

UTAH AREA SPORTS MANUAL

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PREFACE

“Church sports activities have a unique central purpose . . . a purpose much higher than the development of physical prowess, or even victory itself. It is to strengthen faith, build integrity, and develop in each participant the attributes of his Maker” (The First Presidency, *The Church Sports Official* videocassette).

In speaking to participants in Church sports, President Ezra Taft Benson advised, “Sportsmanship is the spirituality in athletics, and we believe that the Church athletic program is a spiritual program. If it wasn’t, we wouldn’t continue it, because our purpose is to build men and women of character and spirituality.” (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 437).

“There need be nothing debasing in wholesome contests. In a sense, life itself is a contest in the counter play of all the forces—physical and spiritual—which affect our living; and the development of strength and virtue comes largely out of such contests” (Stephen L. Richards, at dedication of the Smith Fieldhouse, 1951).

“Church sports activities provide opportunities for wholesome physical activity, fellowship, and sportsmanship for members and nonmembers. Participants should strive to perform as well as possible in these activities, but the emphasis should be on participation. Priesthood leaders, sports specialists, and coaches should ensure that all team members have regular opportunities to play.

Sports activities can provide year-round opportunities for members to participate in a wide variety of individual and team sports.” (*Church Handbook of Instruction, Book 2, Section 10*, p. 275).

Since their formal inclusion in the Church in 1908, competitive sports and recreational programs have helped members live and share the gospel. Competitive play offers real-life settings for involvement, cooperation, personal discipline, sportsmanship, and application of gospel principles.

Participation in sports and other physical activities should be guided by gospel purposes and assist all involved in helping to accomplish the mission of the Church, which is to invite all to come unto Jesus Christ and to be perfected in Him (see D&C 20:59 and Moroni 10:32).

Competitive sports and other physical activities have been approved by presiding Church authorities and should be implemented at the local level as they meet the interests and needs of members.

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INTRODUCTION

Physical activities in the Church are designed to help members focus on and accomplish the mission of the Church, which is to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59) and “be perfected in Him” (Moroni 10:32). Such activities offer many opportunities for fellowshiping, activating, and sharing the gospel with others. When participants demonstrate Christlike behavior and attitudes, physical activities can help them grow spiritually.

The gospel focuses on Church members’ spiritual development, as well as their social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development. Wholesome competitive sports and recreation and fitness activities can help members grow in all these areas.

Many communities sponsor competitive sports programs for children, youth, and adults. Often these programs tolerate and even promote attitudes and behaviors not in harmony with Church teachings and standards. Church sports programs offer opportunities for members and non-members to participate in activities where adherence to Church standards and gospel teachings is expected and required.

Members should not feel compelled to join in every activity offered. They should select activities they desire to participate in that allow them to meet family responsibilities, economic responsibilities, Church callings, and other commitments.

Disabled members should be included when they can and want to participate. Almost all activities can be adjusted to include rather than exclude disabled members.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the sports program are to:

1. Strengthen and contribute to the unity of families through their participation in sports.
2. Help priesthood quorums and auxiliaries accomplish the mission of the Church.
3. Use sports and other physical activities to help members live and share the gospel through participation, socializing, and fellowshiping.
4. Expect and encourage all participants to adhere to and demonstrate gospel principles and teachings, including a continuing emphasis on good sportsmanship.
5. Provide a variety of competitive sports that meet members’ interests and needs.
6. Help participants acquire and develop skills that will encourage lifelong interest and participation.
7. Promote positive and nurturing interpersonal relationships.
8. Call, train, and certify qualified officials.
9. Plan and schedule appropriate league and tournament play.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is absolutely essential in sports competition. Good sportsmanship includes thoughtfulness and concern for others; sincere admiration for the skill of teammates, opponents, and officials; self-control; humility in victory; and calmness and composure in defeat. It is playing fair, following both the spirit and the letter of the rules. It is Christlike behavior on the court or field, on the bench, or in the stands. Promoting and displaying good sportsmanship in competitive activities is a responsibility of everyone involved.

