



**AVON GROVE
WILDCATS**

**FOOTBALL COACH
HANDBOOK**

2024

INTRODUCTION:

In an effort to continually improve its youth football program, AG Wildcats Youth Football has chosen to publish a coaching handbook to serve as a guide for its volunteer coaches. The AG Wildcats Board of Directors feels that this handbook, when viewed as a whole, will provide you, the coaches, with valuable information and new insights on coaching youth football.

MISSION:

The Wildcat Organization is committed to developing scholar athletes who value teamwork, commitment, education, and community.

PHILOSOPHY:

A coach more than anything else is a teacher. Coaches have the obligation to teach sportsmanship, self-confidence, teamwork, and ensure our players love and respect the game of football. All coaches are volunteers, but we also need to recognize that we are responsible for the emotional wellbeing of our players. It is important to build up our players and ensure that they are having "Fun" while playing the game. Winning is an outcome of effort and enjoyment. Push our players to reach beyond what they think they are capable of achieving, but remember they are kids and very few if any will every play at the highest levels. Thus, make sure they enjoy the experience and return the next year as a wildcat and future AGHS Red Devil!

In order to develop future stewards of AGW Football we expect our coaches to adhere to the following values:

- Safety - Safety is paramount! Heads up tackling fundamentals are integral to our success. Deviation from these fundamentals is absolutely unacceptable.
- Effort - Promote effort over winning. Together we succeed, and winning is the outcome. The organization is committed to developing a winning culture. Ultimately Wins and Losses are secondary to player development. Focusing on developing confident, committed, strong players will ultimately pay off for your team, and the overall AGW organization. Football is the ultimate team sport and success occurs when everyone works together for the whole.

- Fun - Understand these players are children and Football should be "Fun!" To build a strong organization, we want players to enjoy the experience and return the following year. Make practices enjoyable! Repetition is important, but not at the expense of the child's enthusiasm for the game. Games are one hour in the overall engagement time you have with the players. You have 6-8 hours of practice time to develop, energize, and encourage your players to love and respect the game.
- Player Development - Develop players by starting with the basics. Not every player is a "superstar." Focus on developing the weaker players in order to develop a stronger program. Do not always focus on the top performers. Allow players to make mistakes, and coach them up. Remember they are kids and they seek your approval!
- Position Development - Coach every player equally. We are trying to develop future players and we need to recognize that their current position may not be what they play later in life. Enforce position diversity allowing players to practice and play at different positions. This does not mean that everyone plays every position equally. It is important that players develop their abilities at the positions they will primarily play; however, balance this with effort to develop the players at different positions to broaden both their experience and their ability to positively impact the team. Players should be exposed to the total game.
- Parent engagement - Parents are not the enemy, but a valuable resource which will make or break the organization. Engage the parents and over communicate. Also recognize that when players are late or absent from practice it is not always their fault. Our young players are beholden to their parents' schedule and plans. Enforce the Attendance Policy equally, No exceptions!

We expect our coaches to always display professionalism, composure, and teamwork at all times. Remember we are developing future leaders, and they are watching what you do, at all times!

JOB DESCRIPTION

HEAD COACH:

- Authority – The Head Football Coach (HFC) is the primary leader on the field, both on game day and during practice. He is responsible for the safety of his players and assistant coaches. He is the final authority for all matters pertaining to the proper execution and implementation of the AGW program as it is outlined in the AGW Parents/Players Handbook, and the IYFL Rules. His authority is an extension of the Board of Directors.
- Chain of Command – The AG Wildcats, though a private, non-profit organization, functions under the umbrella of the Independent Youth Football League (IYFL), Like the League, AGW has a working Board of Directors. The Athletic Director (AD) is a voting member of the Board and responsible for Football Operations. Consequently, all Head Coaches (HCs) report to the AD on matters relating to such operations. The Board, through the AD, defers the responsibility of selecting and terminating membership of his subordinate coaching staff to the HC in keeping with this coaching handbook. The HC can design his chain of command below him (offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator, etc.) at his discretion.
- Roles and Responsibilities - Plan, organize, implement, and direct all team and individual practice and game activities. Coordinate development of winning attitudes, fundamental skills, team and individual discipline, sportsmanship and citizenship. Establish lines of communication with parents and/or guardians of team members. Adhere to coaching philosophies, requirements, and guidelines set forth by the Board of Directors of the organization and the League.
- Assembling/managing his coaching staff – It is one of the major functions of the HC to assemble and manage his coaching staff. After the Coach Certifications and Clearance process is complete, it is the responsibility of the HC to ensure that his subordinate coaching staff are trained and briefed on his style of leadership and expectations. He is not only responsible for hiring his staff but in the unfortunate event of misconduct he is responsible for discipline, including termination.

