

Alliance for Positive Sports

Hot Springs Parks and Recreation, YMCA, & the Hot Springs Boys and Girls Club

Three of the largest agencies involved in youth and adult organized sports have formed a cooperative alliance to help promote a safe, drug free, and good-sportsmanship environment for their sports programs in the Hot Springs Area. The City of Hot Springs Parks and Recreation, the Y.M.C.A. of Hot Springs and the Hot Springs Girls and Boys Club have met and standardized the rules of conduct for parents, players, coaches and referees so that the same standards will apply when people participate in the various sports programs offered by these agencies.

This group was formed out of a cooperative relationship among the three agencies and first met when Recreation Superintendent Bea Arline invited the Membership and Athletic Program Supervisors of the other agencies to meet to discuss some of the negative trends nationwide and locally in sports – especially with youth. “We believe that the youth of our city that are involved in organized sports deserve to have a drug-free and violence-free environment for sports where good sportsmanship and fair play are the norm. We are responsible for our youth and we want their experience with sports to be one where positive values are encouraged. Competition can get a bit out of hand sometimes when parents or coaches push the youth into an attitude of winning at all costs or when adult players lose their tempers and their sense of fair play. There is so much more to sports than winning,” Arline continued. “There is teamwork, cooperation, fair play, physical activity and health and these are the qualities we want to encourage.” She and Annmarie Kaylo had discussed the problems shared by those offering sports programs and agreed that a group effort was in order.

One discussion taking place at these meetings focused on how many professional athletes are not behaving in a mature and responsible way and are not serving as a good role model when they make rude gestures, act like poor sports, or act as if the rules don’t apply to them. The group agreed that together they can and will make a difference in sports in our areas. The Code of Behavior for Parents will appear on the back of the Parks and Recreation Registration Card and is also being distributed already with the Y and the Boys and Girls Club. Parents must acknowledge receiving them when they register. Mike Volz of Parks and Recreation says, “Softball and other sports can be so good for our kids and our families. The truth is that players, coaches and parents can get really caught up in competition and forget that the main idea was to have fun and to learn the skills of the game. We should respect each other and the game. Respect is so important and we need to be the role models for our kids, and not rely on the million dollar professional athlete.”

“We are really trying to be proactive rather than punitive,” said Arline, “but all agencies are willing to take action to enforce the codes that promote positive sports values.” “The members of the alliance are FOR the kids, FOR good sportsmanship, FOR cooperative sports,” states Annmarie Kaylo of the YMCA. There have been instances when behavior of parents and players has necessitated the police being called in to assist. This is unacceptable.” Kaylo continues. “Our children deserve a safe and positive atmosphere and we as the adults have to model that behavior.” Derek Phillips of the HS Boys and Girls Club agrees with the efforts to create a positive atmosphere for youth and adult

players. “We take our responsibilities for our youth and our players seriously...and we want them to have fun. If we can all respect each other and remember that the goal is to play sports and have fun, then everyone will have a better experience.” Another representative of the YMCA at that time commented that the Y is and has been committed to providing a positive and responsible sports and recreation environment. “We want to see healthy kids and healthy adults playing in an environment where the most positive aspects of sports are the focus. We are responsible and we want to help make the sports venues positive and safe and, of course, fun.”

Listed below is the *Parents Code of Ethics* which is the first code to be standardized by the Alliance. Only the third element varies slightly while the other nine (9) are the same.”

After implementation of these guidelines, the Alliance will expand to include other interested organizations and also offer programs in the community that offer alternative views to violence in sports and promote positive values. Plans are also being discussed regarding various workshops and clinics for sports officials so that there will be similar expectations for players and coaches regardless of where they officiate. A similar code for Adult Basketball Leagues will go into effect in the leagues taking place this winter.

We are excited about the potential of the Alliance of Positive Sports. We are committed to our youth and to fair play at all ages. If your agency is interested in joining this Alliance, please call Bea Arline at 501-321-6871.

- 1. I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.**
- 2. I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.**
- 3. I will teach my child that doing one’s best, competing fairly and having fun is more important than winning.**
- 4. I will support the coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.**
- 5. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.**
- 6. I will remember that these activities are for youth—not for adults.**
- 7. I will do the very best to make the youth sports experience fun for my child.**

- 8. I will help my child to enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching or providing transportation.**
- 9. I will teach my to child treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect, regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.**
- 10. I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports activities by following this Parents' Code of Ethics.**