

Young Athletes Bill of Rights

Young athletes have the right to...

1. ...determine when to participate and in what sports, and to what degree of intensity and involvement.
2. ...play in every game, no matter what their degree of physical ability or the relative importance of the game in terms of league competition.
3. ...be taught the fundamentals of the sport by a qualified teacher/coach and to play on fields and courts that have been adjusted proportionally to children.
4. ...be coached by those who have been trained in, or who have been made aware of, the various stages of emotional and psychological development in children, and to be treated on a level equivalent to their emotional and physical maturity – not standards of collegiate or professional sports.
5. ...have a coach who places the child first, the team second, themselves third, and winning fourth; to feel satisfied after a defeat and to have fun participating even while playing on a losing team; to be able to use play as an opportunity to test life; and not be subjected to adult imposed pressures to win.
6. ...have a coach who is patient and supportive, as opposed to one who believe in a harsh, negative, “professional” approach; a coach who takes time to work with each athlete, regardless of ability or potential, and who offers periodic evaluation of the child’s physical improvement and emotional growth as the season progresses.
7. ...be treated as a member of a democracy, not a dictatorship, including the freedom to voice opinions openly to the coach without fear of repercussion.
8. ...proper medical treatment and play in a safe and supportive atmosphere.
9. ...report to the coach or parent any physical pain or emotional concerns such as fear or rejection without fear of ridicule or loss of esteem.
10. ...freedom from physical and emotional punishment by their parent or the coach. Punishment leads only to fear and inhibition. The purpose of sports should be to help a child grow, feel expansive, and realize their potential.