



DOWNERS GROVE PARK DISTRICT
YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL
Volunteer Coach's Manual



*** Game Rules will be sent in a separate document to all coaches. Game Rules are also available at www.teamsideline.com/dgparks under “Downloads” ***

*** Additional coaching aids (such as an equal playing time chart & practice ideas) can be requested by the coach and will be sent via email as well. Some practice ideas are available under “Downloads” at www.teamsideline.com/dgparks ***

General Information

Welcome to the Downers Grove Park District Youth Flag Football leagues! Our leagues provide an opportunity for participants to learn the fundamentals of playing flag football through practices and weekend games. The league emphasizes proper techniques, knowledge of the rules, team strategy, participation and **fun!**

Thank you for volunteering to coach a Downers Grove Park District youth sports team! Whether you are a beginning or returning DGPD volunteer coach, we appreciate all your time and energy.

Everyone in our youth leagues – coaches, referees, parents, and DGPD staff – should uphold the basic expectations included in the “Code of Conduct”. As adults, we are role models for young people in our community. It is our responsibility to create a safe and fun environment for our players.

DGPD Athletics Contact Information

- Assistant Superintendent of Recreation: Josh Williams, CPO, CPRP, jwilliams@dgparks.org
- Athletic Supervisor: Liz Frazier, efrazier@dgparks.org
 - Youth Soccer & Youth Basketball
- Recreation Manager: Carter Patton, cpatton@dgparks.org
 - Youth Flag Football
- DGPD Athletic Leagues Website: www.teamsideline.com/dgparks
 - League schedules, standings, and rules
- DGPD Main Website: www.dgparks.org

DGPD Youth Sports Program Objectives

Downers Grove Park District youth sports programs strive to achieve the following:

1. Programs will be designed to promote positive learning experiences that enhance physical, psychological, and social development.
2. Programs will emphasize fun, developing new skills, fair play, and sporting behavior.
3. Programs will be conducted with the safety of all participants in mind.
4. Programs will be designed to promote positive self-esteem and self-confidence of the participants.
5. Programs will be comprehensive in nature and offer a variety of levels that match available resources. If resources or facilities are limited, accommodating the needs and interest of the majority of the participants will take priority.

* Youth sports programs can be competitive on both a team and individual level. However, it is the desire of the Downers Grove Park District to keep the intensity of the competition at a recreational level, which stresses fun, learning, and the concept that everyone plays. *

DGPD Youth Sports Philosophy

The DGPD recognizes that competition in and of itself is a part of life and if placed in the proper perspective something that an individual learns from. Competition should encourage participants to strive to be the best they can be. The DGPD youth sports leagues strongly support the concept that competition must always be channeled into positive and educational experiences, never into degrading or harmful behavior patterns.

Practice sessions should emphasize skills-building and be fun. In games, winning and losing will be de-emphasized whenever possible, with emphasis placed on participation, learning, and enjoyment. No one should ridicule or punish a player when correcting technique or behavior. We must remember that we are teaching skills, not recruiting or drafting players with superior skills.

In an effort to keep the recreational philosophy and to serve the greatest number of residents, athletic programs will be designed to encourage participation for the beginner and mid-level athlete. The overall focus should still remain on fun and learning. For certain participants, their skill level and competitive needs may exceed the capabilities of the DGPD program or resources and they may need to seek outside or private clubs and organizations.

Principles for Coaches & Parents

General Youth Coaching Principles

Coaching is an extremely important responsibility. A good coach always places the best interest of the player before winning. The players and their parents have placed you in a position of leadership, and you have a responsibility to give them your best effort. This athletic experience will play a significant factor in determining whether the players continue participating in sports in the future. If you follow the list of coaching principles, the players and their parents will be better served.

