



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# YOUTH SPORTS HANDBOOK

FOR FAMILIES AND COACHES





# WELCOME

## FROM YOUR YOUTH SPORTS DIRECTOR

Dear Families, Coaches, and Youth,

Welcome to the Youth Sports Program! Our goal is that all youth sports participants, both parents and children, have an enjoyable sporting experience. Skill development is the main component of all YMCA Youth Sports. Non-competitive games are a part of every season, and each child will play for a roughly equal amount of time in every game (as close as possible based on roster of team). Of course, a FUN and FRIENDLY environment is characteristic of all YMCA programs.

Please take a few minutes and read the information inside this Family & Coaches' Handbook. It describes the Wabash County YMCA youth sports program, our philosophy, and mission statement. Hopefully it will also answer some of your questions.

Our Youth Sports Program is only possible through the dedication of our amazing volunteers. Many volunteers put in hours of work to make the YMCA programs a success. Thank you to all of the YMCA volunteers who invest time and energy in the lives of young people today. If you are interested in future volunteer opportunities, please contact us.

Supportive families are also very important to the Wabash County YMCA Youth Sports Program. We hope you will be an active participant with your child during practices and games. Time spent with your child in sports' skills development builds confidence and parent-child relationships.

Thank you so much for your participation. We look forward to serving you and your child in our Youth Sports Program. If you have any comments or questions, please call the Wabash County YMCA at 260-563-9622.

Sincerely,

Bill Barrows  
Director of Morrett Sports Complex  
260-563-9622  
[bbarrows@wabashcountyyymca.org](mailto:bbarrows@wabashcountyyymca.org)



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# OUR MISSION & PHILOSOPHY

YMCA Youth Sports is not just another sports program. Our mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all, and that mission is stated in our Seven Pillars of YMCA Youth Sports.

## PILLAR ONE

### EVERYONE PLAYS

We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut young athletes from YMCA Youth Sports. Everyone who registers is placed on a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays in every game.

### SAFETY FIRST

Although kids may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. Coaches make sure the equipment and facilities are safe, and they teach the sport as we've prescribed so that the skills taught are appropriate for every athlete's development levels. Coaches constantly supervise their players and stop any unsafe activities through positive redirection.

## PILLAR TWO

## PILLAR THREE

### FAIR PLAY

Fair Play is about playing by the rules — and more. It's about coaches and players showing respect for all involved in YMCA Youth Sports. It's about coaches being role models for good sporting behavior and guiding their players to do the same.

### POSITIVE COMPETITION

We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. The right perspective is when adults make decisions that put the best interests of the players before winning the contest. Learning to compete is important for youngsters, and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. Through YMCA Sports we want to help kids learn these lessons.

## PILLAR FOUR

## PILLAR FIVE

### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

YMCA Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately in their child's participation in our sports programs. In addition to parents being helpful as volunteer coaches, officials and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation.

### SPORTS FOR ALL

YMCA Youth Sports is an "inclusive" sports program. We offer programs to all youngsters regardless of their race, gender, religious creed, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the kids and their parents to do the same.

## PILLAR SIX

## PILLAR SEVEN

### SPORTS FOR FUN

Sports are naturally fun for most kids. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sporting activities they over-organize and dominate the activities to the point that it destroys the enjoyment of the sport. If we take the fun out of the sports for young athletes, we are in danger of the young athletes taking themselves out of sports.

# GOALS

## OF YMCA YOUTH SPORTS

- ✓ To build self-esteem
- ✓ To teach social skills—values, communication, human relations
- ✓ To teach physical skills, fitness, and health
- ✓ To develop responsibility and decision making skills
- ✓ To enhance leadership skills in youth and adults
- ✓ To build relationships among peers and between parent and child
- ✓ To support and strengthen family life
- ✓ To create fun experiences for children and their families
- ✓ To teach the values of the YMCA: Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility



**CARING:** Caring is compassion, empathy, and concern for others. One's level of caring is reflected in one's actions, not words. Youth need to care about the needs of others.

**HONESTY:** Honesty is truth-telling, reliability, forthrightness, ethics, and integrity. Again, children's first impression of this is at home. Our programming deals with children in a true, open and forthright manner. Encouragement and positive reinforcement should always be tempered by the truth.

