

# NATIONAL YOUTH SPORTS SAFETY FOUNDATION, INC.

## SPORT PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Children's sports are supposed to be fun – for the *children*. Unfortunately, many parents, fans and coaches don't realize that their actions, whether verbal or nonverbal, can have a lasting emotional effect on children. Too many children are leaving sports activities because the fun is unfairly taken away by adults.

That is why the **National Youth Sports Safety Foundation (NYSSF)**, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to promoting the healthy development of youth in sports, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Governors Committee on Physical Fitness and Sports, convened a consensus meeting with representatives from more than thirty sports, medical, educational and professional organizations to create the following **Code of Conduct** for parents and spectators to abide by at every game. The Code of Conduct can also be found at [www.nyssf.org](http://www.nyssf.org).

Parents, fans and coaches who follow this simple code can help reinforce what sports are all about... BEING FUN FOR EVERYONE.

### Preamble

The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character."<sup>1</sup>

I therefore agree:

1. I will not force my child to participate in sports.<sup>2,9</sup>
2. I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.<sup>6,9</sup>
3. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.<sup>9</sup>
4. I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.<sup>7,3</sup>
5. I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators at every game, practice or other sporting event.<sup>10</sup>
6. I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.<sup>3,6,7,8</sup>
7. I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and wellbeing of the athletes.
8. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.<sup>5,2</sup>
9. I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.<sup>6,9</sup>
10. I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.<sup>2</sup>
11. I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.<sup>2</sup>
12. I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participant for making a mistake or losing a competition.<sup>2,5</sup>
13. I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my child over winning. I will also deemphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.<sup>10</sup>
14. I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.<sup>9</sup>
15. I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.<sup>4,7</sup>
16. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.<sup>6</sup>
17. I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.<sup>4</sup>

I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:<sup>9</sup>

- Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or head of league organization
- Written warning
- Parental game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file by organizations involved
- Game forfeit through the official or coach
- Parental season suspension

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Parent/Guardian Signature

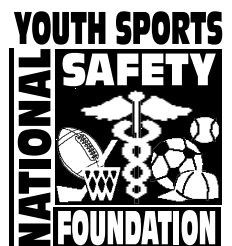
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### References

The Sport Parent Code of Conduct has been compiled from the following national organizations and local youth sports league Parent Codes of Conduct:

1. Arizona Sports Summit Accord
2. Character Counts
3. Heartland Soccer Club
4. Kidsports
5. Mt. Laurel Soccer Club
6. National Alliance for Youth Sports
7. National High School Athletic Coaches Association
8. Pop Warner
9. Rosemont Area Athletic Association
10. USA Hockey

Additional recommended resources for conduct and sportsmanship for coaches and athletes include: Arizona Sport Summit Accord, United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Coaches Code of Ethics, and the Character Counts Coalition.



## *Consensus Meeting Participants*

### **Meeting Co-Chairpersons**

**Lyle J. Micheli, MD**, Chairperson, Massachusetts Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness & Sports; Director, Division of Sports Medicine, Children's Hospital, Boston

**Rita Glassman**, Chairperson, Youth Fitness Subcommittee, Massachusetts Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness & Sports; Associate Executive Director, National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, Inc.

**Michelle Klein**, Executive Director and Founder, National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, Inc.

### **Participants**

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**Caruso, Fred**, District Administrator-MA, Little League Baseball

**Caruso, John**, Assistant District Administrator-MA Little League Baseball

**Ciollo, Joe**, Liaison, Governor's office

**Coville, Nancy**, Educational Improvement Group, Learning Support Services, Massachusetts Department of Education

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**Fitzgerald, Brian, ATC**, Massachusetts Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness and Sports

**Fitzgerald, Kevin**, Co-Director Urban Youth Sports, Center for the Study of Sports in Society

**Gondek, Jim**, Executive Director, USA Youth Soccer, MA

**Janicki, Mike**, State Commissioner, Eastern MA Cal Ripken Leagues of Babe Ruth Baseball

**Johnson, Robert**, Executive Director, Special Olympics MA

**Keefe, Linda**, Coordinator of Play Across Boston, Center for the Study of Sports In Society

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**Loud, Rita La Rosa**, Youth Fitness Subcommittee, Massachusetts Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness & Sports

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**Reardon, Janice**, Director of Community Tennis Development, USA Tennis New England

**Savenor, Arnold, MD**, Board of Advisors, National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, Inc.

**Smith, Joe**, Secretary, Pop Warner Football, Massachusetts

**Smith, Marge**, President Elect, Massachusetts Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

**Stearns, Chris**, USA Volleyball, MA

**Wein, Debra, RD**, Youth Fitness Subcommittee, Massachusetts Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness and Sports

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**Zaichowsky, Leonard, Ph.D.**, Professor and Head of Sport & Exercise Psychology, Developmental Studies and Counseling, Boston University; National Youth Sports Safety Foundation Board of Advisors

### **Organizations Supporting the Sport Parent Code of Conduct (as of December 22, 2000)**

Massachusetts Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness and Sports

National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, Inc.

New England Region Pop Warner Football

Massachusetts Department of Education

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association

Boston Police Activities League, Inc. (Boston PAL)

Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation/Bay State Games

Massachusetts PTA

Newton Wellesley Family Pediatricians