Priesthood Leadership

Priesthood leaders can promote good sportsmanship by:

1. Ensuring that qualified sport specialists, coaches, and officials (referees, umpires, timers, and scorekeepers) are called and regularly trained.
2. Committing players, coaches, and spectators to good sportsmanship and personal discipline.
3. Emphasizing that coaches and players take responsibility for team actions.
4. Encouraging families, quorum and auxiliary leaders, and members to support players and teams and to be a positive influence for good sportsmanship.
5. Discussing the need for good sportsmanship in a positive and appealing way in sacrament meetings, priesthood and auxiliary meetings, firesides, and other appropriate settings, such as personal interviews with participants.
6. Counsels privately with love, and disciplines if necessary, those who do not show good sportsmanship.
7. Fosters team spirit by helping participants understand that each person is important and can contribute to the good of the team.
8. Begin sporting events with a brief statement reminding participants and spectators of Church objectives, refer to and recite the spiritual message contained on the appropriate Utah Area Sports poster, followed by a prayer.

Honor Calls

Honor calls are made when players acknowledge openly and honestly infractions they have committed during the course of play.

Leaders could implement the honor call approach in the following ways:

1. Have coaches stress gospel principles that support the philosophy of honor calls.
2. Encourage coaches and leaders to be examples of integrity and honesty.
3. Make sure coaches and players have full and current knowledge of the sport or activity.
4. Identify and discuss different situations in games where honor calls are appropriate and should be encouraged.
5. Make sure officials encourage honor calls but make final decisions themselves.

SPIRITUALITY

Priesthood and auxiliary leaders, sport specialists, coaches, players, and spectators should understand how quality sports programs can contribute to developing Christlike attributes and plan ways to do this. The First Presidency has explained that “Church sports activities have a unique central purpose . . . a purpose much higher than the development of physical prowess, or even victory itself. It is to strengthen faith, build integrity, and develop in each participant the attributes of his Maker” (*The Church Sports Official [53019]*).

Sports Devotionals

Leaders should take every opportunity to encourage participants’ spiritual growth in sports at every level of play. Devotional programs (pre-season and pre-tournament) can foster spirituality and help participants maintain a commitment to gospel principles and practices.

Some examples of successful events sponsored by stakes are as follows:

1. A devotional for all players before stake or regional play.
2. A skills clinic by accomplished players, coaches, or officials, including an inspirational speaker focusing on gospel living.
3. A post-season awards function at which an inspirational speaker addresses the group on gospel principles applied to sports and life.
4. An annual awards evening to recognize excellence and sportsmanship.
5. Opportunities for coaches and other leaders to bear their testimonies of Jesus Christ and his gospel, thus reinforcing the positive role Church sports can play in coming unto Christ and striving for perfection.

ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Priesthood leaders should continue to support and emphasize sports programs at the ward, stake, and regional levels. As priesthood leaders follow these guidelines, sports activities can increase the faith and testimony of those who participate. Such programs can also help members share the gospel as they participate with and fellowship members and nonmembers. The scope of the sports program is determined by the Area Presidency, Area Authorities, and Stake Presidents involved.

The stake presidency and bishoprics in consultation with quorum and group leaders and auxiliary presidencies, determine the extent of sports programs in the stake. Under priesthood direction, stake and ward activities committees organize, coordinate, and implement male, female, and family sports programs.

Ward and stake physical activities directors should communicate regularly with priesthood leaders and auxiliary presidencies to determine if the program is meeting members' needs and the objectives of the Church.

WARD ORGANIZATION

Ward sports, fitness, and recreation programs are administered under priesthood and auxiliary direction.

Bishopric

As with all activities, the bishopric is ultimately responsible for the ward sports program. The bishopric has the following specific responsibilities:

1. Ensuring that the sports program follows Church policies and guidelines, emphasizing Christlike conduct and sportsmanship for players, coaches, and spectators (see "Sportsmanship" page 2).
2. Calling and setting apart the ward sports specialists for the priesthood and women's programs. Recommendations for sports specialists may come from the activities committee and from priesthood and auxiliary leaders.
3. Calling and setting apart coaches for ward teams. Recommendations for coaches may come from ward sports specialists and from priesthood and auxiliary leaders.
4. Ensuring that all who are called to work in the sports program are trained by appropriate leaders.
5. Approve eligibility for individuals and teams representing his ward (see pages 12-13).