Ten Coaching Guidelines

1. A coach should be enthusiastic without being intimidating. He/she should be sensitive to the player's feelings and genuinely enjoy spending time with them. He/she should be dedicated to serving children and understand sports provide physical and emotional growth for its participants.
2. A coach needs to realize he/she is a teacher, not a drill sergeant. He/she should help children learn and work to improve their skills. Personal gains are never a consideration. The job does not depend on winning. The best interest of the player transforms into the best interest of the game.
3. The safety and welfare of the players can never be compromised. A coach will consider these factors above all others.
4. A coach needs a tremendous amount of patience. Don't push players beyond their limits in regards to practice. Children have many daily pressures and the athletic experience should not be one of them. Playing sports is supposed to be fun.
5. A coach should care more about the players as people than athletes.
6. A coach should encourage his/her players to dream and set lofty goals. It is important to remain positive and refrain from making discouraging remarks. Negative comments are remembered far more often than positive affirmations.
7. A coach needs to remember the rules of the game are designed to protect the players, as well as to set a standard of competition. He/she should not circumvent or take advantage of the rules by teaching deliberate misconduct. A coach who puts his/her opponent's team at risk should not be involved with children.
8. A coach should be the first person to demonstrate good sportsmanship. He/she should take a low profile during the game and allow the kids to be the center of attention.
9. Parents and players place a lot of trust and confidence in the coach. The coach has an important role in molding the athletic experience of the child.
10. A coach can measure success by the respect he/she gets from his or her players, regardless of victories or defeat. Children who mature socially and physically while participating in sports are the best indications of good coaching.

Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to establish common expectations of players, parents and coaches so that youth sports programs provide a constructive learning experience for players in a positive sports environment.

Expectations of Coaches

1. Coaches should remember the purpose of the program is for players to have a constructive learning experience, within an enjoyable team activity.
 - a. Help players develop an appreciation for the sport
 - b. Keep winning and losing in the proper perspective
2. Coaches will demonstrate good sportsmanship by being positive role models.
 - a. Be on time for meetings, practices and games
 - b. Show respect in language and behavior toward players, coaches, officials, parents/guardians and spectators
 - c. Be approachable for players and parents/guardians
3. Coaches will promote a healthy and safe environment for players.
 - a. Monitor the court/field/diamond for safety considerations
 - b. Monitor the condition of all equipment for safety considerations
 - c. Refrain from the use of substances that are illegal to players in the presence of players in the sports environment (i.e. tobacco, alcohol, drugs)
 - d. Ensure that safety is at the forefront of all games and practices for one self and one another
4. Coaches will teach and reinforce the fundamentals and basic skills of the sport.
5. Coaches should possess knowledge of game/league rules. Rules and other resources are available from the Park District.
6. Coaches will accept responsibility for the conduct of all players, assistant coaches, parents, guardians and fans connected with their teams.
7. Coaches will use the designated communication process when they have an issue with the program.
8. Coaches will know and support the consequences to players and parents/guardians if there are violations of the Code of Conduct and be consistent/fair in the application of the code (consequences listed below).
9. Coaches will communicate with players and parents/guardians regarding:
 - a. Player and parent/guardian expectations
 - b. Game/league rules
 - c. Communication process
 - d. Consequences for players and parents/guardians if there are violations of the Code of Conduct
 - e. Volunteer assistance with the program

Expectations of Players

1. Remember the purpose of the program is to have a positive learning experience, within an enjoyable team activity.
 - a. Develop an appreciation of the sport
 - b. Keep winning and losing in the proper perspective

2. Players will demonstrate good sportsmanship.
 - a. Be on time for meetings, practices and games
 - b. Show respect in language and behavior toward players, coaches, officials, spectators and parents/guardians
3. Players will personally strive to promote a healthy & safe environment for themselves and other players.
 - a. Check condition of all equipment for safety considerations
 - b. Monitor their own health to know the physical conditions required for playing safely
 - c. Refrain from the use of illegal substances (i.e. tobacco, alcohol, drugs)
 - d. Ensure that safety is at the forefront of all games and practices for one self and one another
4. Players will learn the fundamentals and develop/practice the basic skills of the sport.
5. Players will build their knowledge of the game/league rules.
6. Players will accept responsibility for their own behavior.
7. Players will know and support the Code of Conduct and understand the consequences of Code violations (consequences listed below).

Expectations of Parents, Guardians & Spectators

1. Remember the purpose of the program is for players to have a positive learning experience within an enjoyable team activity. Keep winning and losing in the proper perspective.
2. Demonstrate good sportsmanship by being positive role models.
 - a. Ensure that players show up on time to practices and games
 - b. Ensure that players are wearing the proper clothing and have proper equipment for their sport
 - c. Show respect in language and behavior toward players, coaches, officials and other spectators
 - d. Know basic game rules and reinforce them with children
3. Promote a healthy and safe environment for players.
 - a. Refrain from the use of substances that are illegal to minors in the presence of minors in the sports environment (i.e. tobacco, alcohol, drugs)
 - b. Check the health of players to ensure their ability to play
 - c. Ensure that safety is at the forefront of all games and practices for one self and one another
4. Provide volunteer assistance, as specific needs are identified.
5. Use the designated communication process when there is an issue with the program.
6. Parents, guardians and fans will know & support the Code of Conduct and understand the consequences of code violations (consequences listed below).

