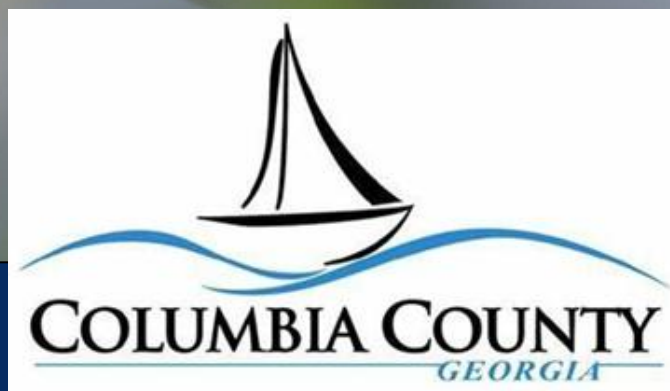




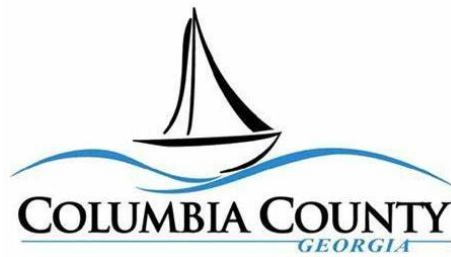
Youth Sports Handbook

COLUMBIA COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

5445 COLUMBIA RD

GROVETOWN, GA 30813

(706) 863-7523



Dear Youth Sport Parent, Coach, or Official,

Welcome to Columbia County Parks, Recreation & Events Department's (CCPRE) Youth Sports Programs. We at CCPRE strongly believe that participation in athletics plays a valuable role in the development of children. Aspects of teamwork, dedication, discipline, physical fitness, self-esteem, and fair-play all contribute to the overall growth and maturation of young people. The Recreation Department takes its role in this process seriously and strives to offer quality programs which will aid in this development.

We feel open communication with parents, coaches, and participants is crucial for a successful program. Our youth sports website, Quickscores.com/columbiacountyga, has been developed to keep you informed and contains information on schedules, contacts, standings, rain outs, maps, and other announcements. Our staff is always here to discuss any issues and answer any questions you may have. Collectively, our athletic programming staff members have over fifty years of full-time experience organizing and overseeing youth athletic programs. They also hold numerous training certifications through the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) as well as other organizations.

Our volunteer coaches are the lifeblood of our programs and we do everything we can to prepare them in the best way possible. Each of our coaches has gone through an application process that includes reference checks and criminal background checks. They are required to complete training and maintain certification through the National Youth Sports Coaches Alliance (NYSCA). This certification trains coaches on the philosophy of youth sports, injury prevention, practice organization, game rules, dealing with common issues, and much more.

All too often individual egos of the adults overshadow the children's opportunity to have a positive experience participating in youth sports. Our roles as professional administrators, volunteer coaches, and youth sports parents should be to work together to provide a positive, fun experience for children so that they may learn from sports everything it offers.

This handbook is presented to serve as a reference for you, as a parent or volunteer coach, so you may better understand the philosophies of the agency regarding youth athletics, and to aid you in doing your part in making this program a success.

Best Regards,

Dennis K. Hodges

Dennis K. Hodges, CPRP

Manager,

Parks and Recreation

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I. Introduction

Purpose of this Handbook

- Standardize the process of how CCPRE Youth Sports Programs are administered.
- Explain how leagues are organized and conducted.
- Define expectations of coaches, parents, players, and officials.
- Ensure a positive experience for all involved.

CCPRE Mission Statement

The Columbia County Parks, Recreation & Events Department seeks to enrich the quality of life of the citizens we serve by providing safe and accessible facilities and a diversified program of activities in an effective, efficient, equitable, and responsive manner.

Goals of CCPRE's Youth Sports Programs

- To offer every participant the opportunity to learn the fundamental skills associated with each sport.
- To emphasize the lifelong benefits of physical fitness and good sportsmanship, and to de-emphasize the importance of winning and losing.
- To ensure a safe, drug-free atmosphere for games and practices.
- To promote equal and fair treatment of every participant regardless of skill level, race, social-economic status, sex, creed, or physical ability.
- To ensure all staff, volunteer coaches, and officials are adequately trained.
- To expect and ensure good sportsmanship and fair play at all times.

CCPRE's Philosophy of Youth Sports

The Columbia County Parks, Recreation & Events Department Youth Sports Programs are designed to provide children with the opportunity to experience sports in a structured, nourishing environment. Participation in athletics plays a valuable role in the development of our children. Aspects of teamwork, commitment, physical fitness, self-esteem, and fair-play contribute to the growth and maturity of young people.

To help implement this philosophy the CCPRE has adopted the "National Standards for Youth Sports" from the National Alliance for Youth Sports, an organization dedicated to improving out-of-school youth sports by raising awareness through leadership, education, and advocacy. For more information visit NAYS.org.

National Standards for Youth Sports

1. **Proper Sports Environment** – Parents must consider and carefully choose the proper sports environment for their child, including the appropriate age and development for participation, the type of sport, the rules of the sport, the age range of the participants, and the proper level of physical and emotional stress.
2. **Programs based on the Well-Being of Children** – Parents must select youth sports programs that are developed and organized to enhance the emotional, physical, social, and educational well-being of children.
3. **Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol-Free Environment** – Parents must encourage a drug, tobacco, and alcohol-free environment for their children.
4. **Part of a Child's Life** – Parents must recognize that youth sports are only a small part of a child's life.
5. **Training** – Parents must insist that coaches are trained and certified.
6. **Parent's Active Role** – Parents must make a serious effort to take an active role in the youth sports experience of their child providing positive support as a spectator, coach, league administrator and/or caring parent.

