

MARIN MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC LEAGUE

Coaches Playbook

Table of Contents

Welcome.....	2
Mission of the MMAL.....	2
MMAL Coaching Philosophy.....	2
Characteristics of an Effective Coach.....	3
Coach Responsibilities.....	3
Program Management.....	3
Player Safety.....	4
Equipment & Facilities.....	4
Practice Guidelines & Expectations.....	4
Game Responsibilities.....	5
Parent Relations.....	6
Coach Communication Expectations.....	6
Information Coaches Should Communicate.....	6
24 Hour Rule.....	6
Appropriate Topics to Discuss.....	7
Topics Not Appropriate for Discussion.....	7
Playing Time Philosophy.....	7
Sportsmanship.....	7
Ejections & Discipline.....	8
Student Eligibility.....	8
End-of-Season Responsibilities.....	9

Welcome

Thank you for investing your time, knowledge, and energy into the lives of our student-athletes. Coaches play one of the most influential roles in a student's educational experience. The lessons learned through athletics extend well beyond wins and losses and help prepare students for success in school, their communities, and life.

This resource is designed to establish consistent expectations for every MMAL coach while promoting a safe, positive, educational athletic experience for every student.

Mission of the MMAL

The Marin Middle School Athletic League (MMAL) promotes educationally based interscholastic athletics by providing safe, equitable, inclusive and developmentally appropriate opportunities for students to compete, learn, and grow. Through athletics, MMAL fosters sportsmanship, integrity, teamwork, leadership, and respect while creating a positive environment where all student-athletes can succeed both on and off the field.

MMAL Coaching Philosophy

Middle school athletics exist to educate students through sport. While competition is an important part of athletics, the primary goal is student growth and development. Coaches are expected to teach sportsmanship, teamwork, leadership, responsibility, perseverance, and respect while providing a safe, positive, and inclusive environment. Winning is valued, but developing confident, responsible young people is the ultimate measure of success.

For these reasons the MMAL encourages the participation of all children, not merely the skilled athletes. In order to encourage wide participation and to inspire student-athletes to compete with integrity, demonstrate sportsmanship, build character and develop lifelong healthy habits, the MMAL is built on a strong foundation of dedicated volunteer coaches and children open to learning and playing fairly.

Winning is important. Learning is essential.

The primary purpose of MMAL athletics is to:

- Teach sportsmanship
- Build character
- Develop leadership

- Encourage teamwork
- To develop the concept of community through the participation in team sports
- To promote individual mental, social, physical growth and development through participation in team sport
- Improve physical fitness
- Promote responsibility
- Foster school pride
- Create positive lifelong experiences

Every coaching decision should support the educational mission of the school.

Characteristics of an Effective Coach

An effective MMAL coach should strive to be:

- Positive
- Patient
- Organized
- Fair
- Respectful
- Knowledgeable
- Encouraging
- Honest
- Professional

Student development should always take priority over competitive success.

Coach Responsibilities

Program Management

- Model sportsmanship, integrity, and respect
- Ensure the safety and well being of student athletes
- Follow MMAL rules, policies, and practice guidelines
- Communicate effectively with student athletes, parents, and administrators
- Promote skill development, teamwork, and positive attitudes
- Be prepared for practices and games
- Report injuries and incidents promptly
- Respect officials and accept their decisions
- Report scores to MMAL site within 24 hours of contest completion

Player Safety

Nothing is more important than student safety.

Coaches are responsible for:

- Providing constant supervision
- Inspecting facilities before practices and games
- Checking equipment for safety
- Monitoring weather conditions and following heat illness guidelines
- Following concussion protocols: Players suspected of having a concussion shall be removed immediately and may not return until medically cleared according to district policy.
- Following return-to-play requirements
- Maintaining emergency contact information
- If any player has an injury during a practice, game, or while under your supervision, you need to fill out an accident report and report immediately to the Athletic Director.
- Fulfill mandated reporter responsibilities

Equipment & Facilities

Coaches are responsible for:

- Proper equipment distribution
- Equipment inventory
- Returning equipment
- Locking facilities
- Reporting damaged equipment
- Leaving facilities cleaner than they were found

Practice Guidelines & Expectations

Practices should be:

- Organized
- Age appropriate
- Safe
- Positive
- Instructional
- Well planned

Each practice should maximize participation and minimize standing in lines. Practices should include:

- Warm-up
- Skill instruction
- Team concepts
- Conditioning appropriate to age
- Sportsmanship discussion
- Cool down

Coaches should:

- Begin and end on time.
- Keep athletes actively engaged.
- Encourage effort.
- Correct positively.
- Never use conditioning as punishment.
- Maintain proper supervision.
- Never leave athletes unattended

Every student deserves meaningful instruction.