Sanctions for Coaches, Players and Spectators

The Downers Grove Park District has adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy for violators of the Code of Conduct. The Park District reserves the right to suspend violators of the code of conduct from participation in the Affiliate's programs, in other Park District programs, and where the Park District determines it is necessary to issue a District wide suspension and no-trespass order for all of the Park District facilities that requires application to the Executive Director to have the suspension lifted. At the sole discretion of the Park District, the grounds for disciplinary action include, but shall not be limited to the following:

1. Sanctions for Coaches - Ejection/Suspension

- a. Not following mandated playing time rules for all players
- b. Failure to develop knowledge of or follow the league rules
- c. Failure to treat coaches, players, officials and spectators with respect
- d. Leaving a field or facility before a parent/guardian has picked up all players
- e. Failure to coach in accordance with the Coaches Code of Conduct
- f. Foul or abusive language
- g. Bullying
- h. Threatening a coach, spectator, official or player
- i. Allowing foul language or threatening behavior by players
- j. Use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or other illegal substances during a practice or game
- k. Sexual behavior or use of sexual language
- l. Theft or destruction of property
- m. Inappropriate references to sex, age, color, religion, national origin or any disability
- n. Inappropriate attire
- o. Interference with game play, except for instances of medical emergency

Each action has a consequence (based on severity); however, an ejection from the game will lead to an automatic one game suspension.

2. Sanctions for Coaches – Dismissal

- a. Striking or bodily assault on another person
- b. Multiple Sanctions or ongoing actions that originally led to the Ejection/Suspension level

3. Sanctions for Players and Spectators - Ejection/Suspension:

- a. Interference with the conduct of the game
- b. Failure to treat coaches, players, officials and others with respect
- c. Use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or other illegal substances during a practice or game
- d. Foul or abusive language
- e. Threatening a coach, spectator, official or player
- f. Bullying
- g. Sexual behavior or use of sexual language
- h. Theft or destruction of property
- i. Negative references to the sex, age, color, religion, national origin or any disability

- j. Inappropriate attire
 - k. Interference with game play except for instances of medical emergency
4. Sanctions for Players and Spectators – Dismissal
- a. Striking or bodily assault on another person
 - b. Any repeat offenses or ongoing actions that originally led to the Ejection/Suspension level

Practice Information

Practices are held weekly Mondays-Fridays at a Downers Grove Park District park or District 58 school location. Practice sites are to be determined by the Park District. Because not every District 58 school or Park District park is available for practices, some teams may practice at a neighboring school or park rather than the school attended by team members. Please note: A weekly practice will be scheduled for each team, but is not always guaranteed and is dependent on field availability. Although it is not preferred, due to unforeseen circumstances there may be times two teams are scheduled in one field space.

Possible Practice Locations:

D58 Schools (outdoor space)

Belle Aire, El Sierra, Fairmount, Herrick, Highland, Hillcrest, Indian Trail,
Kingsley, Lester, O'Neill, Pierce Downer, Puffer, Whittier

DGPD Park Areas

Ebersold Park, Hooper's Hollow Park, Hummer Park, McCollum Park, O'Brien Park,
Powers Park, Randall Park, Venard Property, Washington Park, Whitlock Park,

Game and Schedule Information

Schedules will be out at least one week prior to the start of games. When possible, schedules will be out two weeks prior to the start of games. All games are played on Sundays. When necessary, due to spacing issues, odd numbers of teams, or makeups, games could be played on weeknights as well. Games are played at the two local high school turf football fields, Downers Grove North HS and Downers Grove South HS as well as mornings at Doerhoefer Park.

<u>League(s)</u>	<u>Game Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Address</u>
Flag Football	Sunday	Downers Grove North	4436 Main Street, Downers Grove, IL 60515
Flag Football	Sunday	Downers Grove South	1436 Norfolk Street, Downers Grove, IL 60516
Flag Football	Sunday	Doerhoefer Park	4101 Venard Road, Downers Grove, IL 60515

Uniforms/Jerseys

*Each player must wear his or her league NFL Flag jersey to all games. Players are allowed to wear their own shorts and football cleats if desired.

Kindergarten – 8th Grade Leagues

The league uniform consists of an NFL Flag reversible jersey. NFL Flag jerseys for these leagues will be included in the player's registration fee. Jerseys will be available from the volunteer coaches by the team's first scheduled game.

Team Formation

Each season new teams are formed and grouped together as specified below.