**RESPECT:** Respect is showing regard for someone or something. In regards to people, it is valuing their dignity regardless of race, creed, or gender. The need for learning respect for other people, property, nature, animals and the environment has become very important.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Responsibility is how one fulfills his or her obligations. A responsible parent loves, nurtures, disciplines, and guides a **child**. Too often today children have excuses made for them.

## Studies have shown

Provided by the National Alliance for Youth Sports

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**“Both boys and girls who participate in sports perform better in school and drop out less.”**

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**Children who participate in organized sports and have enjoyable experiences that pave the way for an active lifestyle are less likely to battle weight problems as adults.**

# BENEFITS OF YMCA YOUTH SPORTS

Sports are one of the greatest tools in today’s society that help children develop positive character traits and life values. Under the right conditions, many youth sports experiences can be enormously beneficial, teaching the importance of teamwork, cooperation, and hard work, among other qualities.

During the years in which children are participating in organized sports they are learning about themselves psychologically, physically, emotionally, and socially. Clearly, the result of a child’s experiences in sports at the young age is crucial to their development throughout college. There are a multitude of important lessons that children learn from sports which lead to a productive adult life in our society.



- Ethics
- Abiding by the rules
- Winning and losing with grace
- Coping with success and failure
- Respecting authority figures
- Always striving to do your best

# SAFETY

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICIES

### Games

The YMCA will make a determination on weather conditions 60-90 minutes prior to game start time. Any determination after that will be made on the field. This ensures that we do not cancel games "too early" and that our kids can play if at all possible. Weather is not the only factor in determining cancellation. Field conditions that are not safe can also result in a cancellation. The Program Coordinator will make that decision.

### Practice

Decisions concerning practices will be made by individual coaches prior to practice. Please check with your coach for updates.

### Rain-Outs / Game Make-Ups

Any rescheduled game over-rides any set practice times. Coaches are responsible for canceling practices due to weather conditions, the YMCA is responsible for game days.

### How to find out if games/practices are cancelled due to weather or field conditions

Field of Dreams has a website: [fieldofdreamswabash.net](http://fieldofdreamswabash.net)

Field of Dreams also has a Twitter account: @FieldofDreamsWabash

Information will be posted to Twitter in a timely manner if there are any changes to the field conditions at Field of Dreams. There is a Twitter feed on the website that pops up the minute anything is posted on Twitter. Coaches will also be made aware via email or text if there will be changes due to weather.

### How to find out if games/practices have been cancelled during the indoor sports season

Check the Y Website at [wabashcountyyymca.org](http://wabashcountyyymca.org), the Y Facebook page or the Y app for any notification changes due to weather, or call the Y directly at (260) 563-9622. Coaches will also be made aware via email or text if there will be changes due to weather.

# SAFETY

## PARTICIPATION RULES

### Players:

Only players registered with the YMCA will be allowed to play.

All players will have equal playing time.

Each player must have the proper equipment to play.

Uniforms must be tucked in.

No jewelry is allowed during play.

### Practices and Games:

We encourage parents to participate in the activities of their children. Please **do not drop off your children** and leave the playing area; they need your support and encouragement.

Bring filled water bottles with you. Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids.

Please arrive at least 15 minutes early for your game. Please respect the team and coaches by arriving at the time they have asked you to be there so youth can warm up properly.

**Foul and negative language will not be permitted.** Coaches and spectators who do not adhere to this rule will be asked to leave the playing area.

# YMCA YOUTH SPORTS

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Encourage your child to play sports, but don't pressure. Let your child choose to play if he or she wants. Provide the sports experience.
2. Understand what your child wants from sports, and provide a supportive atmosphere for achieving these goals.
3. Set limits on your child's participation. Don't make sports everything in your child's life; it is part of life.
4. Keep winning in perspective, and help your child do the same. If your child has come off the field and her team lost, but she has played her best, help her to see this as a win. Remind your child that she is to focus on process and not results. Her fun and satisfaction should be derived from striving to win.
5. Help your child set challenging but realistic performance goals rather than focusing only on "winning the game". Support your child unconditionally; be your child's best fan.