7. **Positive Role Model** – Parents must be a positive role model, exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at games, practices, and home, while also giving positive reinforcement to their child and support of their child's coaches.
8. **Parental Commitment** – Parents must demonstrate their commitment to their child's youth sports experience by complying with the "Parent's Code of Ethics Pledge."
9. **Safe Playing Equipment** – Parents must insist on safe playing facilities, healthful playing situations, and proper first aid applications, should the need arise.
10. **Equal Play Opportunity** – Parents, coaches, and league administrators must provide equal sports play opportunity for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status, or ability.
11. **Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol-Free Adults** – Parents, coaches, fans, and league administrators must be drug, tobacco, and alcohol-free at youth sporting events.

II. Registration Procedures

a. Overview of Programs (Details on age division breakdowns will be determined season by season)

▪ **Spring/Summer Sports**

- Soccer – Registration most of the month of January; Season runs March thru April; ages 4-18 (age control date September 1 of current year and age control date of January 1 of current year for U6 division). Jersey provided.
- Baseball – Registration most of the month of January; Season runs March thru June; ages 4-14 (age control date April 30 of current year). Jersey and hat provided.
- Softball – Registration most of the month of January; Season runs April thru May; ages 7-14 (age control date September 1st of Current year). Jersey provided.
- Summer Basketball Registration in early May; Season runs June thru July; ages 9-15 (age control date September 1 of current year). Jersey provided.
- Tennis – Registration in early January; season runs February – May; ages 10-18 (age control date of September 1 of current year)
- Girls Volleyball – Registration most of the month of January; season runs April – May; Ages 9-15 (age control date of September 1 of current year)

▪ **Fall Sports**

- Soccer – Registration most of the month of July; Season runs August thru October; ages 4-18 (age control date September 1 of current year). Jersey provided.
- Baseball – Registration most of the month of July; Season runs August thru October; ages 5-15 (age control date April 30 of the next year). Jersey and hat provided.
- Softball – Registration most of the month of July; Season runs August thru October; 7-11 (age control date September 1st of the next year). Jersey and visor provided.
- Football – Registration most of the month of July: Season runs September thru November; ages 5-12 (age control date September 1 of current year); Certain weight restriction apply. Jersey, helmet, shoulder pads, pants/pads provided. Helmet and shoulder pads are to be turned back in at the end of the season. *5/6 year olds play Flag Football
- Tennis – Registration most of the month of July; season runs August – November; ages 10-18 (age control date of September 1 of current year)

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▪ **Winter Sports**

- Basketball – Registration in late October; Season runs December thru March; ages 6-15 (age control date December 31 of the next year). Jersey provided.

b. Registration Process

- Registration Fee – Registration fees for each program will be detailed in the registration information that is emailed to past participants and posted on columbiacountyga.gov.
- Non-Resident Fee - Registrants who live outside of Columbia County must pay a non-resident fee (per sport, per child) of \$65 for the first child, \$50 for the second child, and \$40 for each additional child. Residents of Fort Gordon are exempt from the non-resident fee.
- Multiple Child Discount – Those who register a second child will receive a \$10 discount for that child and a \$20 discount for each additional child.
- Financial Assistance – Financial Assistance is available to qualifying individuals. Income guidelines will be based on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart for Free and Reduced Lunches. There will also be a sliding scale associated with the Federal Eligibility Income Chart that will allow individuals who make more than the maximum monthly amount but still qualify as low-income, to receive a discount between 25% and 75%. All qualifying individuals will still be required to pay for their child's or children's uniforms.
- Forms of Payment – Cash, Debit/Credit, Check (made out to CCPRE)
- Online Registration – Registration is available online at ColumbiaCountyGA.gov for returning participants, you can register in person at the Operations office (Patriots Park, Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm).
- First Time Registrants – Those registering for the first time in a CCPRE program must bring their child's birth certificate. Once your child's date of birth is verified and in the system you will not need it for future registrations
- Late Registration / Waiting List – Those wishing to register after the deadline will be placed on the waiting list. If/when a roster spot opens up players from the waiting list will be contacted (in order) to come in and register. A late fee of \$10 will apply.
- Age Divisions – Age divisions will be determined on a season by season basis and will be detailed on the registration information. Each program has its own age control date which indicates the cut-off for determine what "league age" a participant is. Children are allowed to "play up" at the parent's request, as long as the child's current age is within one year of the league age minimum of the next division.
- Refunds – Requests for refunds must be made to a CCPRE league administrator in writing. A 100 percent refund will be given to anyone who requests a refund within two weeks of the final day of registration. A 50 percent refund will be given to those requesting a refund after the two week period has passed, but before the individual league's first scheduled game is held. After the individual league's first scheduled game is held, no refund will be given.
- Insurance – Insurance coverage is not provided with your registration fee.
- Medical Information – Please notify the Recreation office if your child has a pre-existing medical condition on the registration form (i.e. previous surgeries, allergies, medications, physical impairments, etc.) Also, notify the coach of the condition at the team meeting.

III. Participation

CCPRE youth sports programs are designed to be fair and inclusive to all, no matter the skill or ability of your child. Each program has minimum play requirements for each participant by which we expect our coaches to abide. Please see the sport-specific playing rules for more details.

IV. Player Selection

- a. ***How Players are assigned to Teams/Coaches*** – One of the many benefits of youth sports participating is meeting new people and making new friends. With the high number of registrants that participate in programs at CCPRE it is impossible for every child to be on the same team as all his/her friends or to play for his/her coach of choice. In the younger age divisions (4– 8 year olds) teams are randomly assigned by

our registration software, and coaches will be permitted to make one trade request during the coaches meeting. This process is utilized in the younger age divisions because those programs are designed for instruction and development. Scores and standings are not kept or emphasized, thus balancing rosters based upon talent is not as big of a concern. For our older age divisions (9 – 18 years old) the even distribution of talent becomes more of a factor in creating a positive experience for participants, so it is more important for coaches to select players based on ability rather than location. After the coaches leave the draft the rosters are final. Players cannot switch teams or be traded unless circumstances exist as outlined in section (d).

