

PHILOSOPHY FOR COMMUNITY SPORTS IN WEBSTER

Dear Sports Participant,

This document, now in its second edition, prepared by the Webster Community Partnership Operations Council, provides a philosophy for community sports that is commonly held and applies uniformly to Webster's community sports organizations, interscholastic athletic teams, and programs run by the Webster Parks and Recreation Department.

The Webster Community Partnership Operations Council (POC) was established in 2009 by the Webster School District and the Town of Webster. The POC developed this philosophy for the purpose of identifying common operating standards in the following areas:

- *Conduct for coaches, players, and spectators*
- *Programs*
- *Facilities*

It is the council's belief that when fully embraced and supported, the Webster community and the athletes it develops will carry the values of integrity, pride, loyalty, and good character with them throughout life.

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SPORTS CODE OF CONDUCT

Conduct

Participating in athletic/sports programs promotes healthy life-styles (wellness) in youth and adults through physical, social, and emotional development and should be offered to as many residents as possible. Well-coordinated programs are vital to Webster’s morale and help to maintain a spirit that can sustain the entire community.

Coaches, spectators, and participants have a unique opportunity to teach and model positive life skills and good sportsmanship. Successful sport programs require qualified coaches, players with the will to learn and desire to have fun, and spectators who are respectful and supportive. Coaches, players, and spectators should understand that their conduct will establish the reputation of Webster and that their actions will relate directly to the success of their team.

It is important that the whole community remembers that an athletic contest is only a game, not a matter of life and death. A recommended **Code of Conduct** can be found later in this document.

Facilities

Safe, well-maintained, multi-use facilities that are age- and program-appropriate are important elements of

all successful sports programs. Collaboration and cooperation between the school district, town, and community sports organizations maximize the use of all playing fields, fieldhouse, gymnasiums, and aquatic facilities. The Operations Council, Webster Youth Sports Council, Recreation Department, and Webster Central School District participate in a cooperative process for identifying and implementing facility improvements (as outlined in the Facility Use Protocol and Procedures Document).

Program

In successful sports communities, **program** expectations are clearly defined and well-communicated. Program goals should develop and enhance the physical, social, and educational, well-being (wellness) of all participants. While it is the nature of competition to strive for victory, the number of victories is only one measure of success. To this end, coaches must teach players to:

- Prepare their minds and bodies so that they can do their best, and then
- Be modest in both victory and defeat.

Additional information regarding program goals and outcomes can be found later in this document.

SPORTS CODE OF CONDUCT

SPECTATORS: Parents, Grandparents, friends and family

- Will remember that players participate to have fun.
- Will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league and reinforce the importance of following them.
- Will not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind such as booing, taunting, or profane language or gestures.
- Will be a positive role model and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
- Will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches or officials at the game field.
- Will praise players for competing fairly and always encourage them to give their best effort.
- Will demand an environment that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all events.
- Will refrain from coaching from the sidelines during competitions and practices (unless official coach of the team.)
- Will respect others’ property and not engage in vandalism, theft, and other forms of mischief.
- If unhappy with any aspect of my child’s youth sports experience, I will approach the coach privately and in a respectful manner.

“Sports do not build character, they reveal it.”

John Wooden

WEBSTER COMMUNITY AND SCHOOLS

SPORTS CODE OF CONDUCT

COACHES:

- Will be patient and create a safe environment conducive to learning and having fun.
- Will get to know players as individuals and be sensitive to their individual needs.
- Will lead by example, by what I say and do.
- Will teach teamwork and fair play, and model this behavior.
- Will communicate expectations clearly, motivate with praise, and use criticism only in a constructive manner.
- Will be consistent in applying discipline and enforcing team rules equally.
- Will set age and developmentally appropriate goals for individuals and team.
- Will respect officials, parents, spectators, opposing players and coaches at all time.
- Will not use any athlete to further personal interests or coaching aspirations.
- Will use community facilities with care and leave them in the same condition they were found.

PLAYERS:

- Will make having fun the number one priority.
- Will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league and follow them.
- Will not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind such as booing, taunting, or profane language or gestures.
- Will demonstrate respect and courtesy and positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
- Will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches or officials at the game field.
- Will not use drugs, tobacco, or alcohol.
- Will respect others property and not engage in any vandalism, theft, and other forms of mischief.
- If unhappy with any aspect of my sports experience, I will approach the coach privately and in a respectful manner.

WEBSTER COMMUNITY AND SCHOOLS

SPORTS PROGRAM & PHILOSOPHY

The Webster community strives to provide a quality sports environment for all residents. While program goals and philosophies differ depending on the participants' age and developmental level, quality sports programs should develop and enhance the **physical, social, and educational health/wellness** of all participants. It is important that parents, coaches, and players understand that each is responsible for maintaining a quality sports environment.