Game Responsibilities

Hosting Game Checklist

Before Games

- Arrive early.
- Inspect facilities.
- Verify player eligibility.
- Review sportsmanship expectations.
- Confirm uniforms and equipment.

During Games

- Demonstrate respect for officials.
- Coach positively.
- Manage substitutions fairly.
- Promote participation whenever possible.
- Model composure.

After Games

- Shake hands respectfully.
- Thank officials.

- Address concerns privately.
- Leave facilities clean.
- Report scores as required

Parent Relations

The Marin Middle School Athletic League values positive, respectful, and open communication between coaches, student-athletes, and families. Questions and concerns are best addressed through direct communication while maintaining mutual respect and professionalism.

Strong communication builds successful programs.

Coach Communication Expectations

Coaches are expected to:

- Communicate promptly with families.
- Return emails and phone calls within a reasonable time.
- Maintain professional boundaries with student-athletes and families
- Follow their school and district policies regarding electronic communication.
- Address concerns privately and respectfully
- Never criticize athletes publicly.
- Work collaboratively with Athletic Directors, administrators, officials, and families

Information Coaches Should Communicate

At the beginning of each season, coaches should clearly communicate:

- Practice schedules and game schedules
- Team rules and expectations
- Attendance expectations
- Playing time philosophy
- Communication procedures
- Important dates and season events

24 Hour Rule

To promote productive conversations, parents and guardians should not approach a coach immediately following a practice or contest regarding playing time, coaching decisions, or other concerns. Emotions are often heightened after competition; therefore, MMAL recommends observing a 24-hour cooling-off period before requesting a meeting or conversation.

If a concern arises, the following communication process should be followed:

1. Parents will speak directly with the coach.
2. If the concern remains unresolved, parents will contact the school's Athletic Director.

Appropriate Topics to Discuss

- Student's improvement and development
- Attendance or scheduling concerns
- Team expectations and student behavior
- Safety or health concerns
- Ways to help student improve

Topics Not Appropriate for Discussion

- Playing time
- Other student-athletes
- Team strategy or play calling
- Officials' decisions

Following this communication protocol helps foster respectful relationships and supports a positive athletic experience for all participants.

Playing Time Philosophy

Middle school athletics are developmental.

Whenever possible, coaches should provide meaningful participation opportunities for all eligible student-athletes while balancing safety, effort, attendance, attitude, and team needs.

Playing time is not guaranteed but should reflect the educational nature of middle school athletics.

Sportsmanship

The Marin Middle School Athletic League has zero tolerance for behavior that diminishes the educational value of athletics.

Remember: Athletes often mirror their coach's behavior.

✓ **Expectations**

- Demonstrate integrity.
- Respect officials.
- Respect opponents.
- Respect spectators.
- Treat every athlete fairly.
- Use appropriate language.
- Promote inclusion.
- Model sportsmanship.
- Follow league rules.
- Follow district policies

✗ **Not Allowed**

- Use abusive language
- Belittle athletes
- Engage officials disrespectfully
- Encourage unsportsmanlike conduct
- Place winning above student welfare

Ejections & Discipline

Any coach ejected from a contest shall follow MMAL ejection procedures.

Following an ejection:

- Leave the contest immediately.
- Do not have further contact with officials.
- Do not coach from outside the facility.
- Complete the MMAL Ejection/Incident Report.
- Submit required documentation to the Commissioner before the next contest.
- Serve any suspension required by league rules.

Student-athlete and spectator ejections shall follow the same reporting procedures.

Student Eligibility

Only students cleared by the school Athletic Director may participate.

Eligibility includes:

- Registration completion
- Physical examination (if required)
- Academic eligibility
- School attendance requirements
- District clearance

Coaches should never allow an uncleared student to practice or compete.

End-of-Season Responsibilities

Before concluding the season, coaches should:

- ☐ Return equipment
- ☐ Collect uniforms
- ☐ Report outstanding issues
- ☐ Verify all scores
- ☐ Clean storage areas
- ☐ Recognize sportsmanship, leadership, teamwork, commitment and positive attitude
- ☐ Thank athletes, volunteers and parents
- ☐ Complete evaluations

[Coaches Season Checklist](#)
