

ST. LOUIS YOUTH FOOTBALL
...
PARENT, COACH, ATHLETE

HANDBOOK



IF YOU CONTINUE DOING WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS DONE
YOU WILL CONTINUE BEING WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN
NOTHING CHANGES UNTILL YOU MAKE IT CHANGE

-SHARK-HIT

-SHARK-PRIDE

-SHARK-WIN

St. Louis Youth Football Organization – 2016 Player & Parent Handbook

Welcome to Saint Louis Youth Football!

For those of you that are new to the program, this handbook outlines the goals of the program. For those of you returning to the program for the 2016 season, you will notice a few updates to the handbook.

This handbook has been produced to provide participants in the Saint Louis Youth Football Organization (SLYFO) an overview and outline of the organization, the expectation of its coaches, players, parents and teams.

Many items that were previously listed in the handbook are now shown on the Saint Louis Youth Football Organization website:

<http://www.slyfo.org/teams/?u=SLYFO&s=football>

New Items

Sports Physicals

Under the current rules of the Central Michigan Youth Football League

<http://www.leaguelineup.com/welcome.asp?sid=595883799&url=cmyfl>

A player does not require a sports physical to participate in youth football. Although SLYFO encourages each player to have a regular sports physical, it is not mandatory.

Cost of Participation

See SLYFO website for details on the fee schedule.

Our new Fundraising Committee is working very hard toward trying to lower the cost for ALL participants, and are well on their way to doing so. We hope that we can get the cost to be \$50 or LESS in 2016. This will only be achieved with help from each one of you.... PLEASE VOLUNTEER to help with fundraising opportunities – you will be helping yourself and the rest of the program as well.

Returned Check Fee

If your check is returned for non-sufficient funds, a \$ 25.00 charge will be assessed to you.

Tackle Football Equipment

Tackle football equipment is expensive. It also must be properly cared for, inspected and replaced on a regular basis. Each SLYFO tackle football player is issued over \$ 200.00 in protective equipment. Obviously, we want your player to take good care of the equipment and we need it returned!

Return of Equipment

Your player's equipment needs to be returned at the conclusion of the season at the date, time and location specified. We end up wasting hours of personal time emailing and calling parents for the return of the player's equipment, making special arrangements, etc. Set a good example for your kids, return the equipment clean and on time!

Equipment Cleaning Fee

Should a player return any article of football gear that has not been properly cleaned or laundered, the \$35.00 fee will be charged.

So, if you don't return equipment the program loses \$200.00 in replacement equipment costs. So parents, before you complain about the cost of the program... did you return the equipment from last year?

Cheer Coaches

All cheer teams must be coached by an adult who has:

- Completed a coaching application, supplied by SLYFO
- Been approved by the SLYFO board
- Passed the background check required of all volunteers
- No coach, no cheer team.

Cheerleaders are expected to participate in cheering for any games that they are scheduled to cheer for. It may not be their particular class. Cheerleaders may be broken up into “squads” that are made up of girls from several different grade levels.

The high school cheerleaders are allowed to assist and help instruct the youth cheerleaders. We felt the high school girls did an excellent job coaching the youth cheer teams and should be included again this year.

An adult coach is needed to deal directly with any cheer parent issues.

Playing Time

This is not a “Pay-To-Play” organization. This is a “Pay-To-Participate” program. If an athlete comes to *practice* – he/she is participating. Play time in *actual game* situations may be affected by an athlete’s attitude, attendance, and ability. These will be considered by each individual teams’ head coach, and may change from week to week. (Please see the message from the Director for further insight on this issue.)

Acknowledgements

Participation in this program means that you as a parent/guardian:

- Agree to read and abide by the handbook.
- Authorize SLYFO to use photos of the athletes on our website, Facebook page and similar social media.
- Agree to volunteer at least one time during the season.
- Agree to visit the SLYFO website to view by-laws, rules and other information.

Technology & Social Media

SLYFO Website

<http://www.slyfo.org>

Our new website includes On Line Registration & Payment.

Facebook

Look for Saint Louis Youth Football Organization... and Like us!

<https://www.facebook.com/SLYFO48880/>

Twitter

Follow us @StLouisYFO

From the board:

This handbook has been shortened in hopes that players and parents may actually want to read it!

The 2016 season may be our most challenging yet! Construction on school property will force us to find alternate locations for our teams to practice.