- b. **Evaluations** – Certain age divisions (9 and older) may conduct evaluations prior to the player draft. The purpose of evaluations is so coaches can get an idea of the skill level of all the players. Information on evaluations will be communicated at the time of registration.
- c. **Draft Procedures** (9 year olds and up)
 - o Head Coaches' children will automatically be placed on his/her team in the Third round of the draft.
 - o Assistant Coaches are not guaranteed for any team. If a Head Coach has someone he/she would like to have an Assistant Coach he/she must draft the potential Assistant Coach's child.
 - o Draft Style – There are two drafts styles that may be used. The style of draft will be determined for each league by the Athletic Supervisor.
 - Random Draw – All coaches will pull a random number out of a hat each round to determine draft order.
 - Snake – All coaches will draw a number to determine the draft order for the first round. In round 2 the order is reversed. The order then reverses each round until all players have been drafted.
 - ***Players who are not present at evaluations will be randomly assigned at the end of the draft in alphabetical order, following the draft order, picking up wherever the last draftable player was taken. These random assignments will continue until all players have been placed on teams. These players are considered frozen random assignments and cannot be traded for.***
- d. **Trade Requests**– The Athletic Supervisor may approve a player's switch from one team's roster to another within one week after the draft takes place if (1) The two head coaches of each team involved agree to the trade, (2) Both parent/guardians of the players involved agree to the trade, and (3) The request is submitted within seven days after the completion of the draft. The parent and/or coach making the request assumes all burden to obtain necessary consent from those involved. CCPRE staff will take on no responsibility in contacting parents or coaches in an effort to find a team willing to trade. The Athletic Supervisor will review the request and determine if it is in the best interest of the program. If any of the parents or coaches involved are against the trade the request will be denied. Seven days after the completion of the draft, rosters will be locked and no trade requests can be made. Alternatively, parents may request to have their child removed from a team and placed on the bottom of the waiting list, however, there is no guarantee that a roster spot will open up.
- e. **Notification of Coach/Team** – Coaches are instructed to contact all the players on his/her roster within 48 hours after the coaches' meeting/draft. If you have not heard from a coach by then please contact the CCPRE Office.

V. Practices

- a. **How Soon They Start** – Practices may start as soon as the Friday following the coaches' meeting/draft.
- b. **What Time** – Practices are typically scheduled for 6:00pm, 7:00pm, or 8:00pm, and usually last approximately one hour, depending on the sport and the age. Coaches select practice times based on availability.

- c. **How Often** – Typically a team will practice two to three times per week before games begin. Once games begin teams typically scheduled one or two practices per week. Frequency of practices is left up to the discretion of each coach with a maximum of 4 events per week (games and practices combined).
- d. **Location** – Most practices will be held at the same CCPRE facilities where games are played. In some cases a coach will secure a practice field independent of CCPRE on which to practice. In these cases, they assume all liability for any incident or injury at non county-facilities.
- e. **How Practices are Scheduled** – During the coaches’ meeting/draft, coaches request practice dates, times, and locations. CCPRE staff will then generate a weekly practice schedule which assigns each team one practice on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evening, and one practice on Friday or Saturday. Once all the scheduled practice slots are plugged in coaches may wish to call and sign up for additional practices slots based upon availability.
- f. **Where the Practice Schedule is posted** – The coach is ultimately responsible for communicating the practice schedule with his/her team. The practice schedule will be posted on the league website, quickscores.com/columbiacountyga. Look under “Downloadable Files.”
- g. It is the parent’s responsibility to make sure their child attends all practices and games. Any child who misses three consecutive practices or games (without excuse or coach notification) can be asked to sit out for one game **with the approval of the league coordinator**. Any child who continuously misses practices or games **may receive harsher punishment if deemed necessary by the League Coordinator**. It is the coach’s responsibility to notify the Recreation Department of any child’s missed games or practices prior to the expected enforcement of punishment.

VI. Games

- a. **How Soon They Start** – Games usually begin two to three weeks after the coaches’ meeting/draft is held.
- b. **Days of Play** – Due to the large number of participants in CCPRE’s programs games may be scheduled on any day of the week except Sundays. Projected days of play for each age division are made based upon registration numbers of the previous year and given out at registration. Please remember that these are only projections and are subject to change.
 - *Wednesday Games* – We at CCPRE recognize the potential conflicts involved with scheduling games on Wednesday nights. We make every effort to minimize scheduling on Wednesdays; however, with large number of programs and activities sharing use of facilities this cannot be avoided. Wednesday nights will be allocated as game nights for certain age divisions each season.
 - *Saturday Games* – During the spring season Saturday mornings will be used as a game day for tee ball, coach pitch, and machine pitch leagues. Typically these leagues will play one game during the week and one game on Saturday morning. Saturdays may be used for other age divisions and programs on occasion, especially for make-up games.
- c. **How Often** – Typically schedules will be generated giving teams 2 games per week. In some cases a team will have a bye and only play one game in a given week. A team may also play 3 times per week if necessary in certain situations.
- d. **How Many** – Typically 10 to 12 games will be scheduled in a season. Older age divisions (9 yr and up) may play a post-season tournament. Spring Soccer and Fall Baseball do not have post-season tournaments.
- e. **Location** – CCPRE staff projects locations for each program before registration begins. These projections are based on registration numbers from the previous year and are meant to give parents an idea as to where games will held based upon the age division. Although every effort will be made to stick to the projections, several varying factors can change days/locations of each age division from year to year. So the projections are subject to change.

