



Welcome and thanks for considering an Upward Coaching Position!

The decision to be a coach for Upward Sports is both exciting and important. You have the opportunity to make a huge, positive difference in the lives of kids in our community. Upward is a Christian sports league and our goal is to promote discovery of Jesus through sports. Please read this small packet thoroughly and carefully. We believe that a great league starts with coaches who understand the Upward mission.

Upward Sports is designed to be a competitive and fun environment for kids, and the coach is primarily responsible for this at practices and games. It is up to the coach to equip players with the athletic skills they are pursuing and to be an ambassador for sportsmanship and character on and off the court. The success of a coach is not based on wins and losses. It is based on how he or she stresses the values of **sportsmanship, teamwork, integrity and respect.**

An Upward Sports coach should be equally strong in both ministry and sport. A coach who is strong with all ministry aspects but is weak in teaching the sport will leave many parents unfulfilled in their child's sport development. Likewise, a coach strong in sport development but weak in the ministry components will create an experience that falls short of our league's goal of impacting our community for Christ. The parents and players on that coach's team will be involved in "just another sports league." We will be intentional in placing coaches that are strong in their faith life and their sports knowledge in head coaching positions. Make no mistake about it though, there are assistant coaching positions open to anyone willing to step in and make a difference in the lives of kids.

If you are new to our league and maybe nervous about the term "ministry" or some other "churchy" words, please know that our league has a special place for everyone! All are welcomed and needed in our league and we will do our best to educate you in the purposes of this league. Don't hesitate to follow up regarding any info you find in this packet.

So, get ready! It's going to be an exciting year. Don't hesitate to contact us with questions!

Sincerely,

Johnathan Martinez
Upward League Director



UPWARD COACHING FAQ

What sports does Upward Sports include?

At First Melissa, we offer Basketball & Cheer December to February. We need coaches for all our leagues. The following guidelines apply to all our sports unless otherwise noted.

How much of a time commitment is expected of an Upward Coach?

Our Upward seasons begin with three weeks of practice followed by seven weeks of games and practices. Practices are one night a week and one hour long. Practices include skills/drills, scrimmages, and a Bible devotion. Each team will have one 1-hour game per week.

What is expected of me as an Upward Coach?

As an Upward Coach, your goal is to provide a great sports experience while connecting with your players and sharing the love of Jesus Christ. To accomplish this, it is important to understand your responsibilities as a coach at practices and game:

Practices	Games
Prepare for practices by having a plan in place for skill development	Participate in player introductions and pre-game prayer led by the referees
Teach the fundamentals of the game through drills to enhance basic skills	Support the referee with positive comments throughout each game
Teach the rules of the game	Know and follow the substitution system each game
Share a 5-8 minute devotion with your team during each weekly mid-practice huddle time	At the end of each game, conduct a game day star presentation with all players and parents
Distribute practice stars at the end of each practice and practice cards at the end of specific practices during the season	BASKETBALL ONLY: HEAD OR ASSISTANT COACHES ARE EXPECTED TO REFEREE THE GAME BEFORE YOUR GAME EACH WEEK.

Who is eligible to coach?

Here is list of expectations we have of every coach in our league: (1) knows and enjoys the sport (2) enjoys kids (3) is willing to carry out the Upward mission of sharing the principles and message of Jesus Christ (4) knows the importance of encouragement (5) is a motivator (6) is an effective communicator (7) leads by example and (8) displays commitment. We will be intentional in placing coaches that are strong in both ministry and sport in head coach positions. However, there are assistant coaching positions open to anyone willing to step in and make a positive difference in the lives of kids. All prospective coaches are subject to the approval of First Melissa. Note: Each volunteer in our league must pass a criminal background check.

If my child plays, can I be his/her coach?

Absolutely. We take great strides in making this happen. There are factors that could affect the ability to carry this out, but we will do everything within our power to make this happen. Coaches will always have their own child on their team.

Do I have to come up with my own practice plan?

No. Each week of practice is completely laid out for you including skills, drills and devotions. Your coach's playbook will be complete with diagrams for the drills and everything you need to carry out a full practice.

What do I need to do for the weekly devotion time?

A 5-8 minute devotion will be required each week of practice. Devotions are age specific and are provided in the coach playbook. Spend time before practice reviewing the devotion and be prepared for the object lesson that may accompany the devotion. Assistance will be available to help enhance this area, if necessary.

How will I monitor playing time for each of my players?

Using the Upward Substitution System, coaches are free from monitoring playing time for each player. The system allows for equal playing time for each player. The substitution system provides every child the opportunity to be in the starting lineup, requires no child to sit out back-to-back segments and allows every child to play at least half of the game. More in-depth explanation will be given during coach training. All coaches are expected to follow this substitution at all times as our league's success depends upon it.

What resources will Upward Sports provide?

Upward Sports provides the following resources for coaches:

- Coach polo shirt
- Coach playbooks (paper and online)
- Weekly devotions (included in playbook)
- Player Stars (awards for game day)
- Substitution forms (in playbook)
- Official Upward Coach app with tons of resources including videos and diagrams (www.myupward.org)
- Star Distribution forms (in playbook)
- League Director and Coach's Commissioner available for questions/direction
- Upward Coach's App for smart phones complete with rosters, contacts, devotions, practice plans, and more.
- Thorough in-person training (required for all coaches)

What are Upward Game Day Stars?

Upward Game Day Stars are given to each player for positive characteristics exhibited during game play. There is an easy way of awarding these stars each game which will be explained at coach training. Each game day color represents a different meaning:

- **RED STAR** - Defense
- **BLUE STAR** - Effort
- **GRAY STAR** - Offense
- **GOLD STAR** - Sportsmanship
- **WHITE STAR** - Christlikeness
- **GREEN STAR** – Practice participation

Where will I practice?

Most basketball and cheer practices are held in the FM gym or classrooms.

Will you train me to be an Upward Coach?

Absolutely. Every coach is REQUIRED to go through training. It is of utmost importance that you place this as high priority. We purposefully offer multiple dates in order to keep it flexible for you. You will find our training sessions enjoyable and very helpful.

Whom should I contact if I have any issues?

Our Upward League Director will always be available, but we also will have referees and gym/field commissioners that are easily accessible on game days.

Upward League Director: Johnathan Martinez

979-838-2277(church)

jd54jd@gmail.com



PLAY WITH PURPOSE

Want to Know More?

Here are a few super ways to find anything and everything you could ever want to know about Upward and coaching:

Website for First Melissa
(our league specific information)

www.firstmelissa.com/upward

Upward Sports Official Site

www.upward.org

Your most important resource as a coach. One-click access to your team rosters, contacts, devotions, practice plans, and more. Registration and login credentials required.

www.myupward.org