A reduced number of athletes may require some week to week changes, but should insure lots of playing time.

The SLYFO also includes youth cheerleading! This is the second season for that and we hope to continue to improve this program as well.

Our program needs honest, reliable volunteers. Ticket takers, concession stand workers, chain gang workers, team parents, lots of opportunities where you can get involved and have a positive impact on your child's program!

We board members should be your first stop if you have questions, comments, compliments or complaints about the program.

Many board members continue to serve, even though their children are playing high school football or even graduated high school.

The board meets year around to discuss changes to the program and its policies based on the feedback we receive from parents.

From the director – Todd Weller:

This year is proving to be a very trying year already. It will require patience, cooperation, communication, and understanding – from ALL participants - parents, athletes, coaches and board members combined. I ask all – to be as courteous, and patient as possible through construction, changing practice fields, changing schedules and whatever else we will face this season.

In directing the youth program, and coaching J.V., I have had the opportunity over the last season to notice glaring problems with our entire St. Louis Football program. One problem is depth. We need to find the talents that each athlete (your child) brings to the table – and at the youth level – start to develop it. That means getting them as many reps as possible in live game situations.

We WILL be getting more than one kid in a position. We WILL be rotating kids through an entire game – as often as is possible. You will see this more at the younger levels – and it will taper up through the 8th grade – as it changes more to talent/strength in a position. This goes hand-in-hand with the winning/losing philosophy. We need not worry about Wins/Loses so much at the 3rd/4th grade level – we need to be concerned with the fundamentals and how the game was played. However, by the 8th grade we should have MUCH more of an emphasis on the winning aspect – along with fundamentals and execution of the game. Coaches will be making these changes accordingly, and it will change week to week, game to game, and even play to play.

Your input is very valuable to us. We cannot fix something that we don't know is broken. Please contact us via any of the options in the previous pages.

Todd Weller

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Overview

The SLYFO is a group of volunteers with a vision of improving the academic and athletic performance of our students through improved teamwork, communication and dedication.

The SLYFO is governed by a board of directors that is responsible for the oversight and operation of the youth football and cheer programs.

Any concerns or questions that a parent may have regarding our policies or this handbook can be directed to a member of the SLYFO board.

The SLYFO is now operating as an independent, Non-Profit organization which includes the St. Louis Flag Football program and youth cheerleading program. SLYFO is also a member of the Central Michigan Youth Football League, based in Chesaning, Mi. As such we conform to the policies and regulations of both organizations.

The SLYFO is not technically affiliated with the St. Louis Public Schools. However, we work hand-in-hand with administrative, maintenance, and coaching staff, and try to stay within the policies and procedures of the school district. We are the feeder program to the high school football program. We teach the techniques, and fundamentals that are in line with what the head coach of the St. Louis Varsity Football Team desires, as closely as possible with youth athletes. We do not receive ANY funding from the school – all monies are collected through fundraising and sign up fees.

The 2016 season includes adopting the school's policy on eligibility. Football players that are not succeeding in the classroom will not playing on Saturday. The earlier in their scholastic career our athletes learn that poor grades equals zero playing time, the better.

2016 Board of Directors

Todd Weller – President
Tony Scharaswak – Vice President
Traci Alspaugh – Treasurer
Abigail Pryor - Secretary
Jeff Daniels – Trustee

Academics

For the 6th through 8th grades, we use the math formula: Bad Grades = Zero Playing Time. Our policy is the same the St. Louis Schools. May as well get used to it now, because it will be a part of their high school athletic career soon enough.

Use this link to access the St. Louis Athletic Policy Handbook:

<http://stlouisschools.net/Page/54>

Nutrition:

We don't want your young athlete falling out during a practice or a game. They need to have plenty of fuel in their tank to get through practices and games. Please be sure your kids are getting proper nutrition to build strong muscles, bones and brains. A good protein and carb snack before practice/games, and then a full dinner afterward will give them what they need to participate, and recover from physical exertion. Balanced nutrition will improve mind, body and spirit. **Hydration** cannot be stressed enough.... NOT POP, NOT JUICE, preferably WATER but Gatorade isn't bad to add some flavor and electrolytes. PLEASE BE SURE that your athlete BRINGS WATER TO PRACTICE !!!!

Sleep:

Most kids and adults are not getting enough sleep. Most kids would benefit from 8 to 10 hours of sleep on a regular basis.