- f. **Where/When are the schedules posted** – Game schedules are usually completed two weeks prior to the first games. All schedules will be posted on the league website quickscores.com/columbiacountyga
- g. **Rain-outs** – The decision whether or not to play games due to weather will be made no sooner than 3:00pm. As soon as a decision is made an email will be sent out to the coaches and the Quickscores.com/columbiacountyga league website will be updated with the announcement. The coaches will then contact each parent to inform them of the cancellation. We ask that you please do not call CCPRE to enquire about field status. Every effort will be made to reschedule games that are rained out, however in some cases the decision may be made not to make up games.
- h. **Inclement Weather and other Circumstances**-Regular season games played short of time due to weather-related conditions or conditions affecting the field will be considered completed if at least half of the time allotted for the game has been played.
- i. **Staff** – CCPRE Staff will be present during all games, and will be available to answer any questions or assist park patrons in any way.

VII. League Website – Quickscores.com/columbiacountyga

The following information can be found at the league website, Quickscores.com/columbiacountyga:

- a. Game Schedules – listed by division, team, or location
- b. Practice Schedules
- c. CCPRE Staff contact information
- d. Coaches' contact information
- e. Game Results
- f. League Standings
- g. Game Rules
- h. Field Addresses and Maps
- i. League News/Announcements
- j. Field Status (Inclement weather)
- k. Mobile-friendly site
- l. Picture Schedules

VIII. Awards and Trophies

- a. All participants in league ages 4-8 will receive medallions at season's end. Since scores and standings are not kept in these age divisions, no champion, runner-up trophies, or t-shirts will be given.
- b. In league ages 9 years old and up, t-shirts will be given out to the regular season champions. Post-season tournament champions and runner-up trophies will be given out to individual players.

IX. Information and Disclosure

- a. In an effort to preserve the sensitive information supplied during the registration process, information disclosure is only provided to the account holder that directly registered the player for the program.
- b. Inquiries regarding specific information pertinent to the child will only be shared to the account holder to disclose to whomever they wish at that point.
- c. Game schedules are public knowledge and can be found on quickscores.com.
- d. All submitted birth certificates are encrypted and only viewable by Parks, Recreation, and Events staff responsible for the administration of the program.

X. All-Stars

- a. All-star teams may be selected in age divisions 9 years and older.
- b. **Coach Selection**

The all-star head coach will be nominated and voted upon by the other coaches within the league. Any coach nominated must have a current NYSCA certification and a clean disciplinary report for the season. CCPRE staff must approve the selection. CCPRE may choose to select the all-star coach without a coach's vote if we feel it is in the best interest of the program. If a vote does occur, CCPRE has two votes during the election process and CCPRE will break all ties in all-star coach voting process.

c. Team Selection

Soccer and Softball

- Each head coach may nominate up to 5 players from his/her team for the all-star team.
- A try-out may be organized if the Athletic Supervisor feels it is beneficial.
- League coaches will vote on every roster spot except for two (three for softball). The final two spot will be selected by the head coach of the all-star team.

Dixie Baseball

- CCPRE staff will develop a selection committee of at least 3 individuals without ties to the league, who have extensive knowledge and background in the sport.
- Each head coach may nominate up to 5 players from his/her team for the all-star team. They should include any additional information and/or statistics on their players that will benefit the selection committee in selecting the roster. Coaches may nominate players from other teams as well.
- Each head coach will cast a ballot of the 12 players they feel should be on the team. The top 5 players receiving votes will be placed on the team.
- All players remaining that received at least 2 coaches' votes will then be invited to attend a try-out. The Committee will then select 4 players to be placed on the team based on results of the try out.
- The remaining 3 spots for the team will be selected by the All-Star head coach.

d. Eligibility – Players may be deemed ineligible for all-stars for any of the following:

- They are not a resident of Columbia County
- They did not participate in the minimum game requirement
- They did not have a clean disciplinary report during the season or exhibited poor attitude or sportsmanship.

e. Financial Support for all-star teams

- CCPRE will provide all-star teams with uniforms and necessary equipment.
- State Tournaments –Columbia County Parks, Recreation & Events will provide hotels for all-star coaches. All other expenses are the responsibility of the team parents.
- World Series – CCPRE will cover the cost of a charter bus or vans for the team's transportation. Dixie provides rooms and meals for all coaches and players. Parents and supporters are responsible for their own expenses.

XI. Emergency Planning / Risk Management

A. SPORTS MEDICINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Coach Information

Whenever working with youth athletes, all head and assistant coaches are responsible for the following:

- knowing the location of the nearest emergency telephone
- having a first aid kit available

- knowing and implementing the proper emergencies procedures as detailed below

The emergency plan of action for Columbia County Recreation Department athletics uses the three American Red Cross first aid steps listed below:

CHECK: First aid assessment to determine the necessity for assistance

CALL: If assistance is needed, determine if the injury is life threatening:

- For a non-life threatening injury - send a responsible person to call or go get the on-call certified athletic trainer, Jessica Kirby or James Hildebrand. (706)830-5171
- For a life-threatening situation and the certified athletic trainer is not available - send a responsible person to call 911.

CARE: Remain with the injured athlete and provide appropriate first aid until EMS arrives to take over.

