

**Watertown
Parks & Recreation
Department**

**Handbook
For
Parents of
Athletes
2024-2025**

Watertown Parks & Recreation Department

Handbook for Parents of Athletes

Being a parent is often challenging. This effort and responsibility is frequently complicated by being a parent of an athlete. This handbook, with its guidelines and suggestions, will give you some insights into this responsibility.

There are many relationships that are involved in being the parent of an athlete.

The Player-Coach Relationship

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics.

Unfortunately, a parent can have a pronounced effect on this very important relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a decided effect upon your child.

If you express a negative opinion in front of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day remembering your comments. Your child will be expected to interact with the coach in a cooperative manner. Your positive reinforcement will help both your child and the coach.

Receiving technical or strategic instruction at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions and games. This may ultimately impede your son or daughter's progress and affect playing time or position.

Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of the contest. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities, and may be an emotional time. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm, courteous, and logical manner.

One of the responsibilities, which a coach has at the conclusion of a contest, is to have a brief meeting with his players. Athletes should not pause to talk to parents or friends immediately after games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in athletics.

The Parent-Player Relationship

Some parents may try to live vicariously through their children's athletic efforts. Being positive and supportive is important, but adding pressures and unrealistic expectations can be extremely harmful. Allow your son or daughter to enjoy and grow from this valuable experience. In numerous national studies, it has been determined that most athletes participate for enjoyment or fun. Excessive pressure or expectations can alter this most fundamental reason for playing.

When you speak to your child after a contest, don't dwell on his or her play, how many points he or she scored, or if he or she started. Instead, first ask how the team did, did they play hard, give 100% and have a good experience?

Relationship with Officials

There is an age-old refrain often used by irate fans, "How much are you paying the Officials?" The commissioner of officials for the particular sport assigns all officials and neither team has control of which officials are assigned. Officials agree to follow a code of ethics. They really do not have a vested interest in which team emerges as the victor. It is important to understand that they are a very necessary part of a game. A contest cannot be played without them. While you may not agree with all their calls (who does?), please do not taunt them. It is important to remember that they are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. In many sports, a team will see the same official several times during a season. Coaches, recreation supervisors, recreation director and the Parks and Recreation Commissioners often work hard to establish a rapport and good working relationship which can easily be damaged by spectators.

Athletic Chain of Command

At Watertown Recreation, The following chain of command is in effect:

Parks & Recreation Commissioner
Recreation Director
Assistant Recreation Director
Recreation Supervisor
Basketball Coordinators
Coaches
Assistant Coaches
Players

If there are any questions or concerns, the athlete should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is no resolution, he or she should then go to the head coach, etc.

Sportsmanship

Since athletics should be educational in nature, it is important that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our athletes and student fans. Sportsmanship is an overt display of respect for the sport and for all others - players, coaches, officials, and fans. It also involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. This means:

1. There can be no vulgar or inappropriate language from fans or spectators.
2. Taunting our opponents not be tolerated.
3. Spectators cannot leave the bleachers or enter onto the court or field during a contest.

4. Fans should be supportive and positive. Cheering should be done for our team and not against our opponent.
5. In basketball, we should not yell while a player takes a foul shot.

Responsibilities of an Athlete

Most coaches would expect an athlete to adhere to the following guidelines: The team's goals, welfare, and success must come before any individual interest.

1. An athlete needs to be consistent in attending practice sessions. This also includes weekend and holiday periods.
2. Players need to be receptive to coaching.
3. Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms and equipment.
4. As a member of a team, an athlete must agree to and follow the team rules. Athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but the coaching staff and the Town.
5. An athlete must report all injuries to either the coach or to the athletic trainer.

Responsibilities of a coach

A Watertown Recreation coach has the responsibility for the following:

1. The selection of the team (except: Bantam, Girls 8, 9 & 10, and Boys 8&9)
2. The determination of the style of play, including the offensive and defensive philosophy.
3. The teaching and instruction at practice sessions.
4. The determination of who starts and how long an athlete plays in a contest.
5. The decision as to who plays in what position.
6. The establishment of team rules.
7. The selection of team captains.
8. The communications with athletes and parents with respect to when practice sessions will be held and at what time the sessions will start and finish.

Participation on an Athletic Team

Practice Session and Games

Risks of Athletic Participation

In spite of protective equipment and the supervision and sound instruction by our coaches, there are some risks associated when someone participates in athletics. Injuries can and do occur. All athletes and parents need to be aware and understand this possibility. At Watertown Recreation we will do all that we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our athletes.

POLICY FOR SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR

Please help us and represent Watertown Recreation in a proud manner.

1. Cheer for your team!
2. Do not yell at your opponents.
3. Do not use vulgar or profane language.
4. Yelling at officials cannot be tolerated.
5. Taunting and “trash talking” directed at players, coaches and fans is not permitted.
6. Remain in the stands during the contest.
7. Do not interfere with our opponents’.
8. Do not kick the bleachers. Not only does this display poor sportsmanship, but it also damages them.
9. As a parent, please set a positive example for our athletes.
10. If you see or hear something that is inappropriate, please help us by saying something to the offending individual. Remember that purchasing a ticket provides you with the privilege and opportunity to watch a contest; it is not a license to verbally assault others or to be obnoxious.
11. Please remember that smoking and /or the use of tobacco products is prohibited at all sports contest, and practices.

SPORTSMANSHIP EXPECTATIONS

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

1. Applause during introductions of players, coaches and officials.
2. Players shaking hands with opponents who foul out while both sets of fans recognize player’s performance with applause.
3. Accept ALL decisions of the officials.
4. Handshakes between participants and coaches at the end of contests, regardless of outcome.
5. Treat competition as a game, not a war.
6. Coaches/players search out and congratulate opposing participants.
7. Applause at the end of a contest for performances of all participants.
8. Everyone showing concern for an injured player, regardless of team.
9. Encourage only sportsmanlike conduct.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORAL

1. Disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs, or gestures.
2. Booing or heckling an official’s decision.
3. Criticizing officials in any way; display of temper with an official’s call.
4. Yells that antagonize opponents.

5. Refusing to shake hands or give recognition for good performances.
6. Blaming loss of game on officials, coaches or participants.
7. Taunting or name-calling to distract an opponent.
8. Use of profanity or displays of anger that draw attention away from the game.