ASSISTANT COACH:

Carry out any and all assignments and duties delegated by the Head Coach. Assume all authority, responsibility and teaching obligations in the event the Head Coach is not available.

- **Conduct-** Assistant Coaches are responsible to read and comply with all directives established by the Board of Directors, the Parent/Player Handbook, and this Coaches Handbook. It is also important that all Coaches instruct each team member fairly and impartially without demonstrating favor to any child especially his own.
- **Attendance/Commitment -** Assistant Coaches will make every effort to attend all practices and games on time. If an Assistant Coach cannot attend or will be late to a practice or game, he is responsible for informing the HC. If an Assistant Coach cannot attend either a practice or a game, he will notify the HC 24 hours in advance of the event unless in the case of an emergency. In the unfortunate event of an unexcused absence, an Assistant Coach may be disciplined up to and including termination. Common sense prevails, but it is necessary that our Assistant Coaches realize the importance of and the level of commitment this sport requires.
- **Assignments-** The HC will provide clear guidance to each Assistant Coach with regards to their assignments and responsibilities. If the Assistant Coach has questions on tasking or is unclear on duties, it is his responsibility to clarify these issues with the HC. Assistant Coaches will take ownership of tasks assigned by the HC. This means taking responsibility for the research, preparation, and execution of football instruction.

Hire/ Termination Procedures:

Conditions of Hire

All Coaches will undergo mandatory IYFL certifications and clearances prior to the start of the season. All Coaches must agree to comply with all AGW Board Directives, IYFL Rules, AGW & IYFL Codes of Conduct, and this handbook. All Assistant Coaches must be willing to provide unconditional support to the HC.

Termination Procedures

As well as hiring his assistant coaches, it is also the responsibility of the HC, when unfortunate situations present themselves, to terminate any Assistant Coach at his discretion without a Board of Directors vote. Grounds for termination are not limited to those discussed within this handbook. Procedures for disciplinary action against an Assistant Coach are as follows:

- The first offense will result in a verbal warning from the HC.
- The second offense will result in a written warning from the HC. The Head Coach will notify the Board of Directors immediately when a written warning has been issued. The warning letter will be provided to the Board of Directors as soon as possible via electronic means.
- The third offense is grounds for termination at the discretion of the HC.

Procedures for disciplinary action against a Head Coach are at the discretion of the AGW Board of Directors based on the recommendation of the Athletic Director.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:

SAFETY FIRST! Inspect practice and game fields for rocks, glass, holes, etc., that may deem the facilities unsafe. Inspect it and clean it up before you allow your players to use it.

- Inspect player's equipment and promptly advise replacement of any defective equipment. Do not allow any player to participate with defective or damaged equipment under any condition.
- Use restraint in periods of hot weather. Be constantly aware of the possibility of exhaustion, dehydration and heat stroke. Make sure every player has access to water often. Never deny a water break for any reason.

- Practice emotional control. Never berate or unduly criticize a player. Encourage and teach. Never use psychological, physical, or verbal intimidation.
- Explain and illustrate, not just once -- but many times, the proper placement of the head and neck in tackling, blocking, and as a ball carrier. Absolutely never allow the use of the head, helmet or facemask to spear, lead or block with. Remember!!! Teach -- head up, eyes ahead, head to the side.
- In case of injury -- remain cool, calm and collected. Try to calm the injured player. It is better to be safe than sorry. In the event of any doubt, contact an EMT or Doctor immediately. Never assume the role of a physician. Only perform activities that conform to certified First Aid training you have received. Keep head, neck, back, and compound fracture injuries immobile until a Doctor or EMT arrives.

Be complete and thorough in everything you do. Take a professional attitude. Accept the responsibility that goes with the job.

COACHING REQUIREMENTS & RULES:

Playbook Selection & Execution

In order to ensure continuity between levels, the Avon Grove Wildcats football program will provide the base formations and schemes to be used across all levels. This playbook will directly align to the high school and middle school programs. The HC has authority to modify the formation to meet skill sets and game requirements, however the AGF standards must be understood by all players (hole numbering, Gaps, offense/ defensive formation). All changes and additions to the team playbook are at the discretion of the HC. Assistant Coaches will not add any plays to the team playbook without direct approval from the HC.

