

FIRST PARENT MEETING

Introduction and setting expectations are very important in any type of setting. **Nothing takes the joy of coaching young kids away sooner than having to deal with knucklehead parents.** The following is exactly what we as coaches must tell all parents and kids the first 30 minutes of the first day of practice in a mandatory parents meeting:

Welcome, to the Stallions, Ohio's finest Youth Football Program. **This is just youth football and not an extension of any coaches or parent's past sports history. Priorities are: Faith, Family, School, and then Football.**

Before we get started, let us make sure we have everyone's attention. To be a good and safe football player you have to be a good listener. Whenever you hear a Stallion coach yell the word **"READY"** you stop what you were doing, stop talking, look directly into his eyes and yell the word **"FOCUS"** as loud as you can. You will continue to stay perfectly quiet until the coach is done talking. Every eye should be on the coach, if he looks at you, you should be staring into his eyes, not off into the distance or to the ground. If the coach does not see you looking at him, he will send you running. Let's get ready to have some fun and learn how to play football properly and safely. Is anyone a little nervous maybe a few butterflies swirling around in your stomach? That's very natural and no big deal, everyone that has ever played has had them, me included, and they go away during the first 10 minutes of practice. By the second or third practice you won't have any at all. **"READY"** – **"FOCUS"**. We then introduce each coach and team parent by name.

We are a different program. Please do not compare us to others. We are a competitive tackle football program focusing on life lessons while maximizing the talent level of our kids, playing to our potential, utilizing well-trained dad and volunteer coaches. All programs have pluses and minuses, we are not saying anything bad about anyone, and all programs serve a useful purpose.

We have 17 teams in the Butler County Youth Football League. **The Stallions guarantee that every player will get to play in every game regardless of circumstances. Every player will start and play entire game on offense or defense. Each Stallion team will only have a max. of 22 players.**

FUN

Our goal is learn the game, learn a few life lessons, learn and live sportsmanship, but mainly to have fun. Our goal is to have fun every time we get together, however to have the most fun we have to be organized. We need to have set plays for each practice to make sure we learn the game safely and progress so that everyone can meet their potential as a player and for us to meet our potential together as a team. In order for us to do this, we must get everyone to listen.

LISTENING

Football is a team game; every player has a job on each play. For us to succeed, every player must know his job and how to do it. To play the game safely each player must understand how to safely perform blocking and tackling. In order to do this, we need good listeners. We have all kinds of kids play for us, big, small, fast, slow, athletic, clumsy, aggressive and passive. We have been able to teach them all how to play the game and play it well and safely. The one common thread was they were all good listeners

and came to practice. Those are the only two requirements we have, as well as of course being a good sport. **Quite frankly, it does not matter to us if you are a great athlete or not, we do well with either because we play team football.**

Each player will have a buddy partner and each practice we will devote 5 minutes for them to talk and get to know each other.

Each player will have a personal coach mentor.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Sportsmanship is goal number one for us all, all coaches, parents and players sign contracts and are held accountable to a very **unbendable Sportsmanship Standard. Our players do not talk to referees, we do not trash talk, we do not do excessive celebrations, we do not curse, we do not hit after the whistle, we do not get upset at our teammates and we do not fight or use dirty tactics. We do help up our opponents, we do compliment our teammates and opponents for good plays, we run the ball back to the official when he calls for it, we do not run up scores and we provide snacks to our opponents, win or lose at every game.** Our parents are held to a very high standard as well, as defined in the spectator contract that must be signed by the parent as a condition of playing. It spells out among other things that **our parents will not hassle the referees with snide comments or remarks. Our parents will not gripe about missed or poor calls or “beg”, suggest or otherwise communicate with or about the referee before, during or after the game in public.**

We are trying to set a good example for the boys and the Stallions have worked very hard to earn a great reputation for sportsmanship. **Our parents are the best in the state, they are fantastic, and we are the example every team wants to be like. We will not compromise that for the action of one silly parent or player.** We have a zero tolerance level in this area, if you choose to violate the agreement, you may or may not get one warning before we ask you to leave, pull your child out of a game until you leave, or remove you from the program permanently on the spot. **You are responsible for the actions of family members;** if you have that crazy cousin Irving that you know is a hotheaded loudmouth, make sure not to invite him to our games. We have never had a player, coach or fan draw an unsportsmanlike call.