Ward Activities Committee (see *Church Handbook of Instruction, Book 2, Section 10*)

The ward activities committee through the physical activities director:

1. Coordinates and supervises the ward sports program, ensuring that the program follows Church policies, with special emphasis on Christlike conduct and sportsmanship for players, coaches, and spectators (see "Sportsmanship," page 2).
2. Directs the purchase, care, and replacement of sports equipment.
3. Coordinates sports events and schedules with other ward activities in the monthly ward council meeting.
4. Helps train sports specialists, coaches, and officials.
5. Schedules the use of facilities for all competitive sports and other ward activities as assigned by the bishopric.

Ward Sports Specialists

Ward and stake sports specialists coordinate the male and female sports programs under the direction or assistance of the activities committee and in cooperation with quorum and group priesthood leaders and auxiliary leaders. Generally male sports specialists are called for Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood brethren and female sports specialists are called for Young Women and Relief Society sisters for each level of approved play. (Note: The Young Women's sports specialist serves under the direction of the Young Women's Presidency.)

Ward sports specialists:

1. Recognize that the sports programs can be a vital part of ward activities.
2. Observe the Church standards and policies and encourage participants to develop testimonies, spirituality, and demonstrate Christlike conduct, both on and off the court or field of play.
3. Accept primary responsibility for sportsmanship. Take appropriate measures with coaches and other leaders to ensure good sportsmanship in all contests, encourage them to follow program guidelines and rules of play.
4. Direct and promote competitive sports and other physical activities in the ward, reporting to the physical activities director of the ward activities committee. In cooperation with priesthood and auxiliary leaders, assist with or lead approved sports for youth and adults. Report to the bishopric and in ward meetings as requested.
5. Serve on the stake sports committee and accept assignments as needed.
6. Submit all completed *Eligibility Declaration and Team Roster* forms together with any *Rule Waiver* for each sport to the stake sports specialist before stake play begins.
7. Through the ward activities committee chairman, correlate sports events and schedule with other ward and stake activities in ward council meeting.
8. As requested, recommend and help train qualified individuals to serve as ward team coaches.
9. When requested by the stake sports specialist or stake officials coordinator, recommend individuals to be called as stake sports officials.
10. Prepare the ward sports budget and the report of expenditures for approval by the ward activities committee.
11. Support approved activities and help the activities committee serve quorums and auxiliaries.

Coaches

Coaches are called by the bishopric and serve under the direction of quorum and auxiliary leaders, who are responsible for teams and team members. Women coach female sports teams and men coach male sports teams. Coaches work with activities committee members and sports specialists who are responsible for administering the sports program in wards and stake. Responsibility for the quality of the sports program is shared by quorum and auxiliary leaders, coaches and participants, and activities committee leaders. All should be aware of how coaches can be influences for good in the lives of those whom they coach by keeping the commandments and bearing testimony of Jesus Christ.

Coaches should do the following things as they serve:

1. Focus on the primary purpose of Church competitive sports which is to assist quorums and classes in meeting the mission of the Church.
2. Emphasize participation, sportsmanship, fellowship, and activation for both members and nonmembers. While excelling and winning are worthy goals, participation and sportsmanship are more important.
3. Exemplify Christian principles in appearance, conduct, teaching, and expression at all times. Avoid questionable strategies.
4. Accept responsibility for team behavior and not tolerate unsportsmanlike behavior from any team members. Instill in players respect and courtesy for officials and opposing players and coaches, thus promoting good sportsmanship.
5. Complete and submit the *Eligibility Declaration and Team Roster* together with any *Rule Waivers* to the ward sports specialist before stake play begins.

6. Display knowledge of the sport to be coached and be willing to attend training clinics, workshops, practice sessions, and games to increase knowledge and skill. Review program guidelines and rules of play often, encouraging players to do the same.
7. Respect the spirit as well as the letter of policies and rules.
8. Openly and sincerely acknowledge excellence and effort in their own players, in those of the opposing teams, and in officials.
9. Give team members opportunities for practice and conditioning.
10. Give players individual help and encouragement. Always trust them with love and respect, and show concern for their health and safety.

Participants

Members and nonmembers who participate in Church sports are responsible for maintaining good sportsmanship by:

1. Maintaining self-control and being an example of Christlike conduct and good sportsmanship.
2. Knowing the rules of the sport at the beginning of the season and reviewing them often.
3. Showing respect and courtesy to officials and opponents.
4. Acknowledging in positive ways outstanding performance by opponents as well as teammates.
5. Keeping winning in proper perspective.