Coaching Standards

- **All coaches**, including assistants must complete the following and provide a copy of the course certificate to AGW:
 - [USA Football Youth Tackle Football Training](#). The cost is approximately \$15

- NFHS Football Tackling Course FREE
 - IYFL Background Clearance The cost is approximately \$17
 - AGW/IYFL Code of Conduct
- All coaches will adhere to the AGW and IYFL Coach Code of Conduct, which can be found on the AGW and IYFL websites and attached to this Handbook.
 - All coaches shall be drug, tobacco, and alcohol free at all youth football activities. Coaches are representatives of the entire League and any behavior that reflects badly on the league whether at an AGW event or not, can result in the coach's suspension.
 - All coaches pledge to teach proper and safe technique and will refrain from teaching or conducting dangerous drills and/or activities.
 - During hot weather, all coaches will provide a rest and water break every 20 minutes. Coaches are responsible to see that every player receives proper amounts of water during practice. The use of salt tablets or any other substance is expressly forbidden.
 - The HC is responsible to have a cellular phone available at all practices and games.
 - All coaches will consider any head, neck, or back injury a serious and potentially dangerous situation. In the event of such injury the coach should defer immediately to medical personnel. If medical personnel are not available, the following practices should be observed:
 - Never remove the helmet or shoulder pads (unless absolutely necessary to provide CPR).
 - Immediately check for unconsciousness, tingling sensations in arms or legs, and paralysis.
 - Keep the player immobilized -- calm the player.
 - Call 911, or an ambulance service, if any doubt exists about the player's condition.

- All coaches will be required to provide an enjoyable learning environment for AGW football participants. Attention should be devoted to the participants' physical, social, and personal development while adhering to the following youth coaching values:
 - Teach Sportsmanship
 - Promote Growth through Participation
 - Promote Fitness
 - Teach Coping with Success and Failure
 - Develop Skills
 - Develop Positive Authority Attitudes
 - Instill a Desire to Succeed
 - Instill Self Discipline
 - Teach Teamwork
 - Develop Cooperation Between Individuals
 - Promote Responsibility
 - Provide an Outlet for Energy Release
 - Build Character
 - Make the Experience Fun
 - Develop Commitment
 - Serve as a Positive Role Model

Coaching Conduct

It is the responsibility of each coach to be familiar with the rules, policies and guidelines of AG Wildcats Youth Football.

- In order to help in the promotion of a better sports environment, the use of foul or profane language by coaches, players, fans, etc., is prohibited while participating in any AGW or IYFL function.
- Any derogatory remarks to officials, players or any member of the other team, by coaches or players will not be condoned. Violation of this rule, at the discretion of the official, may result in suspension from or forfeiture of the game.
- Officials may eject a coach, player or fan from any game in accordance with the official rules. The officials and coaches may also suspend the player(s) guilty of flagrant violations of rules from further participation in games.
- Any player and/or coach engaging in fights or any other flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct before, during or after a practice and/or game will be suspended indefinitely. This applies from the time the person enters the facility area, until the time the person leaves the facility area. This shall encompass all unsportsmanlike conduct such as obscene or profane language and/or appearing at the facility under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

PRACTICES:

Full Contact Practice Policy

The IYFL, working in conjunction with the PIAA, has adopted the national USA Football practice guidelines as the standard for football practice operations. The Wildcats Board of Directors is committed to advancing player safety, protecting the health and well-being of every child. Every coach is responsible to ensure all players are taught the fundamentals of football while adhering to the practice guidelines. The purpose of the guidelines are to provide the coaches with the Board approved practice guidelines and limit the chance for injury during structured practice sessions.

The IYFL and AGW will adopt and adhere to any changes made by the PIAA regarding practice guidelines.

USA Football Methodology

The USA Football methodology defines five teaching methodologies for contact – Air, Bag, Control, Thud, and Live. Full-contact drills should be limited during the preseason and regular season as the number of exposures may increase the chance for injury to youth players. For the purposes of this policy full contact will be defined as thud, and live.

