

2009-2010

Parent Handbook



Sharpsburg Youth Football Association



About The League

Believing that all children should have an opportunity to play; the SYFA was formed to accommodate the rapidly growing population of Coweta, Fayette and surrounding counties. As a member of the Southern Youth Football Conference, the SYFA competes locally against recreation and select teams from Fayetteville, Peachtree City, Starrs Mill, Brooks and Landmark Christian School.

Philosophy

The SYFA is dedicated to making youth football and cheerleading a positive and enjoyable experience for every child. Located in Sharpsburg, Georgia, the SYFA provides qualified coaches certified thru The National Youth Sports Coaches Association. We expect our coaches to maintain a safe positive and nourishing environment for all participants. It's our goal to emphasize and develop the core fundamentals of football and cheerleading while emphasizing safety, teamwork, commitment, strong work ethic, respect and sportsmanship.

Eligible Participants

The SYFA provides boys and girls ages 5 – 13 with an opportunity to participate in organized, competitive football and cheerleading.



SYFA Policies

- ***Payments and Refunds***

Payments are due for all programs at time of registration. If a program is cancelled, all participants are entitled to a full refund. Refunds for those who choose to drop a program will be determined on a case by case basis. A fee of \$25 will be charged for all returned checks. Future payments must be made by cashiers check or cash.

- ***Minimum Age Requirement/Divisions***

Minimum age requirement cut-off dates are strictly enforced; no exceptions will be made regardless of circumstance. Leagues are divided according to age group.

- ***Medical Issues***

For any injury or accident that requires something other than a cleaning and covering with a bandage, coaches and parents are required to seek professional medical assistance through a 911 call. Any significant accidents or injuries beyond a minor scrape should be reported to the Athletic Director. Please indicate on the Medical Conditions portion of the receipt page if your child has a pre-existing medical condition (i.e. allergies, medications, physical or psychological impairments, etc.) This is essential in case of an accident to determine the severity of an incident and assist the medical personnel who respond to the scene.



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- **Weather**

The safety of the participants, officials, and spectators is the primary concern in cases of inclement weather. Once a game has started, the game officials will have the responsibility to remove the players from the field if the conditions become extreme. In order to do so, please find a safe place until instructed to return to the playing field or told the game has been cancelled.

- **Game Cancellations and Rescheduling**

If a game is canceled due to weather or other unforeseeable circumstances, all efforts will be made to reschedule that game. However, due to time restraints and/or facility usage conflicts, it will be the decision of The Southern Youth Football Conference if and when the games are made up. Coaches are not permitted to reschedule games.

- **Littering**

Players and spectators are required to clean up after themselves. Teams are not permitted to leave until all debris in their area has been removed and the facility is left just as they found it.

- **Facility Guidelines**

Alcohol, tobacco, glass containers, animals, and swearing are prohibited in and around any SYFA event.



- **Team Assignments**

Players will be assigned to a team within one week after the skills assessment. Trading of players is not permitted; only the Athletic Director may make changes to the team roster. Requests for specific coaches or team members will try to be accommodated but is not guaranteed. Siblings are guaranteed to be on the same team if their ages permit them to play in the same division. Only Head Coaches are guaranteed their own child, Assistant Coaches must volunteer with the team to which their child is assigned.

- **Attendance**

Players are expected to attend team practices and games regularly as their teammates are counting on their participation. If your child cannot attend a practice or game, please notify your child's coach as soon as possible. Teams are created to be as equal as possible in regards to skill and number of children. When a player misses a game, it puts the team at an immediate disadvantage and if enough players are not present the team may be required to forfeit. Please make all efforts possible to maintain good attendance. If transportation is an issue, discuss it with your child's coach and consider organizing a team carpool.



- **Uniforms**

A portion of the registration fee is used to supply the team with uniforms. These uniforms are property of SYFA. If a refund is granted for dropping a program, he or she is required to return the uniform or have a portion of the refund retained for the cost of the uniform. Uniforms must be worn in the condition that they are given out. Unauthorized alterations to the uniform (i.e. cutting the sleeves off, making a “half shirt”) will require the parent to pay for a replacement uniform. Players are permitted to have their names printed on the back of their jerseys. If a player chooses to have a nickname printed it must be in good taste. If the Athletic Director deems the nickname inappropriate the player will not be permitted to wear the jersey during games.

