

Fabulous Forty: NAYS Celebrates 40th Year as Youth Sports Leader

On its 40th anniversary as a leading advocate for youth sports, the National Alliance for Youth Sports applauds all those committed to enhancing young lives through the power of positive sports experiences



Florida, West Palm Beach, Oct 25, 2021 (IssueWire.com) - Widely recognized as one of the leading advocates for youth sports, the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) is proud to celebrate its 40th year of providing the highest quality training programs and resources for volunteer coaches, parents, officials, and league administrators.

Ever since its inception, NAYS has been a driving force for change across the youth sports landscape and has been instrumental in reshaping how sports programs are conducted to help ensure children reap the life-long benefits of safe and rewarding experiences.

“It has been an honor and a privilege to work with so many amazing recreation professionals and incredible organizations who are deeply dedicated to providing the highest quality sports programs for children,” said John Engh, executive director of NAYS. “Their passion fuels us every day as an organization to provide the very best resources that have impacted millions through the years, and it is so rewarding to see kids’ lives changed through the power of positive sports experiences. Plus, we are so grateful for our long-standing partnership with all the branches of our incredible military and being able to assist with enhancing their youth sports programs at U.S. bases worldwide.”

The Beginning: 1981

Founded in 1981 as the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA), the organization was created by [Fred Engh](#), a dad of seven with a background in recreation and a love of sports who recognized the need to help well-intentioned volunteer coaches understand their diverse roles and responsibilities while working with children. Back then – when Ronald Reagan was president and Dallas was the most-watched television show – the notion of training volunteer coaches was unheard of.

Under Engh's leadership, tireless drive, and innovative mindset, the organization forever changed youth sports as recreation agencies began recognizing how crucial it was to prepare their volunteers for the many challenges that accompany coaching kids in sports. And because of those early efforts, coach training for volunteers has become an integral part of most youth sports programs these days.

"We take great pride in our efforts through the years, and it's exciting to see all the great work being done now by other groups who have followed in our footsteps and have been inspired to help enhance youth sports by the path we forged decades ago," John Engh said.

Evolving and Expanding

In 1994 the organization evolved into the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS), as its outreach extended to providing training and resources for not only coaches but parents, league administrators, and officials, as well as rolling out an array of innovative programming for kids. And the impact has been staggering:

*Nearly 5 million coaches trained through the [NAYS Coach Training & Membership Program](#)

*More than 6,000 youth sports administrators have completed the [NAYS Academy for Youth Sports Administrators](#) to earn the Certified Youth Sports Administrator credential (CYSA)

Through the years some of the biggest names in sports have also participated in NAYS events: legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden; Hall of Fame baseball great Cal Ripken, Jr.; and Heisman Trophy winner Herschel Walker; to name a few.

Plus, the NAYS Volunteer Coach Training Program continues to feature the very best coaches from the professional and collegiate ranks sharing their insights, such as Duke's Mike Krzyzewski, Rutgers' Vivian Stringer, and Kansas City Royals manager Mike Matheny, among so many others.

Milestone Moments

There have been numerous moments through the years that NAYS is proud to have been a part of that still resonate across the youth sports landscape today. Among them:

[National Standards for Youth Sports](#): In 1987 more than 100 youth sports leaders and experts gathered in Washington, D.C., to create this historic document that served as the blueprint for how

recreational youth sports providers can meet the needs of all their participants. In 2017 an updated edition of this important document was released by NAYS.

Start Smart: On a Wednesday evening at the Collier County Parks & Recreation Department in Naples, Fla., in 1994 NAYS' Start Smart Sports Development Program was unveiled. The innovative program, which enables children to learn basic motor skills with their parents participating alongside, has become a fixture these days in recreation programs worldwide.

The National Summit on Child Protection in Youth Sports: Hosted in 1995, NAYS has been a long-time and fierce advocate for protecting kids from the horrors of abuse. Check out NAYS' free [Background Screening in Youth Sports guidelines](#) by visiting nays.org.

Why Johnny Hates Sports: NAYS Founder Fred Engh's book receives national acclaim for its first-of-its-kind examination of the problems plaguing youth sports, and the steps needed to correct them.

Mandatory Parent Training: In 2000 the Jupiter-Tequesta (Fla.) Athletic Association became the first organization in the country to mandate parent training through [NAYS' Parent Orientation program](#). Thousands of parents attended the training at Roger Dean Stadium, and more than a dozen national news outlets covered the historic evening.

Recommendations for Communities: This free document represents what leaders in the parks and recreation field believe needs to be adopted to help maintain order and civility in youth sports and ensure that all participants, volunteers, and spectators have a safe and rewarding experience. The Recommendations were developed at NAYS' National Summit On Raising Community Standards in Children's Sports in Chicago in 2001.

Youth Sports Congress: The signature event of NAYS, [the 20th annual event](#) taking place this month in San Antonio, Texas provides a unique educational experience for youth sports administrators.

Moving Forward

Youth sports programs are continually changing and evolving, and new challenges await.

And the National Alliance for Youth Sports is ready to help organizations navigate them.

"It has been an amazing 40 years and we look forward to continuing to be the go-to resource for youth sports organizations," Engh said. "All kids deserve the opportunity to participate in sports and have an experience that they remember for all the right reasons – and it's a genuine privilege to be working with so many amazing organizations across the country and on our U.S. military bases worldwide to help make that happen."

About the National Alliance for Youth Sports

The National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) educates, equips, and empowers youth sports leaders, volunteers and parents so all children can enjoy the lifelong benefits of sports. NAYS, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, partners with more than 3,000 community-based organizations and has trained

nearly five million coaches, parents, officials, and administrators since its inception in 1981. The training courses, membership tools, unique programs, guiding documents, and many trusted resources provided by NAYS ensure quality youth sports experiences that are memorable for all the right reasons. For more information please visit www.nays.org.

Contact: Greg Bach communications@nays.org

Media Contact

National Alliance for Youth Sports

communications@nays.org

1-561-684-1141

5670 Corporate Way, West Palm Beach, FL 33407

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