*** By definition, “Thud” involves initiation of contact at full speed with no predetermined winner, but no take down to the ground. Initial contact, particularly with lineman, is just as physical with “Thud” as with “Live Action.” USA Football recognizes that “Live Action” likely carries a higher injury risk to the body than does “Thud.” The first three levels of contact are considered no, or controlled, contact and thus no limitations are placed on their use in practice.

| <u>Contact</u> | <u>Intensity</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|----------------|------------------|--|
| Air | 0 | Players run a drill unopposed without contact. |
| Bags | 1 | Drill is run against a bag or another soft-contact surface |
| Control | 2 | Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact; one player is pre-determined the ‘winner’ by the coach. Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet. |
| Thud | 3 | Drill is run at assigned speed to competitive speed through the moment of contact; no pre-determined “winner.” Contact remains above the waist, players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill. |
| Live Action | 4 | Drill is run in game-like conditions and is the only time that players are taken to the ground. |

Pre-Season Acclimation

The first five days of pre-season practice for each player regardless of start time will be focused on heat acclimation and fundamental development. The following process will be adhered to with incremental escalation of equipment, and contact. No abbreviations, or exceptions, to the time or policy will be accepted.

Week 1 - Heat Acclimation & Equipment:

- Monday - Wednesday: Shorts, T-Shirt
- Thursday: Shorts, T-Shirt, Helmets, Mouthpiece
- Friday: Shorts, T-Shirt, Helmets, Mouthpiece, Shoulder Pads
- All Following weeks – Full Practice Gear is to be worn.

| <u>Day</u> | <u>Focus</u> | <u>Equipment</u> |
|------------|--|---------------------------|
| One | Air and Bags (no player-to-player contact) | Helmets Only |
| Two | Air and Bags (no player-to-player contact) | Helmets Only |
| Three | Air, Bags, Control (no full contact) | Helmets and shoulder pads |
| Four | Air, Bags, Control (no full contact) | Helmets and shoulder pads |
| Five | Air, Bags, Control, Thud (no Live) | Full Equipment |

Pre-Season Policy

During the preseason all teams have restrictions regarding full contact limits. This aligns to the USA Football practice guideline. The board recognizes the need for additional development time and added an additional practice day with helmets only. Full contact will be restricted to 30 minutes of full contact per practice period for a total of 75 minutes per week. Based on the heat index (wet bulb) the practice posture may be modified to restrict contact or modify the uniform. (See chart below)

| <u>WBGT</u> | <u>Color Code</u> | <u>Activity Guidelines</u> | <u>Rest Break Guidelines</u> |
|---------------|-------------------|---|---|
| Under 82.0° F | Green | Normal Activities | Provide at least three separate rests breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 3 minutes each. |
| 82.0- 86.9° F | Yellow | Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise; watch at-risk players carefully. | Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each. |
| 87.0- 89.9° F | Amber | Players are restricted to helmet, shoulder pads and shorts during practice, and all protective equipment must be removed during conditioning activities. If the WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing to shorts. | Provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each. |
| 90.0- 92.0° F | Red | Maximum practice time is 1 hour. No protective equipment may be worn during practice, and there may be no conditioning activities | There must be 20 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice. |
| Over 92.1° F | Black | No outdoor workouts. Delay practice until a cooler WBGT level is reached | |

Example Practice Schedule

| <u>Day</u> | <u>Contact Levels</u> | <u>Equipment</u> |
|------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Monday | 0-4 – (Air, Bag, Control, Thud) | Full Equipment |
| Tuesday | 0-5 – (Air, Bag, Control, Thud, Live) | Full Equipment |
| Wednesday | 0-4 – (Air, Bag, Control, Thud) | Full Equipment |
| Thursday | 0-5 – (Air, Bag, Control, Thud, Live) | Full Equipment |
| Friday | 0-3 – (Air, Bag, Control) | Helmets Only |

Season Policy

Once the regular seasons begins and games commence, all teams have restrictions regarding full contact. This aligns to the USA Football practice guideline. Full contact will be restricted to 30 minutes of full contact per practice period for a total of 60 minutes per week. The board recommends a modified third practice with only helmets and shoulder pads (Air, Bag, Control).

Example Practice Schedule

| <u>Day</u> | <u>Contact Levels</u> | <u>Equipment</u> |
|------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Monday | 0-4 – (Air, Bag, Control, Thud) | Full Equipment |
| Tuesday | No Practice | |

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Wednesday | 0-5 – (Air, Bag, Control, Thud, Live) | Full Equipment |
| Thursday | No Practice | |
| Friday | 0-3 – (Air, Bag, Control) | Helmets Only |

Dual Roster Players

Avon Grove Middle School and the Avon Grove Wildcats are offering players who are eligible to play for both the Middle School and the Wildcats, the opportunity to do both without having to participate in double the practices. The hope is that this will allow kids to freely participate in both organizations. It will also give kids the opportunity for more playing time while enhancing the skill level across both organizations—so we think it will be a win-win-win!