Spectators

Those who attend Church sports events should promote and be examples of good sportsmanship. Prior to the opening prayer of the event or contest, spectators should be reminded to:

1. Be enthusiastic, but always maintain self-control, showing respect and courtesy.
2. Acknowledge in positive ways outstanding performance by players on both teams.
3. Recognize that officials, sport specialists, coaches, and scorekeepers are fulfilling their Church callings. Give them respect and support.

STAKE ORGANIZATION

The stake competitive sports program provides the league structure for inter-ward play. The program is administered by the stake sports specialist.

Stake Presidency

The Stake Presidency:

1. Is ultimately responsible for the stake sports program, which is organized and coordinated by the stake activities committee chairman (a high councilor) and the stake activities committee.
2. Ensures that the program follows Church policies and emphasizes Christlike conduct and good sportsmanship for all involved (see “Sportsmanship” page 2), and ensures that leaders and participants are taught the purposes and policies of Church sports in achieving the mission of the Church.
3. Calls and sets apart stake sports specialists.
4. Calls and sets apart the stake officials coordinator and the stake sports officials (i.e., referees, umpires, etc.).
5. Encourages stake leaders to attend games and contests when possible.

Stake Activities Committee (see *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2, Section 10*)

The stake activities committee through the stake physical activities director:

1. Coordinates and supervises the stake sports program.
2. Ensures that the program follows Church policies and emphasizes Christlike conduct and good sportsmanship for all involved.
3. Provides for the purchase care, and replacement of stake sports equipment following stake budget allowance procedures. This is done in conjunction with the stake sports specialists.
4. Schedules fairly the use of facilities for stake competitive sports and other activities, including approved region play.
5. Directs the stake sports committee, which coordinates and conducts stake competitive sports programs. This committee consists of all stake and ward sports specialists and the stake coordinator of officials, timers, and scorers.

Stake Sports Specialists

Stake sports specialists:

1. Help priesthood and auxiliary leaders, participants, coaches, and spectators understand that the primary purpose of the sports program is to help quorums and classes accomplish the mission of the Church which is to invite all to come unto Christ and be perfected in Him.
2. Coordinate the sports program with the stake physical activities director.
3. Direct and promote stake competitive sports and other physical activities, reporting to priesthood and auxiliary leaders.
4. Serve on the stake physical activities committee.
5. Serve on the region sports committee.
6. Supervise the training of ward sports specialists, informing them of all planned stake sports activities and encouraging them to offer ideas and suggestions for improving the stake sports program.
7. Supervise the Church officiating program in the stake, which includes training and assigning officials, timers, and scorers.
8. Recommend qualified individuals to serve as officials and to attend training clinics.

9. Receive properly completed ward *Eligibility Declaration and Team Roster* together with any *Rule Waiver* forms for each team before stake play begins. Update and submit these forms to the region committee for those wards scheduled to participate in the region tournament.
10. Encourage and direct approved stake coed sports activities.
11. Prepare the stake sports budget and the report of expenditures for approval by appropriate priesthood leaders.

Stake Officials Coordinator

The stake officials coordinator:

1. Serves under the direction of the stake sports specialist.
2. Recommends through priesthood channels persons to be called as officials.
3. Trains, assigns, and schedules qualified officials, timers, and scorers for stake play.
4. Attends as many activities as possible during the season to observe officiating skills and techniques. These observations can be used in later training sessions.
5. Keeps current with rule changes and new officiating practices. Communicates with sports organizations and agencies, such as state or national sports associations, and makes appropriate information available to all officials.
6. Schedules and conducts training sessions for all officials.
7. Serves on the region officials committee and the stake sports committee.

Officials

Officials for Church-sponsored sports are called and set apart by a member of the Stake Presidency; they are then trained by stake priesthood and activities committee leaders. See *Church Sports Official* video. (NOTE: The use of paid officials is in conflict with church policy.)

To encourage good sportsmanship, officials should:

1. Understand the importance of their callings and become qualified through ongoing training and individual study.
2. Be dependable and punctual, allowing adequate time for pre-game preparation.
3. Be forthright and firm, yet kind, in performing their duties and be consistent in interpreting and enforcing rules.
4. Respond to negative comments with self-control and perhaps a reminder to participants and spectators of Church standards and purposes. Report serious poor sportsmanship problems to activities committee leaders.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of rules and be willing to answer questions and explain and clarify rules.
6. Encourage players and coaches to respect and conform to the rules.
7. Wear neat, modest, and appropriate official's clothing.

