



# Youth Sports

## Responsible Sports: Fostering A Positive Youth Sports Experience

(NAPSA)—Youth sports offer some 35 million children the opportunity for a fun, social and character-building experience, and many adults are seeking the resources and knowledge to be supportive mentors to their budding athletes.

“Youth sports are a great opportunity to teach many of life’s lessons to children,” says Jim Thompson, founder and director of Positive Coaching Alliance. “While we celebrate the success of parents and coaches who excel at this, we should also help adults who need advice on making a positive impact in the lives of these young athletes.”

In that spirit, Thompson points to [www.responsiblesports.com](http://www.responsiblesports.com), an online community designed to help adults engaged in youth sports. The Responsible Sports program is a partnership among his organization, US Youth Soccer, USA Football and Liberty Mutual that features advice, educational materials and best practices for coaching and mentoring.

Nominations are now being accepted for football and soccer coaches who succeed by using a responsible approach to mentoring young athletes.

Additionally, \$2,500 grants will be awarded to 20 organizations across the country that get the most community members to complete the Responsible Sports curriculum on [www.responsiblesports.com](http://www.responsiblesports.com) by the end of 2007.

For moms and dads, Jim Cosgrove, executive director of US



Youth Soccer, points to the Responsible Sports Web site for the following tips on youth sport parenting:

- Learn to communicate effectively with coaches by making positive contact early in the season and always let coaches know when they are doing something right.
- Observe a 24-hour “cooling off” period before talking to a coach or referee about something that upset you.

For coaches, USA Football executive director Scott Hallenbeck refers to the following advice, also found on the Web site, for youth sport coaching:

- Maximize teachable moments in a game to demonstrate life lessons and responsible behavior to young athletes.
- Strike a balance between truthful praise and constructive criticism to foster an ideal learning environment.

Tips like these are an excellent start for giving young athletes a positive example they can apply to Saturday’s game, Monday’s classroom and the rest of their life.