Players who play both will attend all of the practices for the Middle School Team. They will then attend two full Wildcats practices.

Willful Deviation from Policy

The Board recognizes that all coaches are volunteers and as such should be treated with respect and have the support of the Board of Directors. The Board also recognizes that child safety is paramount and must not be compromised. A deviation from policy is defined as violating the mandated equipment schedule for the first week of practice OR exceeding the Full Contact time parameters as outlined above for either preseason or regular season play. The Board of Directors reserves the right to determine willful deviation from policy and determine the appropriate level of recourse.

The Board of Directors are thankful for your willingness to volunteer your time and energy to the Wildcats organization and to the kids in the community. This Practice Policy document is to assist you in making sure all have a great experience this upcoming season. We are here to support your efforts and look forward to a great year!!”

*** When practice is over, at least one coach must stay with the team until every player has been picked up. Never leave a player unattended.

Policies Outlined in the Parent/Player Handbook

PLAYER ATTENDANCE POLICY

Football is a team sport that requires individuals to work together for the good of the whole. In order to develop this team cohesiveness, it is important to practice as a team and learn to work together. The only way to achieve this goal is through practice. Understandably situations will arise when players will miss practice. Additionally in the interest of fairness to the players who attend practice during the week absences must be accounted for in game playing time. Thus, the AGW Board of Directors has adopted the following attendance policy.

To be in good standing, the player must attend all practice and game activities unless he is granted an excused absence. Any player missing a combination of 7 or more games and practices, excused or unexcused, can be dismissed from the team at the determination of the Athletic Director and the Board of Directors.

| <u>Excused</u> | <u>Unexcused</u> |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness or Injury • School activity • School work requiring extra focus or time • Church event • Community function • Family emergency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Sport (ie: fall baseball) • Vacation – we recognize the value of family time; however, during the season, absences for vacation impact the entire team. If practices schedules change over a pre-planned activity the vacation would be considered excused. • Additional activity |

The following standards will be applied for in season practice absences:

| <u>Number of Absences</u> | <u>Excused</u> | <u>Unexcused</u> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 x Practice during the week | No impact | Player will sit out for one quarter |
| 2 x Practices during the week | No Impact | Player will sit out for two quarters |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 3 x Practices during the week | Player will sit out for that week's game | Player will sit out for that week's game |
|-------------------------------|--|--|

Players may be required to sit out of a game or partial game for disciplinary actions, but the parents of the player must be made aware of this the night before the game.

Playing Time Policy

The Wildcat Program's overarching goal is player development, creating a lifelong love of the game and a desire to continue playing. The board of directors recognizes the need to clarify the organizations playing time policy by level in order to ensure coaches, players, and parents have the appropriate expectation.

Flag

The flag program is a development program designed to energize players for the game and create basic fundamentals that will translate to the tackle program. In order to ensure the players have an enjoyable, and rewarding experience, it is the expectation of the Wildcats Program that all kids receive as close to equal playing time as possible and players experience multiple positions on the field. The goal of the Flag program is to teach basic fundamentals.

Developmental (includes JV Teams)

The intent of the developmental team is to develop player skill and prepare them for future opportunities to play at the competition level. The goal is to field competitive teams that facilitate learning and player respect for the game. As such, the expectation of the program at the developmental level is that each player would experience equal playing time. However, as this is a tackle football program, and player safety is of the utmost importance, it is up to the head coach to make playing time adjustments to ensure a player is not put in a position where they would injure themselves, or that their skill level would put another player in a position to be injured. The developmental team head coach should talk to each parent when a playing time adjustment would be required. Every opportunity should be made to give the player an opportunity to develop and play in the game. Additionally, the developmental head coach should look for opportunities to rotate player positions in order to facilitate learning and allow players to experience other facets of the game.

Playing time is also tied to the attendance policy. Regardless of skill level any violation of the attendance policy will impact playing time.