Most Injuries Fall into One of Three Categories

1) Athlete should be transported to a hospital or emergency care facility – Call 911

(If military, direct EMS to Eisenhower; otherwise, send EMS to Hospital)

- Direct blow to the abdomen, which results in vomiting, severe pain, or signs of shock (rapid, weak pulse, drowsiness, shallow but rapid respirations, cool, clammy, and pale skin)
- A head injury with any loss of consciousness, vomiting, severe headache, slurred speech, tingling or numbness in both extremities, or is unable to communicate
- Any severe bleeding that cannot be controlled in a few minutes with direct compression, elevation, and application of ice
- An injury to an extremity that results in severe loss of function, circulation, or sensation
- Any obvious fracture or deformity of a major limb
- A student-athlete showing signs of distress or shock

2) Athlete should not continue and needs further care before returning

- An athlete has experienced a head injury
- Athlete is bleeding. May not continue until bleeding is fully stopped and others will not be at risk of exposure.
- Athlete is favoring injured part in any way (ex. limping) or has pain with activity.
- The injury does not seem serious, but the student-athlete does not want to or coach feels she should not continue.

3) Athlete can continue participating

- Injury is to an extremity and student-athlete is fully functional (i.e. no limping, can run, sprint, cut, hop and do a full squat all without pain).
- Athlete is not bleeding, and the wound dressed so that others are not at risk of exposure.

Athlete is in no other distress and wants to continue.

Keep watching the athlete for signs of favoring the injured area or other indications that the injury is worse than first expected. When in doubt, always err on the side of safety. If there is any question, call the athletic trainer. The head athletic trainer should be notified of any injury as soon as possible.

B. HEAD INJURIES/CONCUSSIONS

Your child has suffered a head injury during athletic participation. She/he will need to rest and avoid any strenuous activity. Please **do not** give your child any medications unless directed to do so by a physician. We need to know all the symptoms your child is experiencing to manage them properly.

The below circled symptoms are those that your child is/was experiencing. **If these symptoms persist, worsen, or are compounded by other symptoms, please seek immediate medical attention*.**

Symptom Scale

None	Mild	Moderate	Severe			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

headache	pressure in head	neck pain
nausea or vomiting	dizziness	blurred vision
balance problems	sensitivity to light	sensitivity to noise
feeling slowed down	feeling like in a fog	don't feel right
difficulty concentrating	difficulty remembering	fatigue or low energy
confusion	drowsiness	trouble falling asleep
more emotional	irritability	sadness
	nervous or anxious	

Signs to watch for:

Problems could arise over the first 24-48 hours.

You should not be left alone and must go to a hospital at once if you:

- Have a headache that gets worse
- Are very drowsy or can't be awakened (woken up)
- Can't recognize people or places
- Have repeated vomiting
- Behave unusually or seem confused; are very irritable
- Have seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably)
- Have weak or numb arms or legs
- Are unsteady on your feet; have slurred speech

Remember, it is better to be safe.

Return to play

Athletes should not be returned to play the same day of injury.

When returning athletes to play, they should follow a stepwise symptom-limited program, with stages of progression. For example:

1. Rest until asymptomatic (physical and mental rest)
2. Light aerobic exercise (e.g. stationary cycle)
3. Sport-specific exercise
4. Non-contact training drills (start light resistance training)
5. Full contact training after medical clearance
6. Return to competition (game play)

There should be approximately 24 hours (or longer) for each stage and the athlete should return to step 1 if symptoms

C. LIGHTNING PROTOCOL

Summer is the peak season for one of the nation's deadliest weather phenomena— lightning. But don't be fooled, lightning strikes year round. In the United States, an average of 54 people are reported killed each year by lightning. Most of these tragedies can be avoided if proper precautions are taken. – National Weather Service

LIGHTNING CAN STRIKE UP TO 25 MILES AWAY FROM A LIGHTNING CLOUD!!

In an effort to continue to create the safest environment for our youth sports participants, volunteers, parents, and spectators, the Columbia County Parks, Recreation & Events Department has installed the Thor Guard Lightning Prediction and Warning Systems at Patriots Park, Blanchard Woods Park, Blanchard Park, and Riverside Park.

The systems constantly monitor the local environment and predicts whether or not there is enough energy change to create a lightning strike at any given park. When the system predicts the probability of lightning is imminent, one 15-second blast of the horn will occur signaling suspension of all activities. A strobe light will begin flashing and continue flashing until safe conditions return. You may resume activities only after three 5-second blasts of the horn are sounded and the strobe light stops flashing.

Safe Shelter

Athletes, Coaches, and spectators must be evacuated to a lightning safe shelter. A lightning safe shelter has four walls, a floor and ceiling, and plumbing and/or wiring. Fully enclosed metal-topped vehicles can serve as safe shelter.

Examples of **unsafe** shelters are: sheds, dugouts, port-a-potties, golf carts, and convertibles.

XII. Child Abuse

If maltreatment of a child is reasonably suspected, a report should be made with Child Protective Services so that a qualified and experienced person can investigate the situation. If immediate assistance is required call the Columbia County Sheriff's dispatch at (706) 541-1042, or if it is an emergency call 911. Before filing a report please inform CCPRE of the situation.

There are four types of abuse to be aware of:

Emotional – This is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. Examples include constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, rejection, and providing no love, guidance, or support. Emotional abuse is sometimes referred to as verbal abuse or mental abuse.

Sexual – This is the exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult. It may range from exhibitionism and fondling to intercourse or use of a child in the production of pornographic materials.

Physical – This is non-accidental physical injury which is inflicted by another person and may include severe beatings, burns, human bites, strangulation, or immersion in scalding water, with bruises, welts, broken bones, scars, or serious internal injuries resulting.

Neglect – This the withholding of, or failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life – food, clothing, shelter, medical care, attention to hygiene, or supervision needed for optimal physical growth and development.

