

5 Tips for Removing Biases From Youth Sports Tryouts



By Chris Knutson, co-founder of TeamGenius, a leading player evaluation software that helps youth sports organizations by streamlining tryouts and player evaluations.

In an ideal world, when youth sports tryouts are held, the athletes all perform to the best of their abilities, the evaluators score each player exactly right, the coaches and volunteers run each drill perfectly, and all parents and athletes agree that the best players all made the team.

Sound realistic? Probably not.

In reality, tryouts aren't perfect. Youth players might not compete to their full potential at tryouts, evaluators might not be prepared and score each player appropriately, and not all drills might go well. But one thing teams can control is how they remove biases from youth sports tryouts.

These tips can help make the tryouts process fair.

- 1. Get outside evaluators:** When determining who should be scoring the athletes in each drill it's important to have evaluators who don't have personal connections to the players.
- 2. Use numbers, not names:** Organizations can opt to list players by only their assigned tryout number and not by their name.
- 3. Use a variety of drills:** Make sure to include types of drills that allow players with various strengths to showcase their skills, including specific tests on ball skills, shooting and defense, as well as game-time scenarios and scrimmages.
- 4. Note the intangibles:** There are valuable traits besides the physical that help to make a great player and teammate – including, coachability, effort, hustle, and more.
- 5. Make results available to players and parents:** One way to make it very clear to parents and athletes that there were no biases in the tryouts process is to make evaluation forms and scores available after tryouts.

Are you ready to start preparing for tryouts? Check out this Tryout Preparation Checklist to get you started.