Teams are created according to the following criteria when registered by the registration deadline.

1. School attended
2. Grade
3. **Mutual** Friend Request*
4. Balance of Gender
5. Roster Size
6. Date Registered^

**A non-mutual friend request or coach request will not be guaranteed.*

^Only used if roster sizes grow too large

In general, our goal is to keep players from the same school on the same team. Should enrollment numbers and roster maximums not accommodate this, schools may be split or combined to form a team. Team maximums are based on enrollment numbers at the time of the registration deadline. Returning players are not guaranteed the same team from season to season or year to year.

General League Rules

All youth flag football games will be played according to the current edition of NFL Flag rules

Any exceptions and/or additions contained in the Downers Grove Park District rules will supersede or clarify NFL Flag rules

League	Parental Responsibility
All Leagues	Parents must shoulder the responsibility and take initiative to make the program successful. Each parent should join in the total effort of honoring the program philosophies and expectations. There is opportunity for all to participate.

League	Good Sportsmanship
All Leagues	The use of profanity, obscene gestures, and/or taunting are strictly prohibited by any player, coach, official, spectator, parent, or family member on and off the court. Coaches and parents must make sure their conduct is proper in every respect and must make sure that their players and spectators do the same.

League	Tobacco & Alcohol Prohibited
All Leagues	The use of tobacco and alcoholic beverages in any form are strictly prohibited within the confines of the facilities.

League	Jewelry
All Leagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Jewelry includes but is not limited to earrings, bracelets, and necklaces. > Players who cannot remove jewelry may cover them with bandages for games. > Medical alert jewelry such as bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry but must be secured to the body. > Officials can instruct a player to remove jewelry or the player will not be allowed to play.

League	Noisemakers Prohibited
All Leagues	The use of artificial noisemakers such as cow bells, whistles, etc. during youth flag football games is prohibited.

League	Spectator Areas
All Leagues	All spectators must sit in the designated spectator areas (along sidelines – can be behind player benches)

League	Scoring, Standings & Team Records
All Leagues	<p>Game scores will be kept throughout the game.</p> <p>Season standings & records will be kept. Playoffs will take place at end of season.</p>

<i>League</i>	<i>Officiating</i>
All Leagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Only the coach can request an explanation of a call or rule - requests must be made during timeouts only. > No one is allowed to argue judgement calls with officials. > Persons who choose to argue with officials shall be subject to a possible ejection. > Each official has the authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in the DGPD or NFL Flag rules. > Physical contact with an official is not permitted and will not be tolerated. Anyone making contact with an official will be immediately ejected and suspended from further participation in the DGPD flag football league.

Thor Guard Instructions

The Downers Grove Park District utilizes the Thor Guard lightning prediction system which predicts lightning by measuring electrostatic charges on the ground and in the air. To clarify, the system IS NOT looking for lightning, but rather it is searching for conditions in the atmosphere that are associated with lightning, including a first strike. Please be aware that lightning can strike even on a sunny day. **ANYTIME LIGHTNING IS OBSERVED, THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION IS TO SEEK APPROPRIATE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY.**

The Downers Grove system is installed in five (5) zones covering 19 sites throughout the Park District. Each zone has a base unit with sensors that will activate warning sirens at the base unit and at each of its satellite locations in surrounding parks. The lightning prediction sensors at each of the five base units act independently of one another and can result in having conditions and alert signals vary from one end of the community to the other (zone to zone).

- A. Lyman Woods Zone includes: Lyman Woods only
- B. Doerhoefer Park Zone includes: Doerhoefer and Whitlock Parks
- C. Lincoln Center Zone includes: Ebersold, Gilbert, Hummer, Memorial, Patriots, Randall and Washington Parks
- D. McCollum Park Zone includes: McCollum, Concord Square, Mar-Duke Farm, O'Brien, Powers and Ned Bell Parks
- E. Golf Course Zone includes: Golf Course and Walnut Park

The system is activated each spring and operates from April through October from 8:30am to dusk, except at the following Parks: Memorial, Doerhoefer, McCollum and Walnut Parks where the system will remain active until approximately 11:00pm in conjunction with scheduled, lighted activities on athletic fields.

When the system establishes that conditions exist to predict lightning in the area, an 8-second warning horn will sound and a warning strobe-light will activate at the base unit and at each satellite park within the zone. Anyone who hears the horn or sees the strobe light should seek shelter immediately. All activities at the park should stop. The strobe light will continue to flash until an all clear signal is received. After the danger is reduced, an all-clear signal of two 3-second horn blasts will sound and the strobe light will turn off.

