

# **Fair Play - Please!**



**Fair Play  
For the good of the game!**

## Call to action

As a coach:

- you want every child's experience in sport to be positive;
- you want to win, but you also want to emphasize the importance of skill development and fun; and
- you believe that fair play can and should be taught.

Whether you are new to the game or an experienced, competitive coach, this manual is for you. It offers practical and easy-to-use fair play tips and tools. We encourage you to apply them in your practices or games to teach the importance of fair play to your athletes.

## What is Fair Play?

Integrity, fairness and respect - these are the principles of fair play. And since children learn best by seeing and doing, sport offers an excellent opportunity to teach fair play in a way that is both effective and fun.

- If children see all the members on the team being given a turn, they will learn to treat people equally and fairly.
- If children learn the importance of rules in a game, they will learn to respect and value the rules in society.
- If children are regarded for playing fairly, they will learn the value of honesty and integrity.

As a coach or youth leader, you are an important role model to the children on your team. By ensuring that your words and actions reflect the five principles outlined on the following page, you can teach them to play well and play fairly.

## Principles of Fair Play

1. Respect the rules.
2. Respect the officials and their decisions.
3. Respect your opponent.
4. Give everyone an equal chance to participate.
5. Maintain your self-control at all times.



## Why Teach Fair Play?

Like most coaches, you probably take time from an already busy schedule to be a volunteer. We know your job isn't easy. Because you're their coach, your athletes look up to you - perhaps more than to their own parents. You can influence their personal development as well as teach them to play well.

You already know that sport helps children to learn important life skills such as team-work and co-operation. It also gives them the chance to develop lifelong values such as integrity, fairness and respect - the key principles of fair play. By teaching your athletes these principles, you'll make sure that they get the best out of sport and that they continue playing in their adult life.

A study of coaches and their athletes undertaken by Angus Reid (fall 1991) revealed some important findings about how they perceive and practice fair play:

1. The vast majority of athletes and coaches place a higher value on fair competition than on winning. However, most athletes associate fair play primarily with respect for the rules, whereas most coaches associate fair play with respect for the officials. It is important that we all have a clear understanding of what fair play is, and that we work together toward common fair play goals.
2. Younger athletes are more open-minded and committed to fair play than older athletes. This highlights the need for fair play education for both groups. Older athletes need to be reminded of the importance of fair play; younger athletes need to be taught fair play effectively so that it 'sticks' in later years.

3. Young athletes look first to coaches, parents and league officials for guidance on fair play, but these individuals often lack the proper teaching tools. "Fair Play - Please! Fair Play: For the good of the game!" provides those tools for coaches and other adults involved in the delivery of community sport.

## **With Fair Play, Everybody Wins!**

In the world of business, an arrangement that benefits two parties is a win-win deal - one that allows both sides to take advantage of the same opportunity without compromising their competitive spirit or individual goals.

Fair play makes this possible in the world of sport! By making sure that the rules, officials and opponents are respected at all times, it gives all participants an equal chance to develop and test their skills. What's more, it challenges them to measure their success by scoring and performing well - with dignity, integrity and pride.

Wanting to win is great and should be encouraged, but not at all costs. Fair play: it's a win-win approach that means greater benefits and better competition for everyone in sport!



Fair Play - For the Good of the Game!

# Fair Play Code For Coaches



1. I will be reasonable when scheduling games and practices remembering that young athletes have other interest and obligations.
2. I will teach my athletes to play fairly and to respect the rules, officials and opponents.
3. I will ensure that all athletes get equal instruction, support and playing time.
4. I will not ridicule or yell at my athletes for making mistakes or for performing poorly. I will remember that children play to have fun and must be encouraged to have confidence in themselves.
5. I will make sure that equipment and facilities are safe and match the athletes' ages and abilities.
6. I will remember that children need a coach they can respect. I will be generous with praise and set a good example.
7. I will obtain proper training and continue to upgrade my coaching skills.

# Fair Play Code For Athletes



1. I will participate because I want to, not just because my parents or coaches want me to.
2. I will play by the rules, and in the spirit of the game.
3. I will control my temper - fighting and "mouthing off" can spoil the activity for everybody.
4. I will respect my opponents.
5. I will do my best to be a true team player.
6. I will remember that winning isn't everything - that having fun, improving skills, making friends and doing my best are also important.
7. I will acknowledge all good plays/performances - those of my team and of my opponents.
8. I will remember that coaches and officials are there to help me. I will accept their decisions and show them respect.

# Fair Play Code For Parents



1. I will not force my child to participate in sports.
2. I will remember that my child plays sport for his or her enjoyment, not for mine.
3. I will encourage my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
4. I will teach my child that doing one's best is as important as winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game/event.
5. I will make my child feel like a winner every time by offering praise for competing fairly and trying hard.
6. I will never ridicule or yell at my child for making a mistake or losing a competition.
7. I will remember that children learn best by example. I will applaud good plays/performances by both my child's team and their opponents.
8. I will never question the officials' judgment or honesty in public.
9. I will support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children's sporting activities.

10. I will respect and show appreciation for the volunteer coaches who give their time to provide sport activities for my child.

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**If you have any questions, comments or feedback about this document, or anything involving the Referee Centre, please send an email to: [sdenoncourt@soccercan.ca](mailto:sdenoncourt@soccercan.ca)**