We will let kids go mid-game as well as parents. We will send out rejection letters each year letting parents know their children will not be allowed to participate due to non-adherence to the Spectator Contract. **If you are one of those that can't keep your mouth shut, you need to either never show up at games, or go to another program.**

FUNDAMENTALS

We are believers that sound fundamental football results in players and teams playing to their potential. We spend an inordinate amount of time perfecting our blocking and tackling. This would include learning how to perform blocking and tackling safely, accelerating through contact, proper footwork and stances, steps, and finishing. We use very sophisticated blocking schemes that include down blocks, double teams, chips, pulling, trapping, wedge blocking, crab blocking and pass protection. We do throw some and use a variety of shifts, formations and motion to get numerical advantages. Most players do not usually get to see this until High School, it is very advanced for the age group. On defense, we use a number of shifts, calls, blitzes and stunts depending on game circumstances. Each aspect has been thoroughly researched and tested. The Stallion program is well known on the National level and the system is taught at various National Symposiums and Coaching Clinics all across the country. This system is packaged and is being used successfully by coaches in 48 states.

ORGANIZATION/PRACTICES

Our practices and games will be very organized and planned down to the minute. Our teams are well organized, with our goal being to play to our full team potential. Our system is a technique and timing based system that is taught in a set progression, meaning if a player misses a practice, they miss a key piece of the puzzle. **We also practice just 3 nights per week until school starts and just two nights thereafter from 2-2 ½ hours. Many of our opponents will be practicing five nights per week the entire year, some 2 ½ to 3 hours per practice.** We can compete despite the disparity in practice time because we have a unique practice methodology and we have a sense of urgency in our practices. We will start promptly at 6:00 and end promptly at 8:15; we will not go over unless it is an extremely odd circumstance. We expect that same from you, if you miss we need to know about it ahead of time. If you have an injury, we expect you to be at practice to listen. **During lighting and/or rain delays at games or practice do not leave the area until the coach notifies you that the game or practice has been called.**

Acceptable Excused Absences (Must be approved ahead of time)

- Church Functions
- Academic Functions (contest)
- Illness requiring player to miss school
- School Suspension

Unexcused

- Other athletic contests or Boy Scouts, etc.
- Injury
- Social Functions (skating parties, etc.)
- Fatigue

PRACTICE METHODOLOGY

Our practice methodology is much different than you may have used when you were kids or even see in different youth teams or high school teams. We do not have time nor do we see lots of value in wasting time doing mindless calisthenics, agility or conditioning drills that have little or nothing to do with football.

After doing a significant amount of research on the subject, studying people like Don Markham whose California and Oregon high school teams won numerous championships and set national scoring records to Screaming Eagle coach Jay Smith, whose Canyon Springs California High School team won two USA Today National Championships in the 90's. We looked at Union College and St. John's whose teams have won a combined 12 National Titles in the last 12 years. We studied successful youth teams as well as unsuccessful ones and found toughness and conditioning were overrated. Almost always, our methods result in us having the most aggressive team.

TEAM GOALS

1. Grow in individual character and virtue
2. Grow individually in football skills
3. Grow as a team in football skills

OUR DRILLS

We do only directly football related drills, no push-ups, sit-ups, agility drills, sprints, etc. **We ease our players into contact with a focus on technique work and personal responsibility. We find a player will not play aggressively unless they are confident in how to do something, as well as where they are supposed to do it. Confidence in both, gives the player potential to play aggressively. We are firm believers in accelerating through contact and using a progression approach to teach it. We also are not big believers in lots of full contact after the first two weeks in pads. We do technique work the entire season. We also limit scrimmaging to 20-30 minutes per week max. We know we get much more out of fit and freeze drills than scrimmages.**

A very wise coach told me once “Teams that scrimmage all the time do so because the coach doesn’t know how to practice or is too lazy to do so”. We keep our helmets off for a good portion of practice and give plenty of water breaks. We will condition by hustling through a very fast-paced practice, playing games, or running our plays out 20 yards. With just 8 minutes quarters and 22 players to a squad, we should not have to worry about running out of gas. Our practices are not terribly physically demanding, however, they are somewhat mentally demanding, the kids have to listen.

Since changing to this methodology and offensive system, The Omaha Eagle teams have dominated every level of play. They have won at over a 70% combined clip for all their 12-15 teams in Omaha. The system flat out works when it is taught properly and the kids listen.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

If we see a player not listening, or not hustling, we may ask him to refrain from doing so, or we may just send him running. It is important that everyone understands our boundaries and understands them early. Our practices are relatively easy, but we have no time to waste, therefore we do not have time to go into long conferences with players. **If they are not paying attention, or not hustling, they will run. It is very rare to have anyone do any running after the first two weeks.**