Physical Activity:

Combine exercise and proper diet to help prevent your child from having excess weight gain or obesity. Try to lead by example.

One resource for healthy eating and exercise tips: www.letsmove.gov

Parent Conduct, Attitude, Behavior, Respect, Sportsmanship:

Our policy will mirror the policies set forth by the Saint Louis Public Schools. The policy may be accessed from the Saint Louis Public Schools website:

<http://stlouisschools.net/Page/54>

In summary, your behavior as parents toward officials, players, coaches, volunteers and other spectators should be positive, encouraging and motivating. If your behavior is contrary to our standards you will be removed from the contest area. If you witness someone in attendance whose behavior and actions are negative, please report the individual to the home press box. If in doubt, follow the rule you should have learned in kindergarten: "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all".

Let's be realistic for a moment... shall we?

Positive parenting equals positive kids.

Parents that whine, make excuses and blame others will raise kids that do the same thing.

Codes of Conduct

Parent Expectations:

Parents of players in this program can expect their child to be treated fairly. Your player should be coming home from practice tired, sweaty, stinky and dirty. Football practices are not easy and the coach may be asking more from your player than they may be accustomed to. Many players have never done anything similar to football with the physical contact, conditioning, bumps / bruises and all that comes with football. Participation in this program is not a guarantee of playing time. Although coaches make efforts to provide playing time in games to all players, playing time is earned on the practice field.

As parents you should remain positive and supportive of your player. If you have a difference of opinion or disagreement with the team coach, don't vent your frustrations in front of your child and erode your player's confidence in the team. Encourage your child, help them to remain positive.

An important area will be the academic eligibility of the player's week to week. If your player is struggling with grades, you as a parent should be in contact with teachers; ensuring homework is completed and turned in. This is your student, and the grades need to be a higher priority than football. If you need to keep a player home from practice to study or finish an assignment, then do

that. Just communicate with the coach. It does not matter if your player is the star quarterback if poor grades prevent him or her from participating.

One of the challenges of this program is transporting your player to the "away" games. We need your player on time at every practice and every game. It is your responsibility to coordinate with other parents if you need to make alternate arrangements. It is not the coach's job to pick up and deliver your player. Obviously unforeseen circumstances can and do occur, from a dead car battery to mandatory overtime. Please communicate with coaching staff as soon as these events occur to make plans accordingly.

Attendance at your player's games is not a license to verbally abuse coaches, officials, players or anyone in attendance. Football is an emotional game and if you cannot control yours, then stay in your car and keep your mouth shut. Nothing is worse at a sporting event than an out of control parent or guest that is shouting rude, negative and inappropriate comments.

If you encounter this type of negative behavior during a game or practice, please contact board member and we will handle the situation. This may include removing the person from the contest.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to stay and watch practice. Parents are not allowed on the practice field and the parents should in no way interrupt or interfere with the practice.

Communication between a coach and parent is crucial. If you know your player will miss a game in advance, provide the coach with as much notice as possible.

Football is tough and coaching football is even tougher. Don't make it harder by being a difficult parent. Show up on time, participate, learn the game, take pictures, have fun.

Please – even if you disagree with a coach's decision, always respect your kids' coach and speak positively of them in your kids' presence.

Player Expectations:

Early is on time ~On time is late~Late is unacceptable

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Our coaches deserve to have players show up at practices and games on time, fully equipped and ready to play. This type of player is a youngster that has had adequate rest, proper nutrition and positive support from home.

When any coach is talking, you are not. When coach is explaining things to a group that you are not involved with, you will not talk, you will pay attention and learn as well as those coach is talking to. Players will be expected to show respect for coaches and other players at all times. There is much to learn and little time to learn it. A team can't afford to have players that are not focused, not paying attention, not listening or following directions. A player may find their improper behavior has resulted in the entire team running laps or doing pushups. Actions have consequences and a true member of a team puts the team before oneself. As a player, your coaches will be asking for commitment, determination and discipline. Getting knocked down is not failure, not getting back up is failure.

Your attitude will either destroy or build your team; either is contagious. Be a team player and build your team at all times. Some players are not as knowledgeable as you, they are learning just as you did once.

Be patient with them and encourage them constantly. Players that complain, grumble, whine and don't give 100% effort at all times during practice will not find themselves with very much playing time. Don't be negative. Do your best and give the coaches your best efforts. Don't expect to get babied on the football field. Take personal responsibility for your actions. Decisions and actions you take off the field, can, and will have direct consequences on the field.

