
Athletes for a Better World

ABW Club

**Resources to start an
extra-curricular student club**



Winning More Than The Game

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Introduction

Athletes for a Better World is a program open to all students who wish to change the culture of sport by promoting individual character, teamwork, and civic responsibility through commitment to the Code for Living. Our vision is to have the Code become a part of every sport at every level, so that it becomes the common language and standard expectation of behavior for everyone.

ABW teaches empowerment through student led projects to address issues of sportsmanship, teamwork, leadership and citizenship. ABW helps individuals develop and learn:

- to do one's best: the values of self discipline and hard work
- to play fair: the importance of rules and good sportsmanship in a drug free environment
- to be a part of a team: the willingness to sacrifice for the common good
- to respect the other: the commitment to act with integrity at all times
- to recognize the difference one person can make: the desire to be a positive role model
- to be responsible: the courage to acknowledge mistakes and learn from them
- to be a good citizen: to play a positive role in the community and world

ABW can be implemented as an after-school or lunchtime program for high school, middle and elementary students in public and private schools. It can also be a part of Parks and Recreation Programs, scouting groups, summer camps, church groups, or any other youth based programs involved with athletics. The benefits of ABW are many, but the end result is clear – our goal is for each member to be a good person, a good teammate and a good citizen.

The following are suggestions on how to get started, but you should feel free to adapt the ideas to your particular group and use what will work best in your situation.

Membership

Student interest should be the driving force in forming an ABW Club at your school, and should be student-run. But first, you must have permission from your school principal and find an adult to be the ABW Advisor – a coach, athletic director, teacher, counselor, parent, etc. Once you have school permission and an adult advisor, it's time to spread the word and find other students to join.

Once you have a core group of members, set a schedule of meetings. There should be at least one meeting per month. You may choose to keep these meetings as casual gatherings, or make them more formal by establishing an executive board model that acts as a team - a Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary to be elected. Duties would be as follows:

Chairman:

- 1) Calls meetings and provides structure and order during the meetings
- 2) Reports directly to the advisor, who must confirm/approve plans
- 3) Delegates responsibilities for projects to members
- 4) Is responsible for committees' meeting; establishes deadlines
- 5) Head spokesperson/role model for the ABW Club

Treasurer:

- 1) Keeps account of all receipts, expenses and income
- 2) Provides an up-to-date report of chapter finances at each meeting
- 3) Takes an active part in planning and implementing club activities and programs

Secretary:

- 1) Keeps accurate minutes and notes of each meeting
- 2) Takes an active part in planning and implementing club activities and programs

In addition, a Class Representative should be elected for each grade. Their duties include:

- 1) Representing his/her grade level as the prime ABW role model for that class
- 2) Recruiting classmates to help with club projects
- 3) Responsible for getting information about ABW to classmates

Adult Advisor:

The adult advisor should be someone who cares about, and is committed to ABW and the Code for Living, and is able to empower students to communicate that message within the school and community. Their duties include:

- 1) Provide advice and counsel to the Board.
- 2) Act as a facilitator when needed - Help students make decisions about policy and procedures for their ABW club, i.e., electing officers, meeting times, etc.
- 3) Be a role model for ABW members.
- 4) Act as a liaison between the students and the school administration: Set up a meeting between your ABW club and administrators to discuss ABW's mission; Request approval for all ABW activities, especially those that require that the entire student body attend; Request approval for early release times for ABW club members when appropriate; Include student representatives at meetings with administrators whenever possible.

How to Implement ABW at your school

The Code for Living:

- Adopt the Code for Living into your school's athletic department as the standard expectation of behavior for all.
- Distribute the Code to all coaches, athletes, fans and parents. Encourage everyone to sign it.
 - Work with local merchants to offer discounts for ABW members who show their membership card.
- At all games, distribute copies of the Code for Living to fans as they arrive and have the PA announcer remind everyone of the Code before the game begins, asking them to demonstrate good sportsmanship and positive behavior at all times.
- Add the Code for Living to game programs, schedules, rosters and other printed materials distributed by your athletic department.
- Teach each team to start their game with the following cheer: "Play Hard! Keep the Code!"

Promote: ABW and the Code for Living.