We will raise a voice, if we see someone not listening or not hustling, just to get the players attention. We won’t do so if a player is just not athletic enough to do something, like dropping a pass, fumbling the ball etc. all that is expected. **Not listening, hustling, or being a poor sport is not OK.** Please know ahead of time that this will happen, if you or your son cannot handle that; please consider playing elsewhere, because it is going to happen. We are fair and always have the highest retention rates. We are very quiet during most every game and will never hassle a referee. We also ask the players to follow a few simple rules:

TEAM RULES

- Must attend practices and be on time
- Must respect the referees and your opponents
- What the coach says goes, no back talking
- Must show up on time for the pre-game---30 minutes before game
- Respect fellow players
- Respect and take care of your equipment
- Turn in your weekly academic accountability forms and keep up on your schoolwork
- No parent allowed on side lines with team at any game

EQUIPMENT

Per league rules, mouthpieces that are not strapped to the helmet are not a legal piece of equipment and will result in a penalty, no clear mouth pieces. Do not sit on your helmet or toss it around. The league does not allow visors. If something does not fit, or is broken, talk to a coach.

PLAYING TIME AND POSITIONS

Each player will start and play the entire game on offense or defense. Each team will have no more than 22 players.

The head coach makes all playing time decisions. He distributes a depth chart to the assistant coaches with the positions and playing time scenarios set for each player. The position coach then subs in based on those parameters. We determine positions based on your sons ability, the teams needs, and lastly the players preference. The rules dictate weight limits for who can carry the ball. We determine positions in practice by the gauntlet drill, tackling contests and other drills. Quite often, we have two very good players at one position that are equal in ability; we may move one player over to a position that is not his natural position to get him on the field. Rarely though, does a player play something different than what we have him designated for, **in spite of parents dreams to the contrary. We play kids in positions that are best for him and the team, not necessarily what they want to play.** A player may play 2-3 different positions. They may even change positions during season or next season. We try to get them a few snaps at what they want to play but that is not always possible.

PLAYING TIME

We sub very generously. There are many teams where some players would not play at all. **We do not negotiate playing time with parents or change positions based on a parents' recommendation.** We do what is best for the team and the player, based on the team's needs and the player's legitimate ability. If your child wants to play more, he has to earn it. Encourage your child no matter what position he plays or amount of time he gets in the game, things change. Many kids want to quit in their first season, those that do usually regret it. Everyone has doubts, that is natural, but always finish the season.

DRAMA

Some people just enjoy creating drama and controversy for the sake of the drama. Creating unneeded gossip or drama will not be tolerated.

If you aren't happy with an outcome, talk to the head coach or quit, don't act like a spoiled child if you don't get your way, it does nothing positive for the team or your child. The leadership put in too much time to have to hassle with petty selfish squabbles.

COACHES

All coaches must go through a criminal background check and attend coaching clinics in the off-season. They must agree to and sign a code of conduct contract. They must study a coaching manual and DVD's developed for all our coaches. Here at the Stallions, we have a great staff with lots of ex-college players. We have very good coaches that did not play college or even high school ball. If you want to coach, we would love to talk to you right now about next year.

OUR SYSTEM

Our practice methodology and offensive and defensive schemes are not debatable subjects. They have been developed over years through thousands of hours of research and refinement. They are a perfect fit for maximizing the talent of the players we typically get and provides them a framework to have fun and allow them to be successful. **It is a great system for developing kids into sound High School players.**

WINNING

The Stallions want to win but we do not trade our integrity for wins. Our goal is to play to our full potential, whether that is 12 wins or 2. **We do not talk a whole lot about winning, we talk about playing well.** Our goal is to play well, if we play well and win the game that is a bonus; the winning takes care of itself. If we play well and lose, that's ok too. We would rather play well and lose than play poorly and win.

Either way, we will win and lose with class and dignity.

PRAYER

You do not have to be Christian to play for the Stallions. We will pray before and after all practices and games and ask Jesus for his safety and blessing at each game and practice, no one is required to participate. The program is run by Christian Principles. We will invite the opponent to join us in prayer after the game.

WEATHER/PRACTICE

Fifteen minute break for thunder or lightning – then re-evaluate.

CONCLUSION

This is who we are. If you are going to be part of us, we look forward to it, if you do not; we wish you and your son our very best. **We realize we are not the best fit for everyone but be aware we are not going to change anything.** We do not try to pressure anyone to stay or leave. The nice thing about having multiple programs in the area is that there is a choice. There is nothing worse than having someone feel they are forced to participate in something they do not believe in, or support. **We think our program is great, but it is up to each family to determine what the right fit is for them.**

We do need significant help in a number or of areas. Such as working the gate at home games and helping set up and clean the field before and after home games. We will be sending out work schedules with the kids. If you are scheduled to work at a time you can't it is your responsibility to get someone else to switch with. Please be respectful for the team.