6. Help your child understand the valuable lessons that sports can teach.
7. Help your child meet responsibilities to the team and to the coach. Your child's teammates are not the enemy. When they happened to play better than your child does — your child can have a wonderful opportunity to learn.
8. Turn your child over to the coach at practice and games—don't meddle or coach from the sidelines.
9. Inform the coach regarding any allergies or special health conditions your child has. Make sure your child brings any necessary medications to practice and games.
10. Monitor your child's stress level at home: Keep an eye to make sure that he/she is handling stress effectively from the various activities in his/her life.

## BE INVOLVED BUT NOT TOO INVOLVED

**Here are a few ways to become involved in YMCA Youth Sports**

- Be a coach or assistant coach
- Be an official or umpire
- Take part in practices when asked by the coach
- Keep time or score
- Coordinate refreshments
- Become part of a car pool

### **Signs of a parent becoming too involved**

- You are overly concerned with the outcome of the game.
- You spend a lot of time talking with the coach about the game plan, player skill levels, and the way he/she conducts practices and coaches the game.
- Your son/daughter has stopped enjoying the sport or has asked you to stop coming to games or practices.



# YMCA YOUTH SPORTS

## COACH RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

**Be welcoming!! Contact players prior to your first practice to welcome them and confirm practice times/dates/location.**

**Be accessible and approachable to players and parents before and after practices and games.**

**Arrive early to help build relationships.**

**Be informative and distribute all printed materials and communicate any changes in the schedule or special announcements.**

**Take attendance and call players who have missed two practices or games in a row.**

**Promote good sportsmanship and respect for others regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.**

**Assure safe and fair play at all times.**

**Dress appropriately and smartly.**

**Plan practice sessions and game plans.**

**Encourage and be positive in correcting and instructing.**

**Know emergency procedures**

**Listen to players.**

**Know the rules of the game and pass that knowledge on to other players.**

**Make it a rewarding and worthwhile experience.**

**Be drug, tobacco and alcohol free during all team events**

**Understand that you are a representative of the YMCA during all events.**

**Lead by example among program parents to support the duties and responsibilities of the referees and league leadership.**

**Remember you are a role model spiritually, mentally and physically.**

**Be aware of the Youth Sports Philosophy and support it!**



# COACHING OBJECTIVES

## SET GOOD EXAMPLES FOR EACH PLAYER, PARENT AND OTHER COACHES

Positive behavior, readiness, promptness and positive re-enforcement are the marks of good coaching. Yelling and negative comments are not! If you shout at players or officials, kids and parents will do the same. Do not give anyone the license to be negative or verbally question officials.

### KEEP IT FUN

Picture yourself at the bank and you are the last person in a 12 person line. Any fun? Same thing for kids. Avoid using lines as much as possible.

### ARRIVE EARLY

Have your practice field prepared beforehand. Cones, dummies and other equipment ready. No down time in between drills. No down time for kids to get into mischief.

### FAKE IT

If you had a bad day at work and you are negative or are not enthusiastic about being at practice, then you have to fake it to make it.

### HAVE A PLAN

Know what you are going to do at each practice and game. Come prepared with a practice plan. On game day, script plays if necessary and be prepared to adjust to the opponents' plan.

### KEEP IT SIMPLE

Don't use fancy words, cadences or names for plays. Have a short amount of plays and try not to run multiple sets, have too many plays or upper level formations. It just confuses players. This is an introductory level. If the kids don't understand, they cannot perform. When it becomes too complicated, kids tend to give up.

### DON'T BE AFRAID

If a drill or activity is not working, don't be afraid to change or even stop it altogether.

# HEALTHY KIDS

## STAYING HYDRATED

As the kids head into the heat, make sure they are prepared. Drink **WATER!** Water is a vital ingredient for keeping body temperature in check. Water is lost as sweat needs to be replaced to avoid dehydration. Thirst doesn't kick in until approximately 2% of body weight is lost as sweat, so make sure that kids are drinking **BEFORE** they get thirsty! Dehydration, left untreated, can lead to heat cramps, heat exhaustion and very serious heat stroke. Closely watch kids for signs of dehydration, including fatigue; dry lips and tongue; low energy; greyish skin' and lack of tears. Since children's body temperature rises faster than adults, it is essential that kids get plenty of fluids to keep them cool, especially when it's hot and humid!

