

**Thank you for your willingness to coach one of our youth sports teams. Without volunteers like you we would not be able to have a league.**

### **Livingston Recreation Coaching Expectations:**

The Recreation Department goals for our sports programs are to:

1. Encourage community spirit and fellowship.
2. Allow all players a equal opportunity to participate.
3. Instruct players in the development of their physical and mental capabilities.
4. Build good character and encourages team work.
5. Develop good sportsmanship.
6. Implement the principles of fair play.
7. Improve physical fitness.
8. Have fun!



### **Ways to be an effective coach:**

1. Know something about what you are coaching (the recreation department has coaching dvd's and manuals to help you. Use them)
2. Show up to practice prepared – People who wing it will destine themselves for failure. Have a plan written down and on a clipboard. What is your goal for that practice and at the end of the practice evaluate to see if you accomplished your goal. Be sure you are early and have everything ready to go before your team gets there. (parents can be a big help to you if you are crunched for time.)
3. Lead your team by example – Show great character (remember the coaches code of ethics)
4. Involve your parents. Let them help you run your practices by leading stations of fundamentals. Kids learn by doing not by standing around. Repetition is the best way to become good at something.
5. Encourage your team win or lose. Recreation is not about winning it is about learning fundamentals so you can master them and become good at them. A great coach understands the difference between the emphasis on “winning” and the emphasis on “learning and playing as a team”. Now the wonderful reality is when you master the fundamentals and being a part of a team, winning will be a natural progression. Over the years as I have seen coaches come and go and watched teams dominate other teams. The answer to winning is this: **A slight percentage of the players have the natural ability, the coaching is the major component of the winning teams.**
6. Make your practices fun – if kids do not want to come to practice then you need to look at what you are doing. Remember the game is about them and keeping them involved. How can the kids learn anything if they are not at practice nor do they want to come to practice because it is boring or all they do is run. If a child is not coming to practice call them and find out what is going on.
7. Show your parents you are prepared by giving them a practice and game schedule to post on their fridge with your phone number on it. Coaches that call last minute practices frustrate the parents. Most households have 2 working parents and arrangements must be made for transportation etc.. Also do not assume by telling the players of schedule changes (especially younger ones) that the information will get to the parents.
8. Always end your games and practices with what you liked about the game or practice. This is a great time to point out the players that are doing a great job. Sometimes stickers or some little motivational award works well. Encourage, Encourage and Encourage some more. Children love to be told they are doing a good job. This will help the ones that are not being pointed our to strive to do good so they can be told they are doing a good job.
9. Use the Department's expertise. If you need help ask us. Our interest is that you succeed. **LET US HELP YOU!**

10. Always keep in mind that recreation youth sports are for fun. No one becomes a professional athlete at the age you are coaching. Make sure that the kids know that a successful season is one where the kids have fun. A good coach can teach the game and foster player improvement, while creating an atmosphere of fun.

*Here is an article from kids Outdoor activities written by a Southern California sports writer who has spent years on this subject. I felt it reinforces what we are trying to do.*

**Make it Fun** - This is and should always be No. 1. If the sport isn't fun, the kids won't continue playing. Having a sport or other pastime is an important component to a successful young person's development. Through sports they learn people skills, teamwork and the value of hard work. They will have their entire lives to work for a living. Making practice enjoyable will keep them interested.

**Make the Commitment** - Coaching will take some time, from practices to games to post-game pizza parties to discussions in person and on the phone with interested parents. Don't take on the job if you can't give the time. Part of this commitment is taking the time to learn the proper skills and drills necessary for the sport. Consult more experienced coaches. Starting out by assisting someone who has coached before is a great way to begin your coaching career. Consulting books and the internet for sport-specific coaching tips is also advisable.

**Set Goals** - Get to know your players and what they hope to gain out of the season. What experience level do they have? What specific skills or positions do they hope to learn?

Have the players, with help from their parents, write down goals at the beginning of the season. These should be specific, like "I want to learn how to shoot free throws better" or "I want to learn how to pitch." Be sure to frequently consult these and don't be afraid to alter the goals as necessary.

**Communicate, Communicate, Communicate** - Players need to be taught and re-taught. So do their parents. Make sure to keep the lines of communication open between everyone. Players and parents must know your expectations and the consequences for failing to meet them – for example the punishment when a player misses practice or is late for a game. Everyone needs to be aware of your rules as well as league rules, so make sure these are handed out in print and discussed.

**Be Consistent** - Rules on a team go for everyone. If your punishment for a player missing a practice is not to start the following game, make sure that is always the case, even if it is your star pitcher who missed practice. You should also be consistent with your praise and consistent in your demeanor. Just like adults, kids do not like to be yelled at. Show self control and hope theirs improves.

**Celebrate Improvement** - Sometimes the highlight of the season can be a single foul ball, if it represents the first time a player actually got a piece of the ball with his bat. The little things – like running in the proper direction and dribbling without the ball hitting your foot – can be cause for celebration. Every player is at a different level, and they all need to be pushed. When they do improve, they need to have that pointed out to them but an adult whose opinion they respect.

**Reward Effort** - Trying is more than half the battle. Continuing to practice a difficult move or skill builds character and should be congratulated. Sports come much more naturally for some, but the less physically-gifted players who work hard and refuse to give up often develop into better players.

**Model Proper Sportsmanship** - Be a good sport. Winning is never the most important thing and certainly isn't the only thing in youth sports. Teach your players to respect the sport, their opponents, their coaches, the officials, and the fans.

**Emphasize Teamwork** - Everyone's role on a team is important. No team wins or loses because of one individual, and everyone strikes out once in awhile. Teach your players to empathize with one another and to support one another. Cheering for a teammate and being genuinely happy when they succeed is a great lesson that makes everyone feel better.

**Be Fair to Your Own Child** - The vast majority of youth coaches begin coaching their own children. This can cause major problems in the parent-child relationship, particularly when the children get older. It is difficult – but very important – to separate the roles of coach and parent. Treat your child the same way you would treat any other player on the team. It sounds simple but it is something often much easier said than done.

Young people who play sports are not only healthier than their peers who don't, but are also less likely to get involved in drug use and other unhealthy activities. Make a difference in the lives of children by becoming a coach. It can be an incredibly rewarding experience.

## **What is my time expectations:**

**Time Commitment** – We ask that the coaches hold 2 practices a week Minimum. We try to make it easy on you by scheduling facilities for you. You tell us your availability and we schedule around that. If you recruit a team parent at the beginning he or she can assist you in contacting and communicating with the parents. We always suggest you give each player a written game and practice schedule for them to post on their fridge. This cuts down on you having to call and it gives the parents a schedule for planning.

**Coach Meetings and Team Selections** - Before each league we hold a coach meeting and “Draft Night” this is done several weeks prior to practices. At this meeting you may or may not assist in selecting teams and you will select your practice times and days. We will also get your team name and jersey selection.

**Rules** – Our league rules for the different sports are built off of national youth sports organizations with a few changes to reinforce our goals and vision.

**Dealing with problems** – We have an incident report that has been developed to help us deal with issues for field issues to parent issues and everything in between. By putting our concerns in writing we can best help resolve issues. We also have a discipline board for players, parents and coaches should we need disciplinary action.

**Making Changes** – the City council has selected a 7 member commission to assist the Recreation Department make the best choice for all residents. These meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month in the city council chambers on Main Street at 6pm. Opinions and ideas are always welcome at these meetings.

The Recreation Office number is 209-394-8830. You can also email us at [recreation@livingstoncity.com](mailto:recreation@livingstoncity.com)