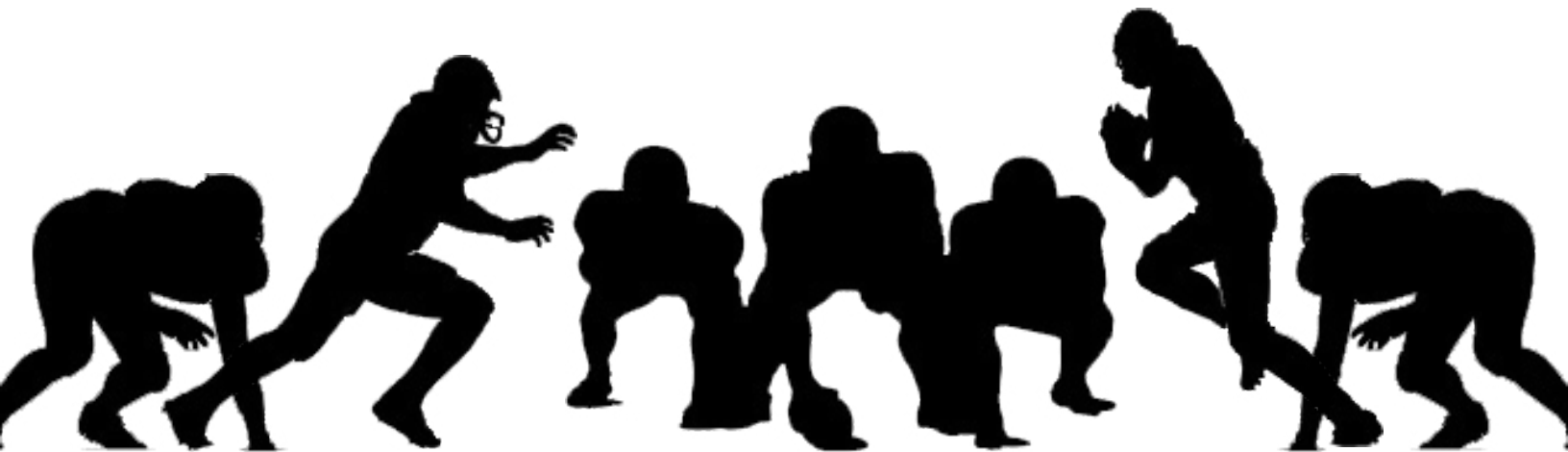




2023 Coaches Handbook

Discipline • Organization • Intelligence • Trustworthy
Respectful & Accountable • Independent • Gracious • Humanitarian



The primary Mission of the Crusader Youth Football Program will be to assist in the development of all student-athletes and their growth, not only as football players, but as young citizens within the community. This will be accomplished by improving their life skills as well as their football abilities. All participants will be afforded the opportunity to improve these life skills through education, friendships, teamwork, and football. The purpose of this program is to provide safe supervised football activities for the youth of the Dane county. The objectives of the Crusader Youth Football Program shall be the following:

1. To build healthy bodies and minds.
2. To develop skills and proficiency in the game of football and related activities.
3. To teach the concepts of teamwork, commitment, accountability, sportsmanship, loyalty, honesty, and pride.
4. To stimulate community interest in football.
5. To have fun.
6. To accomplish all of these objectives with the welfare of the student-athlete first and foremost, without adult ambition for personal glory.

The primary goal of the Mount Horeb/Barneveld Youth Football Program is to develop young men; who through participation in the program; will naturally progress into the Edgewood Varsity Football program, which not only develops football players, but successful community contributors in leadership roles. The youth program is an extension of the Crusader Varsity program, so all grades are required to run the offensive and defensive playbooks provided by the Crusader Varsity program.

COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

Coaching Perspective:

1. Football Character development through Football Fun and Fundamentals
2. Balancing the SPIRIT and WILL of a child
3. Focus on the process (preparation) and not the outcome (score). See philosophy on winning.

