

Real Life Sports

Coaches Handbook

FALL 2017 SEASON

Coaches

Coaching At Real Life Sports

We have intentionally built a unique youth sports program that integrates character and integrity into youth sports. We utilize a More Than A Game philosophy that emphasizes life skill development so that each kid can win on and off the field. We want to partner with parents to further develop the character and integrity of their child based on Christian values.

We do not expect our coaches to be perfect, but we do expect our coaches to be leaders, role models and fine examples for our players and families.

We want our kids to have an outstanding experience in youth sports at Real Life Sports and come away with a greater passion for the game, but more importantly we want them to develop life skills that will help them succeed in life.

Coach Requirements

Requirements to coach at Real Life Sports:

Head Coach

- RLM Member
- Complete Security Screening
 - Required every 2 years

Assistant Coach

- Attend Coaches Meetings
- Complete Security Screening
 - Required every 2 years

Upon security clearance, all coaches will receive a coaching polo that are expected to be worn at all practices and games. Only those that have been through the screening process, and cleared, should be participating in practice. It is the responsibility of the head coach to ensure that anyone acting as an assistant coach has gone through the proper steps and is cleared Real Life Sports to coach.

Assistant Coaches

Head Coaches are encouraged to find their own assistants whenever possible. If the situation arises where the head coach is unable to find any assistants, Real Life Sports will do everything we can to help with this.

Season Timeline

Team Placement

Players are placed on teams accordingly upon closing of registration. During registration, players are able to request items like coaches, friends, night of practice, etc. While we try our best to accommodate requests, they are not guaranteed.

Receiving Roster

Head coaches will receive a team roster approximately 7-10 days prior to the first practice. After receiving a roster, ALL players/parents should receive a phone call within 3 days. Email will ensure that all information is given and received, but a personal call will go much further toward developing good relationships.

The following relevant information should be covered during the initial phone calls:

- Introduce yourself
- Get to know the parents (names, family, do they attend a church, etc.)
- Inform about team and practice times
- Explain what will happen during the season (practices, games, gatherings, etc.)
- Explain what they need to bring to practices/games (equipment, water, etc.)
- Inform about any need for assistant coaches or team moms
- How you can be reached - How and when to contact you

Before First Practice

- Know your field location - RLM East Lawn Field 1 or 2
- Bring or know where to find equipment
- Prepare introductions to players and parents
- Have a plan for how to run the first practice
- Plan huddle/prayer

Season Timeline (*continued*)

During First Practice

- Greet players and parents as they arrive
- Get to know the kids
- Have fun, be active, and establish a connection with the children
- Allow proper time for Devotions and prayers - the first time will set the tone!
- Hand out any applicable items

After First Practice

- Set up a team meeting, event or activity to create team spirit and get to know players/parents (we will have a kick-off event planned for you)
- Contact any parents that may be able to help with coaching, snacks, parent communications, etc.
- Be specific about what you expect from players and parents (Standards for Behavior)
- Establish a communication routine especially before games (remind of time and place)

Beginning Of Season - “Kick-Off Event”

- Communicate any successes, changes, problems or needs after the first week
- Get to know parents individually
- Make MTAG alive and invite parents and players to Real Life

Mid-Season

- Evaluate and adjust objectives, plans for team and players
- Plan an activity outside of a practice/game to get families together

End Of Season

- We will have an all team party or end of season event to send families off on a positive note
- We will give future programming information if available (camps, next season, Team Real Life Wrestling, etc.)

Real Life Sports Standard for Behavior

- This summary document should help you familiarize yourself with Real Life Sports
- In addition, our Standards for Behavior represent our sincere attempt to define the roles and behavior necessary for a fantastic and enjoyable youth sporting experience.
- Staff, players, parents and coaches must all work together along with officials and other adults to insure that our children have an opportunity to learn, grow and mature while participating in our healthy sporting activities. We expect that each administrator, player, parent and coach will abide by the Real Life Sports Standard for Behavior.
- Real Life Sports reserves the right to sanction those not abiding by the Real Life Sports Standards.

Real Life Sports and Outdoor Staff are committed to:

- Providing a Godly environment where the Bible will be used as our rulebook for operating Real Life Sports.
- Provide a safe and secure environment for teaching and loving your child and family.
- Provide a youth sports experience that teaches teamwork, fair play and love for the game.
- Provide and maintain an encouraging and positive environment where “giving your very best effort and honoring God” is more important than winning the game.

- Provide a pressure free but challenging, learning environment for all players.
- Provide an environment where character and integrity are core values.
- Provide first class facilities that foster a professional, safe and comforting environment.

Real Life Sports players are committed to:

- Giving their very best effort on the field and in life.
- Being Respectful to teammates, coaches, referees, opponents and others involved with the game
- Being on time for all team events and communicating with the coach if some exception comes up where you might be late or not be able to make it to a practice or a game.
- Having a positive and encouraging attitude.
- Placing TEAM above personal Self-interest
- Not using any foul language.
- Placing character and integrity ahead of athletic performance.
- Trying to solve issues and concerns with a teammate or coach first before involving others.
- Accepting responsibility for their action without blaming others.

Real Life Sports Parents are committed to:

- Encouraging and supporting their child and other Real Life Sports players.
- Respecting players, coaches, referees and each other.
- Being a parent/fan during games and practices, not a coach.
- Supporting your child's coach, not gossiping or bad mouthing him/her to others.
- Helping your child prepare properly for all practices and games; some examples are nutrition, sleep and equipment.
- Being responsible for getting their child to and from practices and games on time.
- Not conversing with referees regarding the game.
- 24 Hour Rule: wait 24 hours to address any concerns you have with the involved party, and then scheduling an appointment with them to review the issues.
- Matthew 18:15; Address your concerns with any coach or parent directly first before involving others.