Coach Expectations:

Coaches are expected to carry themselves in an exemplary fashion at all of our functions, home or away – as well as those school functions not necessarily Youth Football oriented.

Our coaches must pass a background check through the St. Louis Public Schools. It is the schools' standard background check used for all volunteers. Our coaches are also required to take an on-line concussion training course that is approved by the MHSAA (Michigan High School Athletic Association).

This is not to be for treatment purposes, but a tool to teach the recognition of a concussion, and what steps need to be taken in the event one occurs.

Our coaches will try to teach the basic fundamentals and foundation of the game of football. Many coaches try to incorporate lessons from the football field – into life lessons that your kids will remember most of their life. For many of them, and us on the board, this is more than teaching a game, it is about building young people to be determined, tenacious, and strong individuals. Each coach will treat your kid with respect, and we know that the kids will in turn give the coach every ounce of respect that they deserve as an adult, teacher, and coach.

Coaches will have the final say in where an athlete plays. The head coach is autonomous and will direct his team how he deems necessary. Just as parents do not confront a coach before or after a contest – nor in front of other kids/parents – coaches will not confront parents in this way either. If there is an issue between a coach and a parent, the coach will contact a board member who will help mediate the situation. In other words – coaches are not going to stand there and argue with you and vice-versa.

SLYFO coaches will do their best to get kids in games. Once again this will adjust as years go by – the older kids will earn their time etc. They will always try to be fair – but this is NOT an equal playing time sport.

Parental Duties – Volunteer Opportunities

This is a volunteer organization and as such, we require the services of volunteers. There are many opportunities for parents to pitch in and assist the program.

If every parent volunteered for just ONE 1-1/2 hour time slot during home games, no one would have to volunteer twice in the entire season! Volunteers for Saturdays do not need to be background checked as you are not working one-on-one with the kids.

Volunteer Policies

Any volunteer that works directly with the youth must first pass a background check. This means that if you want to help a coach out on the field during practice – you MUST have one. This is administered by the superintendent's office.

Safety

The safety of the players is the top priority of the organization.

In the event of an injury to a player, the parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible. In the event of some type of serious incident, (broken bone, loss of consciousness, etc.) 911 will be called and if necessary your player will be transported to the nearest medical facility.

Michigan Public Act 343 of 2014 is a Michigan Law regarding compliance of sports concussion awareness training for organizing entities, sponsors, or operators of an athletic activity in which youth athletes will participate.

Any volunteer working with the kids must complete the Center for Disease Control's online training course. This course is free to take and does not require you to create a login ID. This course is approximately 45 minutes in length. For parents wishing to receive this free training here is the link to CDC's site : CDC - Heads Up Online Training Course - Concussion - Traumatic Brain Injury - Injury Center

http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html

As part of the new concussion laws, Michigan Public Act 342 of 2014 deals with the materials SLYFO must hand out to parents and athletes.

The first is a handout and acknowledgement of materials to athletes and parents, signed by both the athlete and the parent.

Team coaches will also have two forms: One form is required to be given to the parent/guardian whenever a concussion is suspected.

The second form is a return to play form that needs to be filled out by a physician after the athlete completes the doctor's treatment regimen.

All acknowledgements and return to play forms will be kept on file by the SLYFO until the athlete reaches 18 years of age.

When the parent/guardian has the Return to Play form filled out they need to bring it to an SLYFO Board member. The Board member will then contact the releasing the athlete to return to full playing status.

Full playing status means full contact with pads. There will be occasions where the Doctor will prescribe a course of treatment that includes light to moderate exercise. In these cases the athlete will be allowed to practice with the team, however there can be ZERO contact, and the athlete should have a paper from the doctor with written instructions for recovery so that coaches will know what kinds of training will suit the prescribed course of action.

An injured teammate may come to practice/games to support his/her team. However, they must be dressed in street clothes and not padded up. At the high school level, this is expected, as even an injured athlete can learn from coaches' instruction.

Rules and Regulations

See SLYFO Website.

Terminology & Nomenclature

See SLYFO Website.

By-Laws

See SLYFO Website.

Saint Louis High School – Fight Song

Fight Saint Louis!

Fight Saint Louis!

Fight for our own high!

She's the greatest and the highest,
Her fame will never die!

We'll revere her and defend her.

On the field and track

Fight for the honor of the Crimson Black!