Competition (Includes Varsity Teams)

The competition level represents the Avon Grove Wildcats program in the IYFL. As such, equal playing time should not be expected for competition players. It is up to the head coach to put the best possible team on the field to represent the program and remain competitive. However, player development and enjoyment are equally as important as winning. All competition players should receive “meaningful playing time” as part of the team. “Meaningful playing time” is defined as an 8 play minimum, not including special teams. Players that fall in the 8 play minimum, will also get on the field through at least one special teams unit (ie Kick Off, Kick Off Return, etc). Competition coaches must take this into consideration when selecting their team during the evaluation period. The head coach will also brief the players’ parents regarding playing time ahead of the season in order to ensure there will be no false expectations. Play critiquing by parents will not be tolerated, as it is the head coach's decision how the players are utilized in order to ensure that Avon Grove has the most competitive team on the field as possible.

Lastly, on a week-to-week basis, players from the developmental team can be selected to suit up for the competition team, in addition to their developmental team. This is based on the competition team’s head coach discretion. Players from the developmental team will not fall into the 8 play minimum requirement, as they would get adequate playing time from their developmental team during that week.

INCLEMENT WEATHER SITUATIONS

If the weather is uncomfortably cold and/or wet, or visible lightning is in the area, or the weather service is notifying the public of unstable weather activity, practice must be canceled immediately. When the heat index exceeds 104 degrees or when the temperature exceeds 99 degrees, practice and games must be postponed. Violation of this policy will result in immediate suspension of coaching privileges.

Coaches should always demonstrate common sense with regard to extremely hot, cold or unstable weather. A coach must never choose to risk players’ health, safety or well-being. Any coach found doing so will be suspended from the program for life, pending Board appeal.

If practice is canceled due to weather conditions, less than one hour into the practice, another practice day may be scheduled without violating the weekly limitation on practice sessions.

GAME DAY -- FIELD RULES

- Only coaches, players, water boys and chain crew may be on the sidelines. Coaches and players must remain inside the coaches' restriction box during a game (the 50-yard area between the 25-yard lines). Chain crews should not cheer or coach from the sideline. **THEY ARE PART OF THE OFFICIATING CREW.**
- Parents and other spectators must remain behind the track, restrictive fence or other established barriers. Camera operators may be on the track as long as they do not obstruct spectator view at any time. At no time are cameras allowed on the field of play during a game.
- Trash clean-up procedures are as follows:
 - Failure to clean up trash after the game may cause the organization to lose the privilege of playing on the field. Remember we are guests of the facility. Let's act accordingly. The HC is responsible to see that the team cleans up the trash on the sideline after the game. The Team Parent is responsible to see that parents and spectators pick up all trash in and around the stands after the game.
- Anyone obviously intoxicated or under the influence of a chemical substance will not be allowed to attend or participate in any Wildcats Youth Football activity or function.

DEALING WITH PARENTS

Coaching Wildcats Youth Football is exciting and rewarding, but from time to time, you may experience difficulty with parents. Some may want their children to play more or they might question some of your judgments as a coach. This is normal, so don't feel that you're alone if this happens.

Here are a few thoughts to remember when dealing with parents:

- Always listen to parents' ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement but resist unfair pressure. You are the coach and it's your responsibility to make the final decisions. Most importantly, be fair. If you treat all players equally, you will gain respect!!
- No coach can please everybody. Don't try!! Know what your objectives are, communicate them to the parents and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not the parents.
- From the very beginning of the season, make certain all parents know your ground rules. Have rules, regulations, your philosophy, your phone number, practice dates/times, etc., printed on a sheet of paper you can pass out to all parents.
- Be consistent. Try not to change your rules or your coaching philosophy during the season. If, for some reason, you must do so -- make sure every player and every parent is informed immediately.
- Handle any confrontation one-on-one -- not in a crowd situation. Don't be defensive. Don't argue with the parent. Listen to their viewpoint and thank them for it. If necessary, contact the Athletic Director and schedule a meeting to iron out any differences.
- Never, never, never discuss individual players with other parents. It is unfair to the player. Remember, the grapevine will hang you every time. Make sure your assistant coaches also adhere to this rule.
- Ask parents not to criticize their children during a practice or game. Don't let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents. Explain that you must be under complete control of your team when they are on your "turf".