The Downers Grove Park District utilizes Thor Guard to provide a warning to park users of impending weather and specifically, lightning. If you have questions regarding the Thor Guard system, contact the Downers Grove Park District at 630-960-7500.

LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS

Avoid:

Open Areas / Isolated Trees
Overhead Wires & Power Lines
Water
Metal/Wire Fences
Elevated Ground
Golf Carts
Maintenance Machinery

Seek:

Enclosed and Grounded Building
Enclosed Automobile/Truck
Approved Lightning Shelter

The Thor Guard Lightning Prediction System uses TWO WARNING SIGNALS:

1. WHEN LIGHTNING IS IMMINENT – Thor Guard will sound: One 8-second blast: SEEK SHELTER NOW!
A strobe light will flash until danger is reduced.
2. WHEN ALL IS CLEAR – Thor Guard will sound: Two Short Blasts (Three at the Golf Course)

Rainout Line Instructions

WHERE TO CHECK RAINOUT LINE & LEAGUE STATUS

Parents & coaches can call 630-225-7272 and check the field status of their youth leagues. The specific rainout line extensions for each youth sports league are below:

- Youth Flag Football – Ext 17

You can also receive text or email alerts via the Rainout Line app or you can view all Rainout Line information via our websites www.dgparks.org & www.teamsideline.com/dgparks.

FIELD STATUS UPDATES



Open or Playable – Applies to athletic fields, programs, events, golf, etc.



Caution – Be advised, the athletic field or amenity is currently not up to the Park District's recreational standards; however, the field or amenity is not deemed unplayable at this time. Leagues and coaches need to evaluate field and weather conditions. Please note, some pregame/pre-practice field work may be necessary to allow your activity to commence.



Closed or Unplayable - Applies to athletic fields, programs, events, golf, etc.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATION PROCEDURES

DGPD Youth League Weekday PRACTICES (M-F)

The decision to hold practices will be up to the discretion of the youth team's volunteer coach. Coaches are in charge of notifying their teams if there are cancellations. Teams are welcome to practice in light rain, but should cancel practices if there is heavy rain or lightning/thunder.

DGPD Youth League Weekend GAMES (Sat & Sun)

The decision to hold games will be made by the Park District staff. Parents and coaches should call and check the Rainout Line on the morning of their scheduled game to check if games will be running.

Safety & First Aid Tips

Care for Common Minor Injuries

It is the coach's job to maintain as safe an environment as possible. It is strongly recommended that coaches have certification in CPR and First Aid.

When an injury does occur:

1. Stay calm.
2. Administer basic first aid as soon as possible.
3. If injury is serious or the extent is unknown: CALL 911
4. Notify Parent
5. Notify Park District staff (on game days)

Treating Floor Burns, Strains, Minor Bumps and Bruises

R – Rest, stop any activity causing pain.

I – Ice for 24-36 hours after the injury.

C – Compress with bandage if needed.

E – Elevate to avoid subsequent swelling.

Conditions Requiring Medical Attention

- Significant swelling/dislocation of an extremity.
- Any obvious deformity.
- Severe pain.
- Inability to bear weight on a lower extremity.
- Lacerations with or without fractures.
- Significant swelling of a joint, i.e., elbow, knee.
- Loss of sensation in an extremity.

Conditions Mandating Only Experienced Medical Personnel Move the Athlete

- Loss of consciousness.
- Neck or back injury with loss of sensation in arms or legs.
- Head injury with disorientation and/or visual changes.

Rehabilitation/Treatment for Chronic Injuries

1. Blisters

- Keep pressure off of new blisters.
- Where the skin is torn, use extreme care.
- Advise parents to keep area clean.

2. Abrasions and contusions (scrapes and bruises)

- Keep them clean and dry.
- Expose them to the air when possible.

3. Chronic knee pain, tendonitis, stress fractures, and ligament strains. Follow the doctor's directions

- Rest for 5-7 days and ice
- Stretch related muscles to strengthen them. Move gently.



Acknowledgement of Receipt

Downers Grove Park District Volunteer Coach Manual

My signature below acknowledges that I have received the Downers Grove Park District's Volunteer Coach Manual. My signature also indicates my understanding that the information contained in the manual is considered to be official Downers Grove Park District policy.

It is my responsibility to read the manual and familiarize myself with the information contained therein. I understand that I am expected to comply with the rules and procedures contained in this manual.

Signature

Date

Printed Name