AREA ORGANIZATION

The Area Presidency has authorized an area-wide sports program and has called an area sports director to coordinate and supervise sports within the area. Post-stake competition is currently limited to region play.

On approval from the Area Presidency, the area sports director obtains priesthood clearance from local priesthood leaders for interviews and potential calls of region sports directors. The Stake Presidency involved together with the Area Sports Director conducts the interview and sets apart the sports director(s). Region sports directors serve on the area sports committee and report to the division sports director.

Area Sports Director

The area sports director:

1. Ensures that the sports program follows Church policies and guidelines, focuses on Christlike conduct and good sportsmanship, and helps participants build testimonies and spirituality.
2. Chairs the area sports committee. With approval of the Area Presidency and in cooperation with local priesthood leaders, the area sports committee coordinates and directs sports programs in the area. The committee is composed of all division sports directors, assistant area sports directors, area officials coordinator, and other members as needed.
3. Prepares and submits the area sports budget and the report of expenditures to the Area Presidency and submits annual sports activity reports as requested.

Area Officials Coordinator

The area officials coordinator:

1. Keeps current on rules and officiating techniques and practices. Communicates with sports agencies and organizations such as state and national sport associations to keep priesthood and sports leaders and officials informed.
2. Attends as many activities as possible during the season to observe officiating skills and techniques for use in training officials and leaders.
3. Works with region officials coordinators and plans, develops, and coordinates sports officiating clinics as needed.
4. Serves on the area sports committee.

Division Sports Director

The Division Sports Director:

1. Ensures that the sports program follows Church policies and guidelines, focuses on Christlike conduct and good sportsmanship, and helps participants build testimonies and spirituality.
2. Chairs the division sports committee. The committee is composed of all region sports directors, assistant division sports directors, division officials coordinators, and other members as needed.
3. Prepares and submits the division activity reports to the area sports director as requested.

REGION ORGANIZATION

The Area Presidency has authorized region sports programs. They are directed by region sports directors who serve under the direction of the division sports directors.

The region sports committee is formed to give counsel to and provide liaison with stake and ward priesthood, auxiliary, and sports leaders involved. The committee is made up of the region sports director and stake sports specialists; region officials coordinator; stake officials coordinators; timers and scorekeepers; and other members as needed.

Region Sports Director

The region sports director:

1. Ensure that the approved region sports programs follow Church policies and guidelines, focus on Christlike conduct and good sportsmanship, and help participants build testimonies and spirituality.
2. Help stake leaders understand that the purpose of the Church sports program is to help participants accomplish the mission of the Church with special emphasis on perfecting the Saints and sharing the gospel.
3. Help strengthen stake sports programs by making available training sessions, sports clinics, resource materials, and other training materials.
4. Chair and conduct the region sports committees which direct and are a liaison to stake sports leaders.
5. Receive and coordinate all *Eligibility Declaration and Team Roster* forms and any *Rule Waiver* forms for region play.
6. Arrange and schedule physical facilities and equipment for region tournaments.
7. Direct region approved coed sports activities.
8. Recommend individuals to serve as region officials coordinators and other positions.
9. Are responsible for preparing and submitting region sports activity reports.

Region Officials Coordinator

The region officials coordinator:

1. Assign and schedule qualified officials, timers, and scorers for tournament play. (Note: Officials, timers, and scorers are normally drawn from stakes involved in region play.)
2. Attend as many activities as possible during the season to observe officiating skills and techniques, making suggestions and adjustments to help achieve the purposes of Church sports.
3. Keep current on rules and officiating techniques and practices.
4. Schedule and conduct officiating clinics for officials in cooperation with priesthood, auxiliary, and sports leaders.
5. Chair the region officials committee and serve on the area officials committee.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The *Church Handbook of Instruction, Book 2, Section 10* contains policies and guidelines for activities in the Church. It should be consulted regularly for direction regarding:

Activities that are not approved	Parental Permission
Area and region activities	Participation in sports
Chaperoning	Renting non-Church facilities
Curfew laws	Sabbath Day observance
Developing local guidelines and policies	Selecting and planning activities
Dress standards	Sportsmanship
Emergencies	Travel
Insurance	

Sports Clinics

Area, Division, Region, and Stake sports clinics help provide training for stake and ward priesthood leaders, auxiliary leaders, sports specialists, coaches, officials, and participants.