- Recognize athletes who exemplify the spirit of ABW
 - Give ABW Spirit trophies at your banquets to those who have best exemplified the Spirit of ABW and nominate them for the National Spirit of ABW award.
 - Ask your coaches to choose a "Sportsperson of the Week" from their team and display photographs of these players and their coaches on an ABW bulletin board.
 - Have officials choose a "Sportsperson of the Game" for each home game, and recognize these athletes at the end of the season.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship at all competitions and to visiting teams.
 - Attend athletic events whenever possible and serve as a model of good sportsmanship – communicate to other spectators during the event what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
 - Create banners welcoming opponents and fans to your facility.
 - Ask home team fans to stand and applaud as the visiting team is introduced as well as the home team.
 - Support the other teams in your league: for example, if a team advances in tournament play, send them a good luck message, and/or attend the game as a show of support, and/or send a congratulatory note.
 - Thank the officials after each competition.
 - If you and/or any of your teams felt they were treated especially well while visiting another school for a competition, encourage them to write a note to that school's principal and/or athletic director to thank them.
- Encourage teams to organize and participate in a community service project.
- Use the Code for Living as a base when speaking to athletes and others.
- Invite a local athlete to your school to talk about sportsmanship, teamwork and citizenship.
- Develop/present skits related to the Code for Living for other students.
 - Work with Drama Club to put together skits related to the Code for Living – Offer to perform them at community meetings, PTA meetings, and/or younger grades and peers.
- Write an article for publication in school or local newspapers on sportsmanship, teamwork, citizenship and/or leadership in athletics.
 - Work with your school paper, community paper, PTA bulletin, school bulletins and/or school announcements to let them know about your club activities.
- Create a mural related to the Code for Living near your athletic facilities. Ask each student in the school and/or ABW club to help out. Have a dedication with city officials or school administration.
- Paint the trashcans at your athletic facilities with positive messages related to the Code.

Athletes:

- Introduce all athletes to ABW and distribute materials (Code for Living, curriculum, posters, newsletter, etc.).
- Have all athletes sign the Code for Living.
- Clearly state to each athlete that they are expected to promote sportsmanship and model the values stated in the Code for Living as a representative of their school.
 - Treat the opposing team as you would like to be treated – Refrain from taunting, trash-talking or any derogatory remarks. Thank the officials after each competition.
- Periodically assemble the team captains of all the sports within your athletic program for an open forum on the current state of your teams, fair play and sportsmanship within your school, athletic conference and state. Brainstorm and create a list of suggestions that will increase the awareness of these issues. These ideas may then be presented to your school's athletic director and/or any other appropriate administrator.
- Prior to a big game, help coaches and their team get together with members or players of your school's biggest rival, and plan a community service project together. Such a project will enable opposing players to interact off the field in a positive, non-competitive situation. Developing these relationships will foster and encourage good sportsmanship and fair play on game day.

Coaches:

- Introduce all coaches to ABW and distribute materials (Code for Living, curriculum, posters, newsletter, etc.).
- Have all coaches sign the Code for Living.
- Encourage them to use the curriculum as a tool to reinforce the values of the Code for Living.
- Clearly state to each coach that they are expected to promote sportsmanship and model the values stated in the Code for Living to their team.
 - Coaches are expected to set a good example for the players and spectators to follow: they should refrain from arguments in front of players and spectators, avoid any gestures towards the officials or opposing coaches, avoid throwing objects when upset, and avoid the use of profanity.
 - Coaches should shake hands and thank the officials and opposing coaches before and after the competition and ask their players to do the same.
- Organize a periodic coaches forum that will involve all coaches within your athletic department. During the meeting, identify problem areas and develop a strategy to improve the awareness of good sportsmanship for the future. Have the coaches examine their behavior as role models and how it affects the attitudes of their players.
- Prior to a big game, get your team together with members or players of your school's biggest rival, and plan a community service project together. Such a project will enable opposing players to interact off the field in a positive, non-competitive situation. Developing these relationships will foster and encourage good sportsmanship and fair play on game day.

Parents

- Introduce all parents to ABW and distribute materials (Code for Living, curriculum, posters, newsletter, etc.). Many curriculum activities can be used at home with families.
- Organize a pre-season meeting for parents – especially for all parents of athletes participating on school teams. At this forum, ABW club members, coaches and school administrators should outline to parents the proper behavior expected from them at home and away games. Introduce them to the Code for Living and have them sign it - Let parents be aware that if they act in a bad manner they will not be able to attend games for the remainder of the season.
 - Host a tailgater for parents prior to a big athletic competition. Let them know about your club activities and how they can support the Code for Living.
- Set up an ABW booth at your school's open house night. Ask parents to sign the Code for Living.

Teachers

- Introduce all teachers to ABW and distribute materials (Code for Living, curriculum, posters, newsletter, etc.). Many curriculum activities can be used in the classroom as a basis for character education.
- Host a teacher appreciation tailgater prior to a big athletic competition as a way to say thanks for supporting ABW.
- Distribute information about the annual ABW Essay contest - this is a great way to get your language arts classes involved!
- Recommend that all physical education teachers set aside time during class throughout the year to discuss the Code for Living, and that they recognize and reward displays of good sportsmanship in the class.

