

# *South Whitley Youth League*

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## **Code of Conduct**

### **Introduction**

South Whitley Youth League is a community youth baseball and softball activity with the goal of providing our children an opportunity to develop life skills through team play, sportsmanship, competition, and hard work. Our mission is to provide South Whitley youth the opportunity to play baseball and softball in a recreation league commensurate with their individual ability, potential, and interest. An emphasis on fair play and respect for all participants is a primary element of our league's mission. To better achieve that mission, we provide the following Codes of Conduct for all South Whitley Youth League, parents, players, and coaches.

These Codes of Conduct are an understanding between South Whitley Youth League, parents, players, and coaches to abide by the rules and regulations of the game, as well as to maintain a cooperative attitude and uphold the ideals of fair play and sportsmanship. These Codes express our values and goals. It is essential they be honored and followed.

The Codes of Conduct can be summarized in the following three principles: (1) Demonstrating a positive attitude; (2) Setting a good example; and (3) Maintaining good relationships with all Youth League participants - including officials, opponents, and our own teams' players, parents, and coaches.

#### 1. Demonstrating a positive attitude

Players, parents, and coaches are expected to show a positive, respectful attitude for everyone involved in the sport. Criticism and disrespect for umpires, opponents, coaches or fans undermine the purpose of sport and encourage behavior contrary to the spirit of the game and the mission of South Whitley Youth League.

#### 2. Setting a good example

Each person associated with South Whitley Youth League is accountable for his/her own behavior at all times on or off the field of play. Parents, players, coaches and other adults should remember that children learn by example - it is up to the adults to set good examples.

South Whitley Youth League will not tolerate conduct that is detrimental to the sport, the participants, or the community. Such conduct includes: Vulgarity by coaches, players or parents; harassment or belittling of umpires, coaches or players; verbal abuse, threats or physical violence toward anyone before, during or after a match; and the taunting of opposing players, coaches and parents. We require thorough self-restraint by all participants - both players and adults. Teams must exercise appropriate control over those who fail to control themselves.

### 3. Maintaining good relationships

**Officials** - The umpire's job is a difficult one. All umpires are human and they do make mistakes. Parents or players who believe their team has been treated unfairly or has been assigned an unqualified umpire should speak to their coach after the game. Coaches should inform the appropriate league officials about blatant umpiring problems. Managers should make reports through appropriate channels, including mail evaluations where available. Verbal abuse toward an umpire can result in an ejection for the player, coach or parent pursuant to Youth League rules.

**Opponents** - Players and coaches are required to maintain a sense of fair play and be respectful of opposing players, coaches and fans at all times. Sportsmanship begins with respect. Without it, the positive competitive environment, which should be a perfect classroom for learning the values of baseball and softball, is completely undermined. Occasionally we will encounter opponents who do not share our values and high standards. If we allow ourselves to be drawn down to their level, we will have lost regardless of the final score.

**Our Team** - In an environment where our children are competing not only against other teams but also frequently against each other, it can be difficult to control jealousies and rivalries. A successful team resembles a family in that members put their own needs second, behind the greater good of the team. Great care must be taken not to undermine the coaches' authority. As in most cases, parental example is all-important.

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### **Player's Code**

As a South Whitley Youth League player, I will:

1. Play the game for the game's sake, and not just to please my parents or coach.
2. Be modest and generous when I win and gracious when I lose.
3. Respect the game of baseball and softball and its rules, and play the game fairly.
4. Work for the good of my team and give my best effort at all times.
5. Show respect for the authority of the umpire, even though I will sometimes disagree with his/her calls.
6. Show good sportsmanship before, during, and after games. I understand that baseball and softball is a game, and that the players on the other team are my opponents, not my enemies.
7. Conduct myself with honor and dignity and treat other players as I would like to be treated.
8. Control my temper and not retaliate, even if I believe I have been wronged.
9. Not use or possess tobacco, alcohol, or illegal or performance-enhancing drugs.

## **Parent's Code**

As a parent, you play a special role in the development of your child and of his/her teammates. Your encouragement and good example will do more to ensure good sportsmanship and self-discipline than any other influence. The other team is the opponent, not the enemy, and should be treated with respect. While winning is important, playing well and fairly is the essence of the game.

### **1. Support your child**

Support your child by giving encouragement and showing interest in his/her team. Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game. Teach your child that hard work and an honest effort are often more important than victory.

### **2. Always be positive**

Children learn more by example than by criticism. Work to be a positive role model, and reinforce positive behavior in others. Applaud good plays by others on your child's team as well as good plays by the opposing team. Do not criticize any child's performance from the sidelines. Accept the results of each game. Teach your child to be gracious in victory and to turn defeat into victory by learning and working toward improvement.

### **3. Don't be a sideline coach or umpire**

Refrain from coaching or umpiring from the sidelines. Parents who shout or scream from the sidelines often give inappropriate advice at the wrong time. The coach should be the only sideline voice. Remain well back from the sidelines and within the spectator area. You and your child will both enjoy the game more if you put some emotional distance between yourself and the field or play. Umpires are symbols of fair play, integrity and sportsmanship - Do not openly question their judgment or honesty.