Many difficulties can often be prevented in league and tournaments play through planning and training before the beginning of a sport season. Sportsmanship improves when everyone involved understands the purposes and goals of Church sports, the skills and techniques of the game, and current rules and officiating practices.

Depending on needs and circumstances, the stake, region, division, or area sports director can direct sports clinics at any of these levels. A sample clinic agenda might include the following presentations:

- The purpose and goals of Church sports
- Building and strengthening sportsmanship among coaches, players, and spectators
- An explanation of individual and team eligibility, including rule waiver requests
- Instruction on skills, techniques, and strategies of the game
- Coaching hints and helps
- An update of rules and officiating techniques
- An overview of sports schedules (league and approved tournament play)
- A question-and-answer period

The amount of time devoted to the clinic will vary according to local circumstances and needs. Where possible, all potential team members should attend.

Funding the Program

As determined by presiding priesthood leaders, the Church budget allowance program provides the funding for Church sports. As in all phases of Church activity, budgeting and spending funds for the sports program are a sacred responsibility that demands wisdom and prudence.

Ward Budget

Ward sports specialist submits a proposed annual budget to the physical activities director, who then submits it to the ward activities committee. The budget should include funding for equipment and uniforms. The bishopric approves the budget after making any necessary modifications. The ward sports budget should comply with all policies and guidelines of the Church budget allowance program.

Stake Budget

Stake sports specialist submits a proposed annual budget to the stake physical activities director. This budget may include training materials, sports equipment, and modest awards. It should also include the stake's share of funding for approved resource materials, training, and regional tournament play. The stake sports budget should comply with all policies and guidelines of the Church budget allowance program.

Region, Division, and Area Budgets

Approved area sports programs including resource material, training, and region tournament play are funded from Stake assessments. The Area Sports Director supervises the expenditure of these funds under the direction and approval of the Area Presidency. Funds for post-stake tournament play should be managed in accord with current Church finance policies and procedures.

Renting or Leasing Non-Church Facilities

Where there are no adequate Church-owned facilities to provide for approved sports programs, priesthood leaders may consider renting or leasing facilities not owned by the Church. (*Church Handbook of Instruction, Book 2, Section 10, p. 279*)

Eligibility of Individuals (see Bishopric, page 4)

The bishop, in his role as a common judge in the Church, determines the eligibility of individuals to participate in Church sports. In making such a determination, he may need to consider the residency requirement and any rule waiver requests.

Bishops should wisely consider the following issues in determining an individual's eligibility. (This applies to both members and nonmembers):

1. Honest, integrity, and morality
2. Respect for the rights and property of others
3. Attitude toward the Church and its leaders
4. Attitude toward Sabbath Day observance
5. Attitude toward observing the Word of Wisdom
6. Church activity
7. The effect such a person's participation would have on others
8. The effect participation would have on the person's attitudes and behavior

For consistency, stake presidents and district presidents may counsel with bishops and branch presidents in applying these standards.

Eligibility of Teams

The bishop certifies a team's eligibility by signing the *Eligibility Declaration and Team Roster*, which contains the name and signature of each player, and of a parent or guardian of each youth division player. As required by the eligibility form, team members must recertify before they can participate in region tournaments.

Uniforms

Team uniforms give a sense of unity and harmony and help set a standard of modesty. Uniforms should be modest, clean, neat, and appropriate for the activity. They must be numbered in front and back for basketball, soccer, softball, and volleyball so officials can identify players. The lines forming the numbers should be at least three-quarters of an inch wide. The numbers should be at least four inches high in front and at least six inches high in back. (Note: some sports have illegal numbers.)

Players should wear identical team uniforms when possible. Leaders should be frugal and stay within the ward budget when buying uniforms. They should also take steps to minimize loss and excessive wear of uniforms.

Rules and Penalties Regarding Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Presiding local priesthood leaders may impose penalties on those teams or individuals who do not behave appropriately in the sports program. When discipline is necessary, it should be appropriate to the severity of the infraction(s) involved. Discipline should be constructive, teaching important lessons as individuals strive toward perfection, rather than merely being punitive.