Get Others Involved:

- Talk to school officials and/or the school board about what they can do to support ABW.
 - Send a memo to all faculty with a letter of endorsement from the school superintendent or state education director to encourage participation.
- Meet with the Cheerleaders, Mascot and Band - Clearly state to each individual that they are expected to promote sportsmanship and model the values stated in the Code for Living as a representative of their school.
 - Greet opposing cheer teams and bands into your facilities with sincerity.
 - Use positive cheers, which praise your team without antagonizing the opponent. If booing or an inappropriate chant starts in the crowd, begin a popular, positive cheer or song to change the mood. Acknowledge good plays by both teams.
 - Treat the opposing school as you would like to be treated – as a guest or a friend. Refrain from taunting, trash-talking or any derogatory remarks.
- Introduce ABW to other youth sport organizations in your area, and to the schools - the ABW Character Education curriculum can also be used in the classroom.
 - Adopt a lower grade school or after-school program and do ABW activities with them.
 - Invite junior high students to sit with your club members at a game. Talk to them about ABW and the Code for Living. Model appropriate behavior for a spectator.
 - Start an ABW club at your feeder schools.

Posters & Banners:

- Hang ABW posters and banners in all of your athletic facilities.
- Decorate a bulletin board at your school, local library, or local businesses to spread the ABW message.

Website:

- Develop an ABW club page on your school's website – link to ABW and other related sites to provide information about your activities and school. Add an ABW banner and link to your homepage to show your commitment to the Code for Living.
- Visit our website regularly to keep up-to-date and find new resources for your school and teams.

Meeting Organization/Timeline

How you organize your meetings is up to you – each school/group has different variables that will dictate what you are able to do in what amount of time. But here are some suggestions and a sample timeline to get you started:

- There are eight points in the Code for Living, plus the Preamble - Emphasize one point a month through the school year, starting with preamble and working your way through it.
- Use the following ideas or collect newspaper stories as a basis for discussion. Start a collection of applicable stories to share with others as needed, but keep it as current as possible.

August/September

- Hold your first meeting of the year – elect officers. Brainstorm ways to get more members/representatives as needed.
- Host a booth at Back-to-School night.
- Meet with all fall teams, coaches, and parents.
- Distribute information to student body by whatever means you wish: assembly, newsletter, announcements, visiting homerooms, etc.
- Hang ABW posters & banners in all athletic facilities.
- Meet with event staff and PA announcers about ABW.
- Organize projects related to the following days:
 - National Smile Week: 2nd week of August
 - Friendship week: 3rd week of August
 - Good Manners Month: September
 - National Grandparents Day: first Sunday after Labor Day (<http://www.grandparents-day.com/>)
 - Citizenship Day: September 17th
 - Good Neighbor Day: September 23rd

October

- Ensure that all essay submissions and Spirit of ABW award nominations are in.
- Meet with teachers about using ABW resources and materials in their classrooms.
- Host a tailgater for parents.
- Organize projects related to the following days:
 - Peace, Friendship, & Goodwill Week: 4th week of October

November

- Recognize fall athletes with ABW Spirit awards/certificates.
- Meet with all winter teams, coaches, and parents.
- Organize projects related to the following days:
 - Random Acts of Kindness Week: November 6-12, 2000 (www.actsofkindness.org)
 - World Hello Day: November 21
 - National Family Week: 3rd week of November (<http://www.familyweek.org/>)

December/January

- Host a tailgater for parents.
- Organize projects related to the following days:
 - National Hugging Day: Jan 21 (<http://www.hugsetc.com/links/huggingday.shtml>)
 - National Compliment Day: 4th Wednesday in January

February

- Host a tailgater for students from local feeder schools.
- Organize projects related to the following days:
 - International Boost Self-Esteem Month
 - National Girls & Women in Sports Day: 1st Wednesday in February (<http://208.178.40.34/templates/events/ngwsd/index.html>)
 - Pay a compliment Day: February 6th
 - International Friendship Week: 3rd week of February

March

- Meet with all spring teams, coaches, and parents.
- Recognize winter athletes with ABW Spirit awards/certificates.
- Organize projects related to the following days:
 - National Nutrition Month (<http://www.eatright.org/nnm/>)
 - National Sportsmanship Day: 1st Tuesday in March (<http://www.internationalsport.com/nsd/nsd.cfm>)
 - Write a Letter of Appreciation Week: 1st week of March

April/May/June

- Recognize spring athletes with ABW Spirit awards/certificates.
- Recognize athletes of the year with ABW Spirit awards/certificates.
- Submit nominations for national Spirit of ABW award
- Organize projects related to the following days:
 - National Youth Sports Safety Month (<http://www.nyssf.org/>)
 - Keep America Beautiful Month (<http://www.kab.org/>)
 - Earth Day: April 22
 - Arbor Day: Last Friday of April (www.arborday.org)
 - National Teacher Appreciation Week: (<http://www.pta.org/programs/tchappwk.htm>)
 - Best Friends Day: June 8th
 - National Forgiveness week: 3rd week of June