Players Code of Ethics

- I hereby pledge to be positive about my youth sports experience and accept responsibility for my participation by following this Players’ Code of Ethics Pledge:
- I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials and parents at every game and practice by demonstrating good sportsmanship.



- I will attend every practice and game that I can, and will notify my coach if I cannot.
- I will expect to receive a fair and equal amount of playing time.
- I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
- I will treat my coaches, other players, officials and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or abilities and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
- I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert my parents or coaches if it stops being fun!
- I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it is important to me.
- I will do my very best in school.
- I will remember that sports are an opportunity to learn and have fun.

Corrective Action Policy

Players who fail to adhere to the Code of Conduct or do not live up to their responsibilities or expectations will be subject to disciplinary action.



Accordingly, SYFA has instituted a Corrective Action Policy to establish appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

The Corrective Action Policy is a guide to assist coaches and SYFA to run a quality program. The Corrective Action Policy is a 3-step system designed to forgive a mistake but to firmly address chronic misbehavior.

For violations of the Code of Conduct or Expectations, the following steps will be followed:

Step 1 – Verbal Warning – Coach will discuss undesirable conduct with player and parents and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated.

Step 2 – Period Suspension - Coach will bench the offending player for 1 period of time during a game when he/she should be playing. Coach will inform Athletic Director of the problem and why the child is sitting out 1 game period. Coach should discuss undesirable conduct with the parents.

Step 3 – Game Suspension - Coach will bench the offending player for 1 entire game when he/she should be playing. Coach will inform the Athletic Director of the 3rd offense, at which time the player and the parent(s) must attend a meeting with the Coach and Athletic Director before the player is allowed to resume playing. The player will be warned that the next offense may result in further disciplinary action.



These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations could merit harsher sanctions against the participant.

Parent Responsibilities and Expectations

In order for a program to be truly successful, it takes the cooperation of everyone involved: players, coaches, officials, league administrators, and especially parents. Parents have the following responsibilities and expectations when participating in the SYFA Athletic Program:

Parents have a responsibility to their children: To make sure that your child gets the most out of his or her playing experience, parents should show their unwavering support, including positive reinforcement of your child's performance and effort. This is absolutely essential, especially at an early age, to ensure their healthy development. Parents should also be positive role models, including, but not limited to, showing proper sportsmanship at all times and refraining from negativity of any kind.

Parents have a responsibility to the coaches: Coaches volunteer their personal time to spend it with your child. Please take the time to meet your child's coach and attend any parent's informational meetings held in the beginning of the season. Coaches need you to be supportive of their decisions and not undermine their efforts. If you don't agree with a



Coach you are expected to tell him or her, but make certain it is done at the right time and place and not in front of the children. Parents are also expected to drop off and pick up their children on time for games and practice, and it is highly encouraged for parents to stay and participate in order to maintain control of the group and to assist the coach as needed.

Parents have a responsibility to the league: League administrators cannot be at all games and practices of all teams. Therefore, in order to maintain the protective shell around these programs, it is essential for parents to report abusive behavior or any other situation that needs to be addressed to the Athletic Director. This is the only way that these programs can achieve their intended goals.

Parents have a responsibility to other parents: Personal gain and satisfaction should not be derived from your child's performance. Competition and taunting between parents is never acceptable, and no parent should ever feel embarrassed or disappointed by their team or child's performance. Good plays should always be cheered, and disappointments should always be consoled, no matter whose team it affects.

Parents have a responsibility to themselves: It is your responsibility to enjoy watching your child and other children participate and learn. The joy and pride associated with watching children participate in sports should be experienced to the fullest, because a lifetime of memories is being created before your very eyes.



Parents Code of Ethics

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parents' Code of Ethics Pledge:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will support coaches, officials, and league administration working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth – not adults.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.



- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
- I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sports coach and that the coach upholds the Coaches' Code of Ethics.
- I will read the NYSCA National Standards for Youth Sports and do what I can to help all youth sports organizations implement and enforce them.

Corrective Action Policy

Parents who do not follow the Code of Ethics will be subject to a Corrective Action Policy. It is the philosophy of SYFA that parents' actions should not spoil the experience of participation in youth sports for the children. Furthermore, SYFA will never punish a child for the actions of his or her parent(s). Therefore, the following guidelines have been established for addressing problem parents.

