases the amount of water lost by the body, and speeds up dehydration.
- Phosphorus in carbonated soft drinks limits the body's ability to use calcium to build bone.
- Artificial sweeteners condition kids to expect "sweetness" in drinks and foods, and kids may reject healthful alternatives that don't provide the same sweet taste. Since their long-term safety is not fully understood, it is best to avoid them.
- Sports drinks are helpful only for highly intense activity that lasts longer than 1 hour, when the ability to keep going is required for competition. In normal play, stopping for a healthy snack and cold drink is a better way for the body to refuel.

## Keeping kids energized with snacks

Growing kids, even teens, need a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack to maintain their energy—this is especially true when outdoor games are the way of the day. A 15 minute rest in the shade for a healthy snack and cold drink is essential on hot days. When kids spend a full 8 hour day away from home, they need at least one good meal and two snacks. A snack or meal every two and a half hours is a good standard.

## Drink Sense Tips

### Do Select

Water

100% Juice:

Apple and Eve

Mott's 100% Juice

Libby's Juicy Juice

Hansen's Junior Juice

Minute Maid 100% Juice

Welch's 100% Juice

Ocean Spray 100% Juice

Northland 100% Juice

Sodium-Free Seltzer

Zazz Seltzer, all flavors

Polar Seltzer, all flavors

Schweppes Seltzer Water

### Steer Clear

Soda: regular or diet

Drinks with added sugar and/or artificial sweeteners:

Fruit Punch

Capri Sun

Kool Aid

Crystal Light

Minute Maid Coolers

Newman's Own

Sunny Delight

Welch's Juice Cocktail

Ocean Spray Juice Cocktail

Vitamin Water

Iced Tea

Lemonade

Sports Drinks: Gatorade, Powerade

## Snack Sense Tips

Create snacks that include choices from each of the following groups:

**Fruits and Vegetables:** frozen grapes, berries, or melon chunks; precut orange wedges; apples; pears; bananas; applesauce; pepper strips; carrot sticks or baby carrots; sliced cucumbers or squash; pea pods; green beans or jicama sticks. A quick ranch dressing or plain yogurt and honey dipping sauce make it fun!

**Proteins:** Peanut or other nut butters; hummus or chick peas; cheese; yogurt; hard boiled eggs; tuna fish (the new pouch preparation is great!); a handful of unsalted nuts (peanuts, cashews, walnuts or almonds); soybeans (edamame) with or without the pods (find them in the frozen foods aisle; simply defrost and eat!).

**Whole Grains:** whole wheat pita or flatbread; whole wheat or graham crackers; RyVita crisps; whole wheat toaster waffles; trail mix or granola; oat bran mini muffins; fig bars; or dry whole-grain cereal.

**A note about trans fats:** Many snack foods tend to be high in unhealthy trans fats, especially crackers and grain-based products. Purchase products that have no "partially hydrogenated oils" or "shortening" present in the ingredient listing. Products labeled "Zero Trans Fats" may have up to .5 g of trans fats per serving, so a quick label check helps to avoid these unhealthy fats.

Information Provided by the Prevention Research Center at Harvard School of Public Health

# Concussion Protocol

## — For Coaches and Parents —

One of the main jobs of a youth sports coach is keeping athletes safe. This sheet has information to help you protect athletes from concussion or other serious brain injury, learn how to spot a concussion, and know what to do if a concussion occurs.

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI— caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.

### How can we keep athletes safe?

Sports are a great way for children and teens to stay healthy and can help them do well in school. As a youth sports coach, your actions create the culture for safety and can help lower an athlete’s chance of getting a concussion or other serious injury. Aggressive and/or unsportsmanlike behavior among athletes can increase their chances of getting a concussion or other serious injury. Here are some ways you can help keep your athletes safe:

1. Talk with athletes about the importance of reporting a concussion.
2. Create a culture of safety at games and practices.
  - a. Enforce rules of sport for fair play, safety, and sportsmanship.
3. Keep up-to-date on concussion information.
4. Check out the equipment and sports facilities.
5. Keep emergency contact information handy.

### How can we spot a concussion?

Athletes who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below—or simply say they just “don’t feel right” after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body—may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

#### Signs Observed by Coaches or Parents:

1. Appears dazed or stunned.
2. Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent
3. Moves clumsily.
4. Answers questions slowly.
5. Loses consciousness (even briefly).
6. Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes.
7. Can’t recall events prior to or after a hit or fall.

NOTE: Concussion signs and symptoms often show up soon after the injury, but it can be hard to tell how serious the concussion is at first. Some symptoms may not be noticed or may not show up for hours or days.

## What should we do if an athlete has a possible concussion?

1. Remove the athlete from play
2. Keep an athlete with a possible concussion out of play on the same day of the injury and until cleared by a health care provider. Seek medical attention right away.
3. Inform the athlete's parent(s) about the possible concussion. Parent should notify the coaches if the athlete has had any prior concussions.
4. Ask for written instructions from the athlete's health care provider on return to play.

## How can we help the athlete return after a concussion?

Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:

1. Take rest breaks as needed
2. Spend fewer hours at school
3. Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments
4. Receive help with schoolwork
5. Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer

Note: As your child's symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually.

An athlete's return to school and sports should be a gradual process that is approved and carefully managed and monitored by a health care provider. When available, be sure to also work closely with your team's certified athletic trainer. Below are five gradual steps that you, along with a healthcare provider, should follow to help safely return an athlete to play. Remember, this is a gradual process. These steps should not be completed in one day, but instead over days, weeks, or months.

### Baseline

Athlete is back to their regular school activities, is no longer experiencing symptoms from the injury when doing normal activities, and has a green light from their health care provider to begin the return to play process. An athlete should only move to the next step if they do not have any new symptoms at the current step.

**Step 1 :** Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase an athlete's heart rate. This means about 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike, walking, or light jogging. No weightlifting at this point.

**Step 2:** Continue with activities to increase an athlete's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, and moderate-intensity weightlifting (less time and/or less weight than a typical routine).

**Step 3:** Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine, non-contact sport-specific drills (in 3 planes of movement).

**STEP 4:** An athlete may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the sport) in controlled practice.

**Step 5:** An athlete may return to competition.

### Remember

It is important for you and the athlete's parent(s) to watch for concussion symptoms after each day's return to play progression activity. If an athlete's concussion symptoms come back, or he or she gets new symptoms when becoming more active at any step, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing him- or herself too hard. The athlete should stop these activities, and the athlete's health care provider should be contacted. After the okay from the athlete's health care provider, the athlete can begin at the previous step.

## — For Athletes —

### What are the symptoms of having a concussion?

#### Symptoms Reported by Athlete:

1. Headache or “pressure” in head.
2. Nausea or vomiting.
3. Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision.
4. Bothered by light or noise.
5. Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy.
6. Confusion, or concentration or memory problems.
7. Just not “feeling right”, or “feeling down”.

### What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

1. Report it to a coach or parent if you think you or one of your friends may have a concussion. Playing with a concussion could be dangerous to your health!
2. Get checked out by a doctor. If you think you have a concussion, do not return the same day you received the injury. Only a health profession can tell you when it is okay to return from a concussion.
3. Give yourself time to heal. Most athletes with a concussion get better within a couple of weeks. For some, a concussion can make everyday activities, such as going to school, harder. You may need extra help getting back to your normal activities. Be sure to update your parents and doctor about how you are feeling.

We want our athletes to be safe while playing a sport. It’s important for us to keep athletes, coaches, and parents well educated on the game.

For more information on concussions, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website [www.cdc.gov/headsup](http://www.cdc.gov/headsup).