Real Life Coaches are committed to:

- Intentionally connecting families without a church home to RLM.
- Providing safety and security of our players during practice and competition.
- Completing the RLM security screening process prior to the season.
- Being positive and encouraging to all of their players.
- Being respectful and obedient to referees.
- Teaming with other coaches to create an enjoyable atmosphere at practice and games.
- Eliminating sarcasm and foul language.
- Enthusiastically leading practice Devotions.
- Providing equal playing time assuming the player has met all team requirements.
- Support the Real Life Sports guidelines, including RLM's Vision, Mission and Core Values

Devotion Guidelines

Coaches Role In Devotions

Weekly Team Huddles- Huddles should be prioritized and planned for and not rushed through at the end of practice. A basic outline of a team huddle should follow this format:

- Huddle in an area and manner so players can give 100% attention
- Introduce the topic or word for the week
- Use devotional to generate questions and conversation amongst your team
- Wrap-up and close the discussion by challenging players to apply the lesson to their life
- Pray together- ask players for prayer requests
- Encourage players to share with their parents

Devotion Guidelines Continued

Pray- Every practice, game, team party, etc. should include the team praying together. Prayer can be coach, player, or parent lead.

Play with Sportsmanship- Teach players to play with honesty and within the rules, not to “win at all costs”. Mantras like “If you’re not cheating, you’re not trying” are the exact opposite of what we want our players to learn. Respect opponents and referees, and expect the same from players.

Family Balance- STARS has guidelines regarding the frequency and duration of practices in order to promote a more balanced lifestyle. Coaches are expected to follow these guidelines and to teach players/families about why these guidelines are in place.

Standards for Behavior- It is important that coaches know and understand what the STARS standards are for coaches, players, parents, and our staff. Any person acting outside of these standards should expect to be held accountable, and our coaches are expected to assist in upholding these standards at all times.

Key Policies

24 Hour Rule- When someone wants to address an issue with someone else, as long as a person is not in immediate danger, he or she should wait 24 hours to allow some cool down time.

Matthew 18:15- Once a 24 hour period has elapsed, concerns should be addressed directly with the other individual. After this, if two parties are unable to come to a resolution, a third un-biased person can get involved.

Equal Play- Coaches are expected to provide players with as equal play time as possible (assuming there is no disciplinary action). If play time comes into question, the coach should have an explanation/plan of how they try to provide equal play time. If a player is not going to receive equal play, the head coach should explain this to the player and parent BEFORE the game.

Player Recognition/Certificates

We want to be intentional about highlighting players that show exemplary character during the season. Each coach will receive certificates to use at practices and games in order to recognize deserving players. Please be on the lookout for kids doing positive things, and then acknowledge it.

Game Day Coaching

Game days should be all about the kids. Teams practice during the week so they can go out and perform on game day. This is not to say coaches should not coach during the game. However, coach behavior should never draw attention toward the sideline and away from the players on the field.

Common Failures

- Screaming at players, discouraging their play.
- Arguing with the referee, distracting the players.
- Trying to micro manage players on the field, telling them what to do every play rather than relying on what you have taught them in practice.
- Asking rhetorical questions and whining - What is going on out there? Didn't we practice this? Players have no way of responding, and are not sure what to try and correct.
- Paying no attention to the game - on cell phone, listening to headphones, talking with other coaches. Parents expect the coach to observe, make some corrections, not tune out.

How To Be Effective

- **Observe First-** Don't allow temper or frustration to enter the thought process. Panic, anger, frustration, and fear are mind killers. The players are depending on the coach to be the coolest and most perceptive head on the field.
- **Limit Coaching-** There is nothing more destructive than an unceasing commentary and instruction from the coach. Young players can't absorb all the information an adult coach can spew out and still play effectively. Don't try to be a play by play director, let the kids play so that they can learn.
- **Applaud and Recognize Good Play-** Be the first to encourage good play.
- **Give Positive and Specific Feedback-** "I really like the way you did..." Positively reinforcing appropriate action is the best way to ensure it will happen again.
- **Speak Clearly-** Realize that the kids on the field may not be able to hear you. Wind, crowd noise, and distance limit communication. Use short clear words at the right moment, don't mumble or whine, show a positive and confident demeanor.
- **Use Simple and Specific Instructions-** Don't start up a theoretical conversation with tired or confused players. Make corrections simple, clear, and direct.

Have an accountability system so that each coach can help the others with his or her emotions, etc.

Coach Safety Standards

All Real Life Sports coaches have the responsibility to

- Not be alone with a player or parent (other than their child/spouse) in a private and closed off place.
- Not leave a child alone at field.
- Make sure that the practice and game surface and equipment is safe.
 - Goals secured properly so they cannot blow over
 - Sideline markers in proper condition
 - Obstacles on the sideline are in proper order
 - Etc.

Heavy Rain

During Heavy rain the POC will monitor field conditions to determine if the safety of the players or field is at risk.

- If a field is deemed unsafe to play, the game/practice will be stopped and the Program director will look to relocate to a better field.
 - If another field is not available coaches should release players to an adult/parent.
- Real Life Sports staff will monitor weather and determine whether or not to continue play and will communicate this with coaches.