For violations of the Code of Ethics or Responsibilities and Expectations, the following steps will be followed:



Step 1 – Verbal Warning – Coach will discuss undesirable conduct with parents and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated. Coach will document this conversation and give to Athletic Director.

Step 2 – Written Warning - Coach or official will notify the league of continued breach of Code of Ethics and league will bring parent(s) in for a meeting to discuss actions and what the proper behavior is. Furthermore, there will be a formal letter of reprimand given to parent(s) stating that the next offense will lead to parent being banned from the sporting event venue for a period of 1 game.

Step 3 – Game Suspension - League will ban the parent from attending the next scheduled contest and another letter will be given to parent(s) stating that the next offense will lead to parent being banned from all future contests.

Step 4 – Season Suspension The parent(s) will be banned from attending all league contests after a 4th offense. The parent(s) will then have to make a formal request to be re-instated into this league. The parent(s) will then have to meet with the Board of Directors prior to the start of the season to determine if the parent(s) is capable of behaving within the spirit and letter of the guidelines of this program.

These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations could merit harsher sanctions against the parent(s).



Athlete Attire and Appearance

SYFA believes that a uniform and clean appearance is a reflection of the attitude and commitment of its program, teams and individual athletes. Please follow the uniform guidelines below and do not allow your athlete to make any alterations to the practice or game attire unless directed by their coach. We encourage parents to hold their athletes responsible for their own equipment and bag. If a football player does not have their full equipment, they will be ineligible to play. Parents can assist in this development of responsibility by double-checking their athletes' gear and their cheerleaders' required appearance before leaving for games and practice.

FOOTBALL

- Practice pants and jerseys are mandatory practice attire. Game Day pants and jerseys are never to be worn to practice.
- All athletes are responsible for keeping their equipment clean and in good condition. Practice and game uniforms should be washed at least once a week. All items are to be washed in warm water. It is important to remove the pads from the pants prior to washing. It is best to have the pants air-dry. Jerseys can be dried in the dryer. **DO NOT BLEACH THE WHITE GAME JERSEY.**

- If there is a problem with any of the equipment, please notify the coach immediately.
- Athletes are responsible for purchasing their own football shoes (rubber cleats only) or any optional items such as gloves, athletic supporters, or supplemental pads.
- All gear needs to be returned at the end of the season except for the game jersey's.

CHEERLEADING

- Uniforms are not to be worn to practice. A T-Shirt and loose shorts or pants should be worn to all practices. Sports bras are required under t-shirts. Flyers must wear spandex under shorts. Athletic shoes must be worn to practice.
- Cheer uniform can be washed in warm water. It is best to hang the uniform on a hanger to air-dry.
- Cheer shoes must be cleaned before each game. Cheer shoes should only be worn at games and competitions.
- Poms and megaphones should be kept clean and brought to every game.
- Uniforms must be returned in like new condition at the end of the season except for the following items paid for by the athlete: cheer shoes, hair ribbons, warm-up, megaphone, and personalized gear bags.



Lost and Found

We do not maintain a lost and found. Please remind your athletes to make sure they have all their belongings at the end of practices and games.

Nutrition

Energy and plenty of water are essential for a healthy athlete. It is difficult to exercise on a full stomach. Your child should not eat a large meal within 1-2 hours of practice and games provide them a substantial, healthy snack instead. Also, please provide at least 2 quarts of water for every practice and encourage your child to drink water during water breaks. Juice, soda, and other sugary drinks are not suitable to keep your athlete well hydrated. **IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR SAFETY REASONS THAT YOUR ATHLETE BRING AMPLE WATER TO PRACTICE AND GAMES.**

Attitude

The first week is Conditioning Week when both football players and cheerleaders will be required to run, do calisthenics, and practice basic stances. Because it is a rigorous and challenging week, you may find that your athlete is tired and grumpy even reluctant to attend practice. As



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your child becomes more fit and gains confidence, his/her attitude will improve. Your support, enthusiasm, and presence at practice will help your child through this first tough week.

