



Parent Orientation Meeting

Coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with team parents early in the season by holding a parent meeting. This meeting will set the tone for your team for the entire season.

A parent meeting can be a formal discussion in a school classroom or office building or a casual gathering in a living room. Not at a bar. Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay dividends for all concerned throughout the season.

Meeting Objectives

- Become acquainted with your players and their parents
- Review league, practice, and game schedules
- Understand team goals and rules
- Understand league specific rules and structure
- Assign team parent roles
- Address any concerns of the parents
- Review parent, player, referee, and coach codes of conduct
- Review Laws of the Game

Things to Consider When Organizing the Meeting

- Hold it early in the season, preferably before the first team practice.
- Having the players present is optional. However, if they are not present then it is advisable to hold a meeting with your players and clearly explain to them what you explained to the parents.
- Preferably hold this meeting at a school. If you cannot hold it in a school, try a private home, community center, or library.
- Be prepared and be organized to conduct the meeting efficiently.
- Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example:
 - Summary or outline of the meeting
 - Schedule of practice and games
 - Team roster
 - Team goals/rules
- Parents make excellent assistant coaches! Make sure to recruit and retain help from the earliest point possible.

Important Points to Cover

There are many important points to cover during a parent meeting. The following is a sample agenda, which can be adjusted as needed:



1. Coach Introduction
 - a. Introduce and give background information on yourself and your assistant coaches.
2. Coaching Philosophy/Responsibilities
 - a. Refer to Coaching Code of Conduct.
3. Team Guidelines
 - a. Practice schedule (How many per week? How long?)
 - b. Game schedule (How many? When do they begin?)
 - c. Discuss how players must respect opponents, coaches, officials, and the game itself.
4. Team Management
 - a. Appoint parents to assist with team duties (i.e. after-match social coordinator, paperwork coordinator, someone to bring ice to matches, year-end party organizer, etc.)
 - b. Set up telephone tree and/or car-pooling system. Coaches must not drive players other than their own child
 - c. Recruit parents as assistant coaches
5. Risk Management
 - a. Every volunteer should be registered with your team through USA Rugby in the role of 'Coach' or 'Admin' to initiate background check
 - b. Medical kit will be provided at all games and practices. Coaches maintain basic First Aid certification.
 - c. Cover medical guidelines
 - i. Concussion protocol and emergency plans
 - ii. Medical insurance/accident and 3rd party liability
 - d. Minimum four contact and scrum (for forwards) required prior to participation. It may take longer than four sessions to adequately train players. Coaches reserve the right to hold out a player who has not had sufficient training.
6. Player Responsibilities
 - a. Refer to Player Code of Conduct
7. Parent Responsibilities
 - a. Refer to Parent Code of Conduct

Team Goals

During the first player meeting, allow players to collaborate and create their own team goals. Utilize the 'SMART' model to guide their efforts.

- S – Specific and clearly defined
- M – Measurable (can be assessed/observed/recorded in some way)
- A – Action Oriented (contains a clear action to be executed)
- R – Realistic (attainable; not too easy or difficult to achieve)
- T – Time-bound (daily, weekly, monthly, season)



Here are a few suggestions of possible team goals:

- Have fun playing rugby by learning new skills: Young athletes want to play and have fun as well as learn new skills. Developing rugby skills allows athletes to play the game and enjoy the overall experience.
- Maintain a positive environment through encouragement and teamwork: Encourage all players, coaches, and parents to maintain a positive rugby environment, including all verbal and non-verbal actions, behaviors at practices and games, as well as off the field.
- Respect all teammates, opponents, referees, and others on and off the field: Young athletes need coaches and parents to support and model good sportsmanship behavior towards referees, opponents and teammates so they can embody it themselves.
- Learn life skills while playing the game of rugby: Rugby teaches many life lessons including leadership, commitment, respect for others, self-control, decision making, communication, etc. Coaches should encourage the development of people, not just players.

As the season progresses, make sure to check in with players to assure team goals are being achieved.

At the end of the season, review these goals with individual players and as a team. Regardless of how many games were won or lost, coaches can declare a successful season if the players had fun, learned skills, were good sports and learned the Laws of the Game.

Team Rules

Team Rules allow a coach to manage a team more effectively by reinforcing rules that provide for more enjoyable and effective practices. Team rules should include what is OK and NOT OK behavior during practices and games. Some team rules to consider:

- Respect your teammates and coaches
- Everyone listens when the coach is talking
- Try your best at practices and games
- No negative comments or criticisms of teammates
- Wear appropriate rugby attire to all practices and games
- Bring water to all practices and games
- No child will be alone with any one adult