### What you can do to keep kids hydrated

Make sure that kids drink fluids at every meal and snack time throughout the day, and during every period of physical activity. During physical activity make sure that kids drink frequently, even if they are not thirsty. Every 20 minutes, give younger kids 5 ounces of cold water. Offer cold water, it's absorbed faster! Avoid sugar, sweetened drinks, these absorbed more slowly.

## HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS

Frozen grapes  
Apples  
Baby carrots  
Raisins  
Berries  
Pears  
Pretzels  
Trail mix  
Melon  
Bananas  
Fruit Bars  
Water  
Precut orange wedges  
Applesauce  
Granola bars  
Light Popcorn

## HEALTHY KIDS

### STAYING HYDRATED

One of the goals of the Wabash County YMCA is to model healthy living for all. Participating in youth sports allows children to move their bodies, burn off their energy, and be healthy. This effort is undermined when we serve unhealthy snacks at half time or after a game. To support this effort, we ask that all children bring their own water bottles to games and practices and that snacks served meet our Healthy Living and Physical Activity Guidelines. This policy benefits everyone because there is less cost (you can purchase in-season produce for the team for around \$6) and there is less mess for the environment as we minimize packages and juice pouches. The best thing for kids to drink before, during, and after sports is regular water. Feel free to bring any fresh fruits or vegetables that you like, just be sure to wash them first so the food is ready to grab and eat. Small boxes of raisins or craisins are also an option but please do not bring fruit roll ups or fruit snacks since those are mostly added sugar and rarely contain real fruit. If you don't think your child will eat these items or needs something more after participating, please bring your own snack and give it to your child when away from the group.





# OUTDOOR SOCCER

## **Where can we get info on games, practices, rules and schedules?**

That information will be in the parent packet that you will receive electronically once teams are formed or as a separate document shortly thereafter.

## **Where can I find my child's coach and contact information?**

The coach will provide that info upon initial contact with you. Also, you can get that info by contacting the Y Membership desk or Bill Barrows at (260) 563-9622.

## **What personal equipment do we need?**

Shin guards, shorts or sweatpants are needs. Soccer cleats are optional.

## **Where and what time are practices?**

Each coach will set his/her practice schedule that they will share with you.

## **When and where are the games?**

All games are played on Saturdays at the Field of Dreams. The schedule should be in the parent packet.

## **When do the teams get their jerseys?**

Jerseys will be distributed to the coaches as soon as they arrive, usually the week leading up to the first game.

## **When is Picture Day?**

That date will be part of the game schedule (usually the 2nd week of games).





# SOFTBALL & COACHES PITCH

## **Where can we get info on games, practices, rules and schedules?**

That information will be in the parent packet that you will receive electronically once teams are formed or as a separate document shortly thereafter.

## **Where can I find my child's coach and contact information?**

The coach will provide that info upon initial contact with you. Also, you can get that info by contacting the Y Membership desk or Bill Barrows at (260) 563-9622.

## **What personal equipment do we need?**

A ball glove is all that is required. Most parents buy a batting helmet, but the coach will have team helmets included with team equipment. Personal bats & cleats are optional. Baseball pants are optional. (Most teams decide to wear a certain color pant and everyone buys their own.)

## **Where and what time are practices?**

Each coach will set his/her practice schedule that they will share with you. Fields at Field of Dreams are a practice site. Some coaches practice elsewhere, depending upon availability.

## **When and where are the games?**

The schedule will be in the parent packet for your team.

Most games are played at the Field of Dreams.

However, some games are played at other locations:

Manchester- at the MRA; north side of North Manchester, just off of Hwy 13 near Manchester HS

Southwood- at Southwood Elementary School

Lafontaine- at the site of Lafontaine School building

Roann- at the site of Roann School building

Lagro- at the site of the Lagro School building

Urbana- on Hwy 13 at the site of the old school building, north side of the road

## **When do the teams get their jerseys?**

Jerseys will be distributed to the coaches as soon as they arrive, usually the week leading up to the first game.

## **When is Picture Day?**

That date will be part of the game schedule (usually mid to late May).



# INDOOR SOCCER

## **Where can we get info on games, practices, rules and schedules?**

That information will be in the parent packet that you will receive electronically once teams are formed or as a separate document shortly thereafter.