Official Weigh-In

The SYFC Official Weigh-Ins for football athletes will take place in August. Parents will be notified of the exact day and time for Weigh-Ins as soon as the schedule is final. **IT IS MANDATORY THAT YOUR ATHLETE ATTEND THIS OFFICIAL WEIGH-IN** as it certifies that they have officially made weight and are eligible to run the ball. **IT IS A CONFERENCE RULE THAT ATHLETES WHO MISS OFFICIAL WEIGH-INS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO RUN THE BALL. THERE ARE NO MAKE UP DAYS.**

Game Requirements

Athletes are expected to attend all games, even when they are not eligible to play, to provide support to their teammates and the organization. Three missed games will result in dismissal from the team for the remainder of the season. If an athlete must miss a game due to illness or emergency, please contact the Head Coach as soon as possible.



Coaching

Anyone who is interested in volunteering as a Head Coach may submit their request and qualifications to the Football Athletic Director or Cheer Director prior to the start of the season. In the event that more than one candidate applies for a Head Coach position, the President and Football Director will qualify each candidate before a final decision is made. Assistant Coaching positions are filled by the Head Coaches with input and approval from the Athletic/Cheer Directors. If you are interested in becoming an Assistant Coach, please contact your Head Coach or the Athletic/Cheer Director. Anyone may submit a request to coach (coaching fulfills your Parent Participation requirement). A parent may coach his/her child's team but it is highly suggested that the parent not be directly responsible for coaching his or her own child.

Team Parent Guidelines

Our Team Parents play a critical role in making sure that the SYFA program runs smoothly by serving as liaison between Coaches, SYFA Board members and Parents. The parents and athletes of this program thank all Team Parents for all of their hard work.



TEAM PARENT GENERAL DUTIES:

Board Meetings: Can attend the monthly Board Meetings. Dates are listed on the SYFA Website.

Team Packets: Prepare packets for the teams at the beginning of the season with schedules, game directions, snack schedule and other pertinent information.

Head Coach Helper: Fulfills any requests the Head Coach has to disseminate information to parents, such as team events, schedule changes, etc.

Focal Point for Fundraising and Various Other Activities: Collects and verifies every team member has completed or turned in necessary information and turns it in to the Committee Chair or appropriate Board Member. Places reminder calls to parents as necessary as deadlines approach.

Parent Volunteer Monitor: Keeps a list of his/her squad's/team's volunteer positions for the entire season. The Team Parent is not responsible for finding replacements for parents who are unable to fulfill a volunteer assignment (The parent unable to fulfill his assignment is responsible for finding a substitute and notifying the Team Parent of the change). The Team Parent keeps track of any changes in the Parent Volunteer Assignments.



Parent Reminders: Calls parents to remind them of Job Assignments or upcoming deadlines as needed.

Coaches' Gifts: Coordinates the collection of donations from parents and selects a small gift for each coach as a token of thanks.

Year-End Party: Individual team parties are planned by each team. Team Parent would help the Head Coach plan the event.

SYFA Board Positions

Sharpsburg Stallions parents and other caring individuals volunteer for SYFA Board Positions. It is the SYFA Board and involved Sharpsburg Stallions parents who ensure that a low-cost, quality football and cheerleading program will continue to be available for the youth Of our community. The Board usually meets the first Tuesday of the month. All Sharpsburg Stallions member parents are encouraged to attend. Be sure to check the website for accurate date, time and location. A copy of the By-Laws can be obtained from the SYFA website.

SYFA encourages enthusiastic, positive individuals to either assist or join the Board. Current Board Members welcome your interest in their duties. Simply introduce yourself and ask how you can help.

Board Members are elected by the organization at large during the General Election Meeting.



Sharpsburg Youth Football Association Board of Directors

President - Mark Doss

Vice President - David Weddington

Treasurer - Tammy Goodman

Secretary - Stacy Vaughn

Athletic Director - Terry Stills

Football Director - Clayton Lawrence

Cheerleading Director - Jennifer Corbitt

Field Director - Shane Johnson

Equipment Director - Steve Ansley



By Laws

A written set of Bylaws governs the way the Board conducts business on behalf of the organization. A copy of the organization's Bylaws can be obtained from any Board Member or the Sharpsburg Youth Football website.

Communication

The best location for updated information is our website. It is a great place to go for the most up to date accurate information. Check it frequently. Just ask if you are wondering about something, your Coaches, Team Parents, and Board Members will be happy to help.