Non-member and Part-member Family Rule

Interested non-members are encouraged to participate in the sports program. Those who choose to participate are subject to all policies and practices of the Church sports program.

During a game, a team must always have on the court or field a majority of players who are either Church members or members of a Church family. (A *Church family* is one with at least one baptized member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. *Member of a Church family* means any individual living permanently or temporarily with a Church family.)

Residency

Generally, all team members should live within the boundaries of the team's ward. Any exceptions require the approval of the stake presidency. If a bishop feels this rule would do a disservice to an individual or family, an exception may be requested. A *Rule Waiver Request* must be completed and approved by the bishops and stake presidents involved. The approved *Rule Waiver Request* is given to the appropriate sports specialist for review and conformity with Church policies.

During a specific sport season, an individual who moves from a ward may continue to participate with the former ward for the remainder of the season for that particular sport, or participate with the new ward. Once a person participates in the sports program of the new ward, he or she is not eligible to participate with the former ward. Working through the ward sports specialist, the bishopric should add the name of the new individual to the *Eligibility Declaration and Team Roster*.

Returning missionaries, students, and military personnel are immediately eligible to participate when the bishop certifies their eligibility. Their names should be added to the *Eligibility Declaration and Team Roster*.

Individuals may only participate on one church sports team during the same season. The only exception to this rule applies to co-ed play.

School Team Players Rule

Players who have the opportunity to participate in school programs under the jurisdiction of the High School Activities Association, or players who are members of officially-sponsored Junior College, College or University teams, will be asked to make a choice between that and the church sports program for that sport. Once any such player has participated with the school team in a scheduled game of a particular sport, that decision is firm for that season and tournament play of that sport. Prior to that first game, if the player leaves the school squad, he/she would be eligible to participate with the ward team for the remainder of stake play and thereafter any tournament play for which they qualify.

An individual may play for both Church and school teams until the first scheduled school game. A participant who has been a member of a school team after the beginning of Church play is not eligible to join or rejoin the Church team during the current season, even though school play may end before Church play ends. (*Church Handbook of Instruction, Book 2, Section 10.*)

Youth who are on school teams should be encouraged to assist with coaching and officiating in the Church program.

Professional Athletes

Generally, professional athletes who meet eligibility requirements may participate in Church sports but may not participate in any sport in which they are currently active professional players.

Age Rule

Youth Participation

The age groupings of the Aaronic Priesthood (Deacons, Teachers, Priests) and Young Women (Beehives, MiaMaids, Laurels) for sports participation are generally appropriate. In units where youths are few in number, combining quorum or class members to make a team is recommended. When combining youth to form a team, leaders should consider each participant's age, maturity, and physical size to ensure safety and fair play.

Youth who turn fourteen, sixteen or eighteen, during a sports season, may finish the sport in which they are currently playing or move up immediately to the team of their new age group. (Exception: Students turning eighteen while still in high school may delay this decision until the graduation of their class). Bishops may, in special circumstances, allow young men or young women eighteen years of age to participate in youth sports. However, participation in sports should not delay worthy eighteen-year-old young men from receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood and being ordained to the Office of Elder (*General Handbook of Instructions*, p. 4.2). Eighteen-year old young men who are ordained Elders may complete the sport in which they are currently participating or move up to the adult sport program. They may not, however, participate in both youth and adult play during the same season. **Note:** At the conclusion of that sports season, eighteen-year old Elders **MUST** participate in the adult program. All young men nineteen and older are to be affiliated with the Elders quorum as ordained Elders or as prospective Elders (*General Handbook of Instructions*, p 4-2). All young women nineteen and older are to be affiliated with the relief Society. On their nineteenth birthday, they may choose to finish that sport in the youth program or advance to the adult sports program. They must however, advance to the adult program at the start of the next sport season.

For application of the age rule, the sports seasons are considered to be:

Basketball	December 1 - April 15
Softball	April 1 - August 31
Volleyball	September 1 - November 30

The bishopric or stake presidency determines to what extent youth under age 14 may participate in activities. (*Church Handbook of Instruction, Book 2, Section 10. p.278*)

Adult Participation

Age divisions for adults should meet the interests and needs of those who want to participate. Where enough people express interest in participating, a ward may have a younger adult team eighteen through twenty-nine years of age and an older adult team thirty years of age and above. Each age group may be involved in stake play. Play may be organized for both adult males and females.