Tips to Prevent False Accusations

- Avoid being alone with a child
- Stay within sight of others
- Respect Privacy
- Avoid sexual jokes, comments, or gestures
- Set and respect boundaries

XIII. Coaches

a. Qualities and Skills CCPRE looks for in a Volunteer Youth Sports Coach

- Integrity – a good coach should respect and understand the need for rules. He/she should never attempt to circumvent the rules in any way.
- Enthusiasm – adding emotion to effort. A good coach must show enthusiasm in order to encourage and excite his/her players.
- Patience – A good coach should not push children beyond their limits in terms of practice. Create an environment of learning a fun, not one of stress and negativity.
- Sportsmanship – Set the example. All the kids on your team and their parents are watching how you react to a bad call or treat the other team's coaches, players, and fans. Show them that you win and lose with class and respect.
- Perspective – Understand that there are far more important things in life than losing a game in youth sports. Everyone should want to do well and everyone should want to win, but losing a game is not the end of the world. A youth sports coach's success is measured by the respect he/she gains from players, parents, and officials – not wins and losses.
- Positive Attitude – A coach should encourage his/her players. Avoid negative remarks towards players and officials. Creating a positive environment during games and practices will be more enjoyable for all involved.
- Preparation – Have an organized plan for practices. Be familiar with the rules of the game and policies of the league.
- Communication – Be accessible to parents. Keep them in the loop with plans and schedules. Setting up an email distribution list with all the parents on your roster is a great way to keep good lines of communication.
- Concern for Safety – A coach should always consider the safety and welfare of his/her players above anything else. If there is a safety concern you need assistance with contact your league coordinator immediately.

b. Coaches Selection Process

- Coach selection procedures may vary based upon the specific league program. Some leagues may be fortunate enough to have an excess of volunteers thus requiring a decision-making process from the league coordinator on who gets the team. Factors that may lead to one being selected over another may include:
 - a. Coached in the league in most recent season
 - b. Has a child in the specific league
 - c. Prior positive experience with the league coordinator
 - d. Documented experience in the specific sport
 - e. No prior behavioral history
- Factors that may lead to prospective coaches not being selected:
 - a. Prior disciplinary history with the department
 - b. Lack of respect for staff, players, and officials
 - c. Prior history of failure to meet the expectations and code of ethics.
 - d. Any criminal history infractions as outlined in section C.
- **AS THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR THEIR LEAGUE, THE ASSIGNED COORDINATOR FOR A LEAGUE PROGRAM HAS THE FINAL SAY IN DECIDING ALL VOLUNTEER COACHES FOR THEIR PROGRAM.**

c. Background Screening

To ensure that the participants involved in CCPRE's programs receive the highest quality experience, all potential volunteer youth sports coaches and officials must go through CCPRE's background screening

process. Background screening assists CCPRE staff in selecting the most qualified individuals who understand the organization's goals, as well as excluding individuals that have certain criminal histories or histories that suggest they may be a potential risk to young athletes.

- Application Form – must be completed by all potential coaches for all volunteer positions. Every potential volunteer must complete the form regardless of how long they have been associated with CCPRE.
- Review of Information
- Interview
- Criminal History Check – a Criminal History Consent Form must be completed by each potential volunteer coach. Forms are then submitted to Protect Youth Sports to perform a national background check. The Recreation Manager and Athletic Supervisor will then determine what action to take based upon the following guidelines.
 - If a coach or official has been convicted of or has a charge pending against him/her in which it is alleged that he/she has committed any of the following crimes their application to coach will be denied and/or they will be immediately dismissed.
 - Simple Battery, where the victim is a minor
 - Aggravated Battery, where the victim is a minor
 - Cruelty to Children
 - Contributing to the delinquency of a minor within the last 5 years
 - Any sexual offense
 - Violation of any controlled substance act
 - Misdemeanor Violence with in the last 7 years
 - Any felony or attempt to commit any felony within last 10 years
 - Any other crime that bears upon fitness to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children

d. Coaching Multiple Teams

We do not allow coaches to be the head coach for more than one team per season. Coaches may head coach one team and serve as an assistant coach on another team. Keep in mind due to the amount of teams, we cannot honor schedule requests to accommodate someone coaching two teams.

e. Coaches Certification

Columbia County Parks, Recreation & Events Department requires that all volunteers who want to coach youth sports must complete and maintain certification through the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA). This is required in an effort to properly educate and prepare coaches for the responsibilities associated with working with children in a youth sports environment. This certification trains coaches on the philosophy of youth sports, injury prevention, practice organization, game rules, dealing with common issues, and much more. The cost of the certification is \$20 per coach, per year, and is paid for by CCPRE. Once a coach has been selected and approved to coach he/she will be emailed instructions on how to go online and go through the training. For more information visit NAYS.org

f. Code of Conduct and Ethics

As part of the certification process coaches will pledge to abide by the following Code of Conduct and Ethics:

I WILL PLACE THE EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING OF MY PLAYERS AHEAD OF A PERSONAL DESIRE TO WIN.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Using appropriate language in appropriate tones when interacting with league officials, game officials, parents, and spectators.
- Including all players in team activities without regard to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, body type, national origin, ancestry, disability, ability, or any other legally protected classification.
- Treating all players, league officials, game officials, parents, and spectators with dignity and respect.
- Playing all players according to the equal participation rules established by the league and the spirit of those rules.
- Encouraging youth to participate in other sports and activities to promote all aspects of their development.
- Allowing reasonable absences from practice.

I WILL TREAT EACH PLAYER AS AN INDIVIDUAL, REMEMBERING THE LARGE RANGE OF EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE SAME AGE GROUP.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Recognizing the differences of each child and treating each player as an individual while demonstrating concern for their individual needs and well-being.
- Encouraging all players, regardless of skill level, to be included as a member of the team and to remain involved in sports.
- Recognizing that youth may vary greatly in physical, social, and emotional maturation and considering these factors when setting up competitions and when interacting with youth.
- Recognizing that some physical tasks, drills, and demands are not appropriate for all youth.