Webster CAREs

We support implementation of the Webster Central School District's CARE initiative and encourage this standard of performance at all levels of sport in Webster. CARE is an acronym for Cooperation, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence. School representatives are available to share and modify the rubric to meet the needs of individual sports organizations and teams.

Weather Related Protocols

It is recommended that all Webster sports groups follow the NYSPHSAA heat index and chill protocol for outdoor participation available at: <http://www.nysphsaa.org/safety/HeatChillProcedures.asp>. RealFeel (Heat Index/Wind Chill) precautions are detailed for 80 degrees and above and 36 degrees and below. All users are required to follow Section V and the New York State Public High School Athletic Association's *Thunder and Lightning Policy* at <http://www.nysphsaa.org/Portals/0/PDF/Safety/ThunderLightningPolicy.pdf>.

Downtime

WCSD and WYSC have implemented a policy of 2 months of "downtime" for each interscholastic sport. Downtime is important for student athletes' bodies that are still growing and developing. Downtime enhances the athlete's ability to recover following a season of practices and competition, helping prevent overuse and repetitive motion injuries. WCSD strongly encourages student athletes to engage in cross-training and participate in different sports and other fitness activities during these months. During downtimes, WCSD will not sponsor an athletic program in that sport, nor will school facilities be available to non-school programs in these sports.

Health and Injury Related Protocols

We support school and WYSC initiatives relative to injury prevention and participant safety, including coaching certifications and background checks.

SPORTS PROGRAM & PHILOSOPHY

The following are age-related guidelines for sports programs.

6/under to 12

When developing programs for youngsters 6 and under, it is vital to remember they mature at different rates—physically as well as emotionally. Programs for this age group focus on motor skill development and emphasize fun for all participants.

7/8 year olds

Programs for 7 and 8 year-olds continue to focus on skill development and fun, but begin teaching the “rules of the game.” The complexity of skill development, team play, rules, and competition increase incrementally as players age up. Playing time is equal for all participants and the level of physical and emotional stress will continue to be age and developmentally appropriate. The ability to have fun should always be part of a player’s evaluation at the end of his or her experience.

13 and up/Modified – Freshman - Junior Varsity (JV) – Varsity

Program philosophies change as youth proceed through the various age/developmental levels in both community and school sports. It is important that coaches explain, and that parents and players understand, that all players have a role and responsibility on a team. At the **modified level** (approximate ages: 12-14), the focus is on learning athletic skills, game rules, the fundamentals of team play, and healthy competition. The physical/emotional differences of student athletes and appropriate demands on the adolescent body continue to be important considerations at the modified level and participants will have equal playing time.

Freshman (approximately 13-14) and **junior varsity** (approximately 13-16) programs are intended for student athletes who demonstrate potential for developing into varsity athletes. Freshman/jv participants are expected to commit to the program, team, and continued self development. There is an increased emphasis on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, and strategies of team play. Freshman and jv program goals balance continued player development with an increased focus on victory. Meaningful playing time in games will exist over the course of a season; however, a specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed.

SPORTS PROGRAM & PHILOSOPHY

Varsity competition is the culmination of each sport program. Normally juniors and seniors (16-18) make up the majority of roster spots and squad size can be limited. It is vital that each team member understand their role on a team. The number of participants is a function of those needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice as well as to play the contest. While participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed. Striving for victory in each contest and working towards both the team and an individual’s maximum potential are varsity program goals.

Adult Leagues

Adult leagues in Webster are purely recreational in nature and include a wide range of ages and skill levels.

Playing Time Playing time is an important aspect of skill development, particularly at the younger ages. It is highly important that 6-12 year-old participants (grades 1-6) share equally in playing time. This keeps everyone interested in the activity, regardless of skill level, and in essence *fun*. As participants’ age and skill level increases, playing time may be structured differently and emphasis is placed on winning over skill development. At the modified/freshman level, the focus continues to be skill development, teaching of game rules and team play. At the JV level, emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, the refinement of fundamental skills, elements and strategies of team play; striving for victory is a greater focus at the jv level. At the varsity level, winning becomes the main focus. Each team member has the advanced skills necessary to fulfill that goal.

Communication The most important aspect of any program is communication. It is imperative that the youth sport administrators and coaches, school district athletic directors, and coaches clearly communicate to parents and participants the guidelines governing their program. At younger ages, it is straight forward: everyone plays and has fun. As competition increases and the goal of winning becomes more important, it is even more critical that coach/administrative expectations and philosophies for the season are clearly communicated to players and parents. Up-front communication regarding playing time and roles of players dramatically impacts a participant and his or her parents’ experience in the sport or activity. This straight forward approach will ensure the emotional stress of all involved is kept to a minimum. Additionally, it is important for parents and coaches to keep the lines of communication open with the participants throughout the season, checking in regularly to determine that the activity continues to bring value and emotional satisfaction and embodies the quality sports environment to the participant’s life.