### **4. Demonstrate a positive attitude toward your opponents and their families**

Opponents are not enemies. Never allow yourself to be drawn into a verbal disagreement with opposing parents or coaches. No one has ever regretted letting "cooler heads prevail."

### **5. Remember that your child wants to have fun**

Your child is the one playing baseball and softball, not you. Children must establish their own goals - to play the game for themselves. Take care not to impose unreasonable demands on your child. Let your children experience the fun of playing as well as the challenge of excelling.

I/we will set following:

- We will not criticize the umpires openly or directly, during or after games. Any criticism shall be done in writing, sent to my coach and not verbally.
- We will give only positive feedback to players.
- We will cheer at all games within the spirit of fair play and shall do our best to cheer the effort regardless of the outcome. We will be mindful in “lopsided” game where cheering our own “winning” team might be misunderstood.
- We shall do our best to teach our players to become students of the game.
- We shall show the quality of our sportsmanship during and after each game and help our child remember to thank the umpire after the game without regard to the result.
- We shall do our very best to have our child prepared for every game.
- We shall support the learning efforts of the players, the coaches, and the umpires by demonstrating our patience.
- We shall leave the coaching to the coach during the game. We shall not give our child instructions during the game.
- We understand that the league can, and will if necessary, suspend our individual privilege to watch our child play should we behave in a manner that is rude or otherwise offensive.
- We agree to do our best to have as much fun watching the game as the players should have playing the game.

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## **Coach's Code**

The South Whitley Youth League Coach’s Code enumerates basic requirements, organized under four principles. They are: Setting a good example; keeping players safe; ensuring that all participants in South Whitley Youth League have a positive experience; and relating to game umpires in an exemplary manner and encouraging players to do the same.

### **1. Setting a good example**

The coach’s example is powerful. If a coach insists on fair play, concentrates on players' enjoyment of the game and their overall, long-term development, and supports the umpire, players and parents will notice. If a coach discourages (or allows) players to play outside the rules, are overly concerned about the results, and/or criticize the umpire or opposing coach, players and parents will also notice. Above all, children deserve a coach they can respect.

- Coaches, in all contact with South Whitley Youth League, parents, officials and coaches, should strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct. Before, during, and after the game, they should be an example of dignity, patience and positive spirit.
- Before games, opposing coaches should meet and exchange greetings to set the proper tone for the game. After games, the teams and coaches should meet and congratulate each other in a sportsmanlike manner.
- Coaches should ensure that their players’ baseball and softball and softball experience is one of fun and enjoyment, and improvement in skill (winning is only part of it). Players should

never be yelled at, lectured or ridiculed for making mistakes or losing a game. Coaches should be generous with praise when it is deserved.

- Coaches should avoid any conduct which could be construed as physically or verbally abusive.
- Coaches should completely refrain from verbal dissent during a game with an opposing coach.
- Coaches should honor all professional relationships with colleagues, associations, umpires, and the public. Conflicts of interest and exploitation of these relationships must be avoided.

## 2. Keeping players safe

Coaches should have the safety of the players in their charge as their first priority at all times. Coaches should be familiar with the facilities and fields on which their teams practice and play, and be mindful of the levels of fitness and skill of each one of their players. Coaches should also be familiar with the Rules of the Game, current with principles of age-appropriate coaching, aware of applicable existing rules and regulations, and informed of the affairs of South Whitley Youth League.

- Coaches should check players' equipment and playing facilities frequently. They should meet safety standards and be appropriate for the age and ability of players.
- Coaches should follow the advice of a physician when determining when an injured player is ready to play again. During a game, and in an absence of medical advice, coaches should err on the side of caution in permitting an injured player to return to play.

## 3. Creating a positive experience

South Whitley Youth League wishes to ensure that games are fair, positive and enjoyable experiences for the children and adults involved. A baseball and softball and softball game should be friendly and unifying - a spirited social and athletic occasion for players, coaches, umpires, and spectators.

- Coaches should require all players and spectators to adhere to the highest level of sportsmanship at all times. During the game, the coach is responsible for the sportsmanship of the players. If a player is disrespectful, irresponsible or overly aggressive, the coach should remove the player from the game at least long enough for him/her to calm down. Coaches should explain acceptable behavior to players and parents at a preseason meeting. Encourage parents to make positive comments about good play by either team. Prohibit them from yelling at players and the umpire.

## 4. Relating to officials

Coaches should demonstrate respect for the umpire and his/her role. Coaches can help umpires improve by letting them concentrate on the game, accepting their inevitable, occasional mistakes, and offering constructive post- game comments.

- Before a game, coaches should introduce themselves to the umpire. During the game, they should address the umpire only as needed to continue play. After the game, they should thank the umpire and ask players to do the same.
- A small disagreement should be discussed with the umpire calmly after the game. For major complaints, or if the umpire appeared to be unfair, biased, unfit, or incompetent, report opinions to the Chief Umpire.