I WILL DO MY BEST TO PROVIDE A SAFE PLAYING SITUATION FOR MY PLAYERS.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Maintaining a high level of awareness of potentially unsafe conditions.
- Protecting players from sexual molestation, assault, and physical or emotional abuse.
- Correcting or avoiding unsafe practice or playing conditions.
- Using appropriate safety equipment necessary to protect all players.
- Seeing that the players are provided with adequate adult supervision while under the coach's care.

I WILL PROMISE TO REVIEW AND PRACTICE THE BASIC FIRST AID PRINCIPLES NEEDED TO TREAT INJURIES OF MY PLAYERS.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Keeping basic first aid supplies available in all practice and game situations.
- Recognizing and administering proper first aid to an injured player.
- Demonstrating concern for an injured player, notifying parents and league coordinators, and cooperating with medical authorities.
- Protecting the players' well-being by removing them from activity when injured and not returning them to activity if they are compromised by injury.

I WILL DO MY BEST TO ORGANIZE PRACTICES THAT ARE FUN AND CHALLENGING FOR ALL MY PLAYERS.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Establishing practice plans that are interesting, varied, productive, and aimed at improving all players' skills and individual abilities.
- Devoting appropriate time to the individual improvement of each player.
- Conducting practices of reasonable length and intensity appropriate for the age and conditioning of the players.

I WILL LEAD BY EXAMPLE IN DEMONSTRATING FAIR PLAY AND SPORTSMANSHIP TO ALL MY PLAYERS.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Adopting the position, teaching, and demonstrating that it is our basic moral code to treat others as we would like to be treated.
- Abiding by and supporting the rules of the game as well as the spirit of the rules.
- Providing an environment conducive to fair and equitable competition.
- Using the influential position of youth coach as an opportunity to promote, teach and expect sportsmanship and fair play.

I WILL PROVIDE A SPORTS ENVIRONMENT FOR MY TEAM THAT IS FREE OF DRUGS, TOBACCO, AND ALCOHOL, AND I WILL REFRAIN FROM THEIR USE AT ALL COLUMBIA COUNTY RECREATION YOUTH SPORTS EVENTS.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Being alcohol and drug free at all team activities or in the presence of your players.
- Refraining from the use of any type of tobacco products at all team activities or in the presence of your players.
- Encouraging parents to refrain from the public use of tobacco products or alcohol at team activities.

I WILL BE KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE RULES OF EACH SPORT THAT I COACH, AND I WILL TEACH THESE RULES TO MY PLAYERS.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Becoming knowledgeable, understanding, and supportive of all applicable game rules, league rules, regulations, and policies.
- Teaching and requiring compliance of these rules among players.

I WILL USE THOSE COACHING TECHNIQUES APPROPRIATE FOR EACH OF THE SKILLS THAT I TEACH.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Teaching techniques that reduce the risk of injury to both the coach's own players and their opponents.
- Discouraging illegal contact or intentionally dangerous play and administering swift and equitable discipline to players involved in such activity.

I WILL REMEMBER THAT I AM A YOUTH SPORTS COACH, AND THAT THE GAME IS FOR CHILDREN AND NOT FOR ADULTS.

- **Expected Behavior**

- Maintaining a positive, helpful, and supportive attitude.
- Exercising your authority/influence to control the behavior of the fans and spectators.
- Exhibiting gracious acceptance of defeat or victory.
- Accepting and adhering to all league rules and policies related to the participation of adults and youth.
- Fulfilling the expected role of a youth coach to adopt a “children first” philosophy.
- Allowing and encouraging the players to listen, learn, and play hard within the rules.
- Placing the emphasis on fun and participation.

g. Violations of the Code of Conduct/Ethics

● Possible Actions Include:

- Warning to the coach accompanied by apology from the coach
- Probation
- One Game Suspension
- Multiple Game Suspension
- Season Suspension
- Permanent Revocation of Certification, thus inability to continue as CCPRE coach

● Factors that might suggest a more lenient sanction include:

- First offense
- Remorse
- Apparent desire to reform
- Other good coaching attributes
- History of dedication to youth sports

● Factors that might suggest a harsher sanction include:

- Child endangerment
- Violation of law
- Prior violations
- Lack of remorse
- Number of Ethics Canons violated
- Number of Expected Behaviors violated
- Breach of duties as a role model
- Extraordinarily poor judgment around children
- Lying or not being forthcoming

h. Volunteer Coaches Golf Tournament

In October we will hold a golf tournament in honor and appreciation of our coaches. Participation is free for our coaches and includes lunch and other prizes.

II. Parents/Spectators

Code of Ethics

In order for a program to be truly successful it takes the cooperation of players, coaches, officials, league administrator, spectators, and especially parents. Parents and spectators are expected to read, understand, and abide by the following Code of Ethics:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.

- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- 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 youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth – not adults.
- I will do my very best to make sure youth sports remain fun for my child.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, ability, or religion.
- I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sports coach and that the coach upholds the Coaches' Code of Ethics.

Corrective Action

Parents who do not follow the above Code of Ethics will be subject to corrective action. It is the philosophy of Columbia County Recreation that parents should not spoil the experience of participation in youth sports for the children. The following guidelines have been established for addressing problems with parents/spectators. *Note: These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations could warrant harsher sanctions.*

Step 1 – Verbal Warning – League administrator and/or coach will discuss the undesirable conduct with parents and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated. Coach will document this conversation and submit to CCPRE.

Step 2 – Written Warning – League administrator, coach, or official will notify CCPRE of continued breach of Code of Ethics and CCPRE will arrange a meeting with the parents. A formal letter of reprimand will be given to the parent stating that the next offense could lead to a suspension or ban.

Step 3 – Game Suspension – A letter of suspension will be drafted by CCPRE staff explaining that the parent will be banned from attending the teams next scheduled contest. The next offense could result in a season-long suspension.