- Ask your players' parents to remember that Game Officials are human and may make a mistake. In fact, they may make several mistakes. Officials should not be subject to criticism during ball games -- not by coaches, not by players and not by parents or other spectators. Explain that the rules we play by are not the same as the rules they see at the pro, college and even high school level. Most of the abusive fan criticism and behavior is simply a result of their lack of knowledge of our playing rules.
- Ask your parents to get involved. There are many activities in which they can be of great help and benefit to the team and to the league, such as: videotaping, photographing, keeping statistics, cleaning the field after games, fund raising, Team Parent, etc.
- Remember that assistant coaches must be approved in advance. If a parent decides he/she wants to help you coach; he/she must meet league criteria and qualifications.
- Always remember that you will be dealing with all types of children and with parents of differing backgrounds and ideals. One of your main challenges as a coach is to deal with these differences in a positive manner that will lead to cooperation, enthusiasm, and enjoyment for all.

PARENT MEETING GUIDELINES

Every Wildcats Youth Football Head Coach is required to conduct a pre-season parent meeting. The main purpose of the meeting is to: open lines of communication between the coaches and the parents and allow you to explain your coaching philosophy, rules and regulations.

Arrange to have your meeting at your first regular practice location. Once you have decided on the date, time and location, call all your parents. It helps if both parents can attend.

The following is an outline of topics you must cover in your coach-parent meeting:

- Introduce yourself and your assistant(s). You should give a little background information on yourself and each assistant.
- Solicit or Introduce a volunteer for Team Parent.

- Remind parents to reference TeamSnap for updates on practices and games. Any changes, like inclement weather delays or cancelations, will be sent through TeamSnap for immediate communication.
- Go over each piece of equipment the organization provides. Explain the purpose of the various pieces of equipment and demonstrate the proper way to put the equipment on. Read the helmet warning label and tell the parents they are never, never, never to adapt the inside of the helmet for any purpose -- this is essential. Explain what type shoes should be used – players may never use baseball cleats.
- Talk about providing water during practice sessions.
- Go over all your rules, regulations, policies, and coaching philosophies. Explain the League rule concerning game playing time. Explain the rules we play under -- make a copy and hand out if you prefer.
- Give special attention to the Sparring, Head Tackle/Head Contact and Facemask rules. Emphasize that players should never try to tackle or block with the head down. Also, emphasize that players should never lead with their facemasks into the chest of another player.
- Tell the parents point blank that football is a collision/contact sport that can be dangerous. Make them fully aware of the risks. Also point out all the rules that the league incorporates to reduce these risks.
- Thank the parents for their support!!



IYFL VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

I understand that my responsibility as a volunteer (Director, Officer, Coach, Concession or other) for the IYFL and its Member Organizations, a youth organization, is of great importance and that my actions have the potential to significantly influence the children I come into contact with and therefore I agree to conduct myself in accordance with the this Volunteer Code of Conduct as follows:

1. I recognize that I am a role model for all participants and the families involved in the IYFL and the Member Organizations. I shall at all times control my behavior so as to promote a positive attitude and experience for the children. I shall place the emotional and physical welfare and development of my players ahead of any personal desire to win.
2. I will treat each player, opposing coaches, officials, parents, and administrators with respect and dignity at all times.
3. I will thoroughly become familiar and follow the letter and spirit of the bylaws, rules, regulations, requirements and objectives of IYFL, the Member Organization and the sport.
4. I will communicate to my players and their parents what is expected from each participant, parent or guardian, family and invited guest.
5. I will cooperate with the administration of IYFL and the Member Organization in the enforcement of the bylaws, rules, regulations, requirements and objectives and will report any irregularities to IYFL and the Member Organization.
6. I will do my best to protect and preserve the health, safety and welfare of all participants entrusted to my care and supervision.
7. I will comply with IYFL and Member Organization participation requirements and make every effort to ensure active participation by each of my players in every game or competition.
8. I will not use profanity or make disparaging remarks or gestures of any type to any person, whether an official, coach, parent, participant or other nor will I publicly disparage or humiliate any of the above-named individuals.
9. I will not use or be under the influence of any illegal drugs, alcohol, and/or tobacco during any practice, game, competition and/or sanctioned activity and will immediately report any person who I believe to be using and/or under such influence.
10. I agree to submit to a criminal background check and child abuse clearance in accordance with IYFL rules and regulations, which shall be a precursor to my ability to volunteer and be permitted on the football field.
11. I shall comply with and enforce the IYFL Code of Conducts and if I fail to do so, I may be subject to discipline as provided in the IYFL Disciplinary Code.

Volunteer/Coach Name (Print)

Volunteer/Coach Signature

Date