In student and young single adult units, specific age groupings for play are usually not needed.

Rules Governing Play

Except for the Church and Area modifications of rules, the "Rules of Each Sport" which govern play are as follows:

Basketball Rules: The official high school basketball rules published by the National Federation of High School Associations will govern play with adaptations as described herein unless otherwise directed. The address of the NFSHSA is 11724 Plaza Circle, Box 20626, Kansas City, Mo. 64195.

Softball Rules: The official rules of the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) will be used. The address of the Amateur Softball Association of America is 2801 N. E. 50th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111.

Volleyball Rules: The official rules of the United States Volleyball Association, as written, will govern play with the adaptations as described herein unless otherwise directed. The address of the USA Volleyball is 715 South Circle Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80910-2368.

Golf Rules: Rules of the United States Golf Association. Obtain rules from your local golf pro shop or the USGA, Golf House, Far Hills, New Jersey 07931.

Futsal Rules: Contact the appropriate Area Sports office (Utah North, Utah Salt Lake, or Utah South)

Multiple Ward Teams

Where there are sufficient interests and numbers of participants in a given sport, wards may field more than one team. This will increase the number of participants and the playing time for each individual.

If a ward has fielded two teams in an age division during stake league play, the two squads may be combined for post-stake play on approval of the bishopric.

Combining Teams

If a ward cannot field a complete team, local priesthood leaders may permit individuals of the same age division from two wards in the same stake to form a single team.

Sunday, Monday and Other Restrictions

Participation in sports on Sunday is not in harmony with teachings of the gospel. No games or practices are to be scheduled on Sunday. Also, sports activities should not conflict with or take the place of regular Church meetings scheduled during other days of the week. Monday night is reserved for family home evening throughout the Church. No games or practices are to be conducted after 6:00 p.m. on Mondays.

Coed Sports

As approved by priesthood leaders, sports and recreation activities that involve both males and females (youth or adult) should be planned by stake priesthood and auxiliary leaders and ward sports specialists. When males and females participate together in sports activities, official rules can be adapted to allow all members to participate on a more equitable basis, thus promoting safe, enjoyable, and active participation for all.

LEAGUE AND TOURNAMENT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Tournaments in the Church sports program are usually extensions of stake league play. Post-stake competition is limited to region play. Decisions about tournament play are made by the Area Presidency in counsel with Area Authorities and Stake Presidents.

Teams with the most success in stake play are given an opportunity to play teams with similar success in other stakes in region tournament play. Tournament play often becomes the culminating activity of a given sports season. Like ward and stake play, tournament play should stress Christlike conduct and good sportsmanship. Region Sports Directors and committees direct approved tournament play.

Types of Play and Tournaments

Stake league play usually involves planning and scheduling round-robin play. Region tournament play usually involves single or double elimination tournaments. In organizing a tournament, consider the type of sport or activity, the availability of facilities, time and officials, travel, and the interest of participants. Study each type of tournament to determine what may be best.

Round-Robin League Schedules and Tournaments

Round-robin stake league schedules are usually best because they maximize participation over a specified time period. In single round-robin play, each team plays every other team once before a winner and runner-up are named. In a double round-robin each team plays every other team twice. Teams with the most number of wins are declared winners, or in the case of a tie, co-winners. The runner-up is usually the second place team.

For other types of tournaments, or information, contact the area sports office.

AWARDS

The main purpose of awards is to recognize achievement and sportsmanship. They should be appropriate to the sport, reflecting individual and team effort and success in sportsmanship as well as playing the sport.

Team Recognition

Large team trophies should not be presented. Appropriate awards might include:

1. A picture of the team that includes players, coaches, and presiding Church leaders.
2. Equipment, such as volleyballs, soccer balls, basketballs, softballs, bats, or inexpensive shirts.

Individual Recognition

Sometimes individual awards may be appropriate, if given, they should be inexpensive and in good taste.

Exemplary Individual Recognition

An award for exemplary individual performance and sportsmanship may be given for region or stake play. This award could be presented annually on an appropriate occasion, such as a tournament, devotional, or fireside. The award may be named after outstanding Church sports leaders whose names and recognition have been approved by the appropriate priesthood sports adviser and presiding priesthood leaders. Permission to use an individual's name should be obtained in advance or from the family if the individual is deceased.