## **Where can I find my child's coach and contact information?**

The coach will provide that info upon initial contact with you. Also, you can get that info by contacting the Y Membership desk or Bill Barrows at (260) 563-9622.

## **What personal equipment do we need?**

Shin guards, shorts or sweatpants are needs. Athletic shoes are required.

## **Where and what time are practices?**

Each coach will set his/her practice schedule that they will share with you. Practices are in the Blue Gym.

## **When and where are the games?**

All games are played on Saturdays at the Y in the Blue Gym. The schedule should be in the parent packet.

## **When do the teams get their jerseys?**

Jerseys will be distributed to the coaches as soon as they arrive, usually the week leading up to the first game.

## **When is Picture Day?**

That date will be part of the game schedule (usually the 2nd week of games).





# BASKETBALL

## **Where can we get info on games, practices, rules and schedules?**

That information will be in the parent packet that you will receive electronically once teams are formed or as a separate document shortly thereafter.

## **Where can I find my child's coach and contact information?**

The coach will provide that info upon initial contact with you. Also, you can get that info by contacting the Y Membership desk or Bill Barrows at (260) 563-9622.

## **What personal equipment do we need?**

Shorts or sweatpants are needs. Athletic shoes are required.

## **Where and what time are practices?**

Each coach will set his/her practice schedule that they will share with you.

Practices are in the Wood Gym.

## **When and where are the games?**

All games are played on Saturdays at the Y in the Wood Gym.

The schedule should be in the parent packet.

## **When do the teams get their jerseys?**

Jerseys will be distributed to the coaches as soon as they arrive, usually the week leading up to the first game.

## **When is Picture Day?**

That date will be part of the game schedule (usually the 2nd week of games).





# TACKLE FOOTBALL

## **What are the age groups for football?**

We play in a TRC League with several other schools. Grades 3&4 play together. Grades 5&6 also play together. Teams will be made up of players from a certain school district. Players will be on teams together as to where they go to school ie. Wabash, Southwood and Northfield.

## **Where can we get info on games, practices, rules and schedules?**

That information will be in the parent packet that you will receive electronically once teams are formed or as a separate document shortly thereafter.

## **Where can I find my child's coach and contact information?**

The coach will provide that info upon initial contact with you. Also, you can get that info by contacting the Y Membership desk or Bill Barrows at (260) 563-9622.

## **What personal equipment do we need?**

T-shirt, mouthpiece, shorts or sweatpants are needs. Football cleats are optional.

## **Where and what time are practices?**

Each coach will set his/her practice schedule that they will share with you.

## **When and where are the games?**

All games are played on Saturdays. Grades 3&4 will play at the Field of Dreams or at the other host school's field. Grades 5&6 will play at the high school field of the school hosting on a particular weekend. The schedule should be in the parent packet, posted on the Y website, Y Facebook page or the Field of Dreams website at: [fieldofdreamswabash.net](http://fieldofdreamswabash.net)

## **When do the teams get their jerseys?**

Jerseys will be distributed to the coaches as soon as they arrive, usually the week leading up to the first game.

## **When is Picture Day?**

That date will be part of the game schedule (usually the 2nd week of games).



# FLAG FOOTBALL

## **What are the age groups for football?**

Players are from grades 1, 2 and any 3rd grader who does not desire to play tackle football.

## **Where can we get info on games, practices, rules and schedules?**

That information will be in the parent packet that you will receive electronically once teams are formed or as a separate document shortly thereafter.

## **Where can I find my child's coach and contact information?**

The coach will provide that info upon initial contact with you. Also, you can get that info by contacting the Y Membership desk or Bill Barrows at (260) 563-9622.

## **What personal equipment do we need?**

T-shirt, mouthpiece, shorts or sweatpants are needs. Football cleats are optional.

## **Where and what time are practices?**

Each coach will set his/her practice schedule that they will share with you.