Step 4 – Season Long Suspension – The parent will be banned from attending any future league contests. The parent will remain on suspension until a formal request for re-instatement is made. CCPRE will review the re-instatement request and determine if the suspension will be lifted

III. Participants

Code of Conduct

In order for a program to be truly successful it takes the cooperation of players, coaches, officials, league administrator, spectators, and especially parents. Participants are expected to read, understand, and abide by the following Code of Ethics:

- I will demonstrate and encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials, and parents at every game and practice.
- I will attend every practice and game that I can, and will notify my coach if I cannot attend.
- I will expect to receive a fair and just amount of playing time.
- I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
- I will treat my coaches, other players, officials, and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or abilities, and will expect to be treated accordingly.
- I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert parents or coaches if it stops being fun.
- I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it is important to me.
- I will remember that sports are an opportunity to have fun.

Corrective Action

Players who fail to adhere to the Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action. Therefore, Columbia County Recreation Department has instituted a Corrective Action Policy to establish appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior. *Note: These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations could warrant harsher sanctions.*

Step 1 – Verbal Warning – Coach will discuss inappropriate conduct with the player and parents and emphasize that this behavior will not be tolerated. Coach will document this discussion and provide a copy to CCPRE.

Step 2 – Period Suspension – Coach will bench the offending player for a period of time during a game when he/she should be playing. Coach will inform CCPRE of the problem and why the child is sitting out playing time.

Step 3 – Game Suspension – Coach will bench the offending player for one entire game when he/she should be playing. Coach will inform CCPRE of the 3rd offense, at which time the player and the parent must attend a meeting the coach and CCPRE representative before the player is allowed to resume playing. The player will be warned that the next offense could result in his/her expulsion from the league.

Step 4 – League Expulsion – The participant on the 4th offense may be expelled from the league and no refund will be given. The parent will need to make a formal request to be re-instated into this league. The player and parent will next meet with CCPRE prior to the start of the next youth sports season to determine if the child is capable of playing within the guidelines of the program.

IV. Administrators and Officials

Columbia County Recreation Department is dedicated to raising community standards in youth sports. In order to do so, we must hold ourselves accountable by staying abreast on current topics and trends in the recreation industry. Training administrators and officials is essential in maintaining a level of professionalism and credibility in youth sports. Administrators and Officials are expected to understand and pledge to abide by the following Code of Ethics:

Administrators Code of Ethics

I hereby pledge to provide support to all youth sports programs in my community, to administer youth sports programs with professionalism and in the best interest of the children involved by following the Youth Sports Administrators' Code of Ethic:

- I will run youth sports programs for the children involved, not the adults.
- I will ensure that I am knowledgeable in the area of youth sports administration.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for all participants.
- I will provide support for coaches, officials, and parents to provide a positive, enjoyable experience for all.
- I will require all coaches to be trained in the responsibilities of being a volunteer within the organization and that they uphold the NYSCA Codes of Ethics.
- I will implement and enforce the National Standards for Youth Sports.
- I promise to stay informed about current issues involving youth sports.

Officials Code of Ethics

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support of all players, coaches, fellow officials, and league administrator at all times.
- I will ensure that I am knowledgeable of the rules of each sport I officiate, and apply those rules fairly to all participants, teams, and coaches.
- I will not allow personal friendships and associations to influence my decisions during a contest.

- I will refrain from the use of tobacco and alcohol products when in the youth sports environment.
- I will remember that youth sports are an opportunity for children to learn and have fun.
- I will place the safety of the participants above all else.

- **Corrective Action**

- Officials who do not follow the above Code of Ethics will be subject to corrective action. It is the philosophy of Columbia County Parks, Recreation & Events that Officials should not spoil the experience of participation in youth sports for the children. The following guidelines have been established for addressing problems with Officials. *Note: These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations could warrant harsher sanctions.*
- **Step 1 – Verbal Warning** – League administrator and/or coach will discuss the undesirable conduct with parents and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated. Coach will document this conversation and submit to CCPRE.
- **Step 2 – Written Warning** – League administrator, coach, or official will notify CCPRE of continued breach of Code of Ethics and CCPRE will arrange a meeting with the parents. A formal letter of reprimand will be given to the parent stating that the next offense could lead to a suspension or ban.
- **Step 3 – Game Suspension** – A letter of suspension will be drafted by CCPRE staff explaining that the parent will be banned from attending the teams next scheduled contest. The next offense could result in a season-long suspension.
- **Step 4 – Season Long Suspension** – The parent will be banned from attending any future league contests. The parent will remain on suspension until a formal request for re-instatement is made. CCPRE will review the re-instatement request and determine if the suspension will be lifted

Background Check Screening

- To ensure that the participants involved in CCPRE's programs receive the highest quality experience, all officials must go through CCPRE's background screening process. Background screening assists CCPRE staff in selecting the most qualified individuals who understand the organization's goals, as well as excluding individuals that have certain criminal histories or histories that suggest they may be a potential risk to young athletes.
 - Criminal History Check – a Criminal History Consent Form must be completed by each potential volunteer coach. Forms are then submitted to Protect Youth Sports to perform a national background check. The Recreation Manager and Athletic Supervisor will then determine what action to take based upon the following guidelines.
 - If a coach or official has been convicted of or has a charge pending against him/her in which it is alleged that he/she has committed any of the following crimes their application to coach will be denied and/or they will be immediately dismissed.
 - Simple Battery, where the victim is a minor
 - Aggravated Battery, where the victim is a minor
 - Cruelty to Children
 - Contributing to the delinquency of a minor within the last 5 years
 - Any sexual offense
 - Violation of any controlled substance act
 - Misdemeanor Violence with in the last 7 years
 - Any felony or attempt to commit any felony within last 10 years
 - Any other crime that bears upon fitness to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children