## **When and where are the games?**

All games are played on Sundays at the Field of Dreams. The schedule should be in the parent packet, posted on the Y website, Y Facebook page, or the Field of Dreams website at: [fieldofdreamswabash.net](http://fieldofdreamswabash.net)

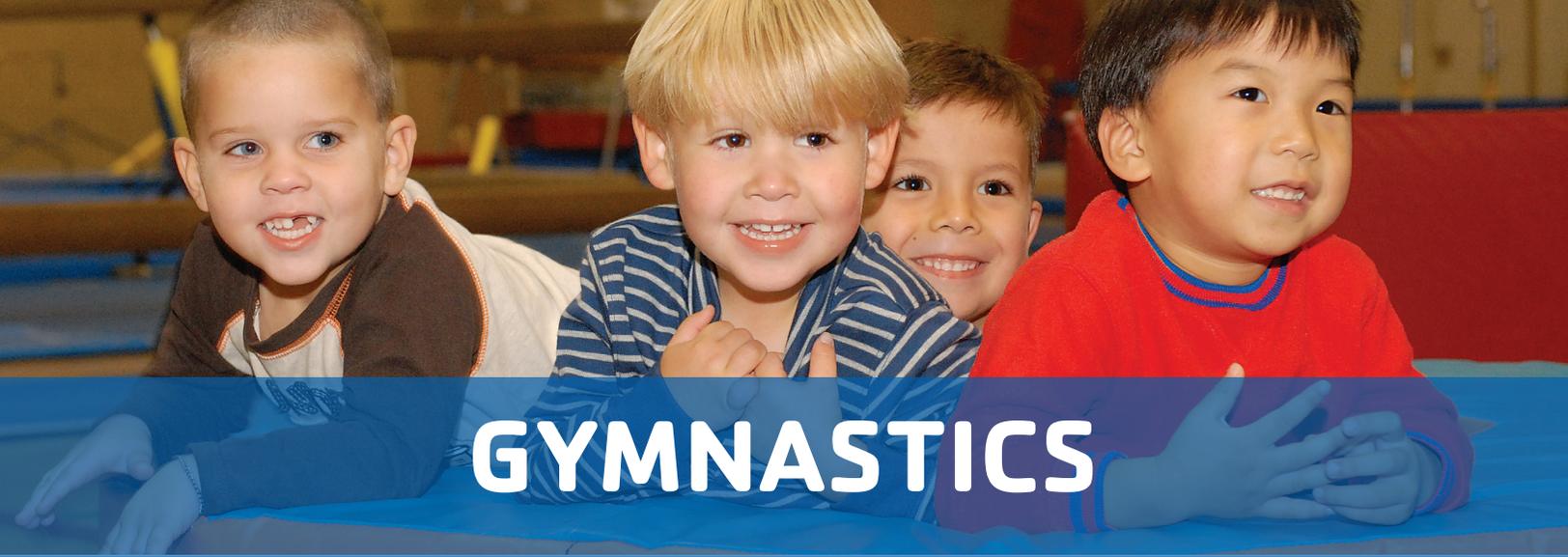
## **When do the teams get their jerseys?**

Jerseys will be distributed to the coaches as soon as they arrive, usually the week leading up to the first game.

## **When is Picture Day?**

That date will be part of the game schedule (usually the 2nd week of games).





# GYMNASTICS

## **Where can we get info on games, practices, rules and schedules?**

That information will be in the parent packet that you will receive electronically once classes are formed.

## **Where can I find my child’s instructor and contact information?**

The coach will provide that info upon initial contact with you. Also, you can get that info by contacting the Y Membership desk or Bill Barrows at (260) 563-9622.

## **What personal equipment do we need?**

T-shirt, footies, shorts or sweatpants are needs.

## **Where and what time are classes?**

You signed up at registration for a certain class time. Classes are 45 minutes long every Monday evening.



**The Wabash County YMCA Staff and Board of Directors hope that you and your family enjoy the Youth Sports Program! Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact:**

**Bill Barrows**  
Director of Morrett Sports Complex  
Phone: 260-563-9622

**WABASH COUNTY YMCA**  
500 S CASS STREET WABASH, IN 46992

**PHONE: 260.563.9622 | WEBSITE: WABASHCOUNTYYMCA.ORG**

The Wabash County YMCA is one of our county’s leading charitable 501(c)3 organizations. Our programs and services are open to all through our financial assistance programs made possible through the generosity of our members, donors and partners. To help us help others, make your tax-deductible donations today at <http://www.wabashcountyyymca.org>