Coaching Objectives:

1. Provide the best football experience for each player regardless of skill level
2. Leave them better than where they began the season
3. Develop a desire in each player to return to football the next year (Don't be their last football Coach)



Coaching Philosophy: RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, DISCIPLINE

1. Responsibility – TEACH each player what they are responsible for in SIMPLE 3-step progression
2. Accountability – TEACH WHAT IS EXPECTED of each player, NO EXCUSES (own your assignments)
3. Discipline – Correcting mistakes through teachable moments with a focus on the NEXT TIME.
 - Breakdowns are opportunities to learn. High 5 for mistakes in practice! Keep a teachable environment.
 - Refrain from running kids for physical mistakes. Don't default to being punitive or shaming. Go back to RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, and DISCIPLINE of TECHNIQUE.

Philosophy on winning:

1. Focus on the process and not the outcome
2. Win every play, win every rep, win every moment, win on and off the field
3. If you did your very best, then you were successful
4. Winning is a product of doing the right things
5. Win games in practice

Coaching style:

Know your style and coach within yourself

1. STRATEGIC – you teach players why the play will work.
2. MOTIVATIONAL- you are excited and positive all the time.
3. FUNDAMENTAL- you teach skills and drills and emphasize key points.
4. HYBRID- you have multiple skills listed above.

How to motivate:

1. DIRECTLY: Replace, give instruction, put them back in
2. INDIRECTLY: Through competition as often as possible. You teach to the whole group not one individual.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Know the players spirit – Positive vs. Negative tolerance

- Be CLEAR, CONSISTENT and CONSCISE with your instruction
- CONNECT AND GET BUY IN
- USE THEIR NAME
- TELL THEM YOU BELIEVE IN THEM
- BE HONEST WITH THEM
- LOOK THEM IN THE EYE
- AFFIRM – Build their confidence through honest affirmation



Goals and Objectives:

1. Facilitate a great football experience to ensure that we are not their last football coach
2. Clearly communicate coaching responsibilities and performance expectations
3. Confirm that everyone understands what is expected
4. Make training and continual learning a top priority
5. Regularly provide specific performance feedback
6. Make sure people know how they're doing
7. Consistently recognize and reward positive performance
8. Hold people accountable for negative behavior and performance

Communication:

“Coaching sets the pace to get the best out of others while giving the best of yourself.”

1. Teach them patiently: Tell them, tell them what you told them, ask them what you told them, and then tell them again, don't default to coaching effort, get buy in!
2. The style and tone of your communications are messages in and of themselves.

Coaching Tips:

Things good coaches do:

1. Keep perspective
2. Coach with an enthusiastic attitude
3. Tell them that you believe in them
4. Coach with positive energy
5. Be patient, be organized
6. Balance discipline and fun
7. Coach every play
8. Talk to players on their level
9. Give only one correction at a time
10. Repetition pays off
11. Encourage parents to help out

Things NOT to do:

1. Don't lose perspective
2. Don't let your assistants or your parents lose perspective
3. Don't try to beat the other team, but instead try to win every play
4. Don't swear
5. Don't coach the other team's players
6. Don't make fun of players
7. Don't give up on a player
8. Don't take a close call in your favor
9. Don't touch a kid in anger or frustration
10. Don't intimidate a kid by yelling at him; take a knee and speak at his level
11. Don't take cell calls during practice or games



Practice Plan

Preparation, tempo, results:

Preparation:

1. Follow a master schedule for the sake of others including the 1 hour practice plan
2. Always have a plan

Tempo:

1. Coach on the run
2. Keep up a steady pace and minimize standing around
3. Quick transitions from one drill to another; run from station to station
4. Build on one technique to the next
5. Try not to over-coach
6. Challenge practice plan awareness to promote leadership

Results:

1. Start with the end in mind and communicate what success looks like
2. Drill technique, explain how the drill translates to on the field success
3. Challenge your team with their duties and how they won't be the weak link
4. Celebrate when things come together; pass out something special

Practices:

1. Prior to the first game, each team is permitted a total of eighteen (18) practices with no more than three practices per week. A player must attend fifteen (15) to be eligible for first game).
2. A week is defined as Sunday through Saturday
3. Prior to the first game, practices may be held on Sundays after 1:00 pm
4. Sunday Practices ARE allowed after the first game as long as you have 100% consensus of ALL parents. They must start at 1:00pm or after.
5. There will be a two-hour time limit for all practices
6. After your first game, you are ONLY allowed 3 practices per week.
7. Locations of practices for each grade are determined by the league in consultation with the Recreation department and Activities office. Locations will be announced after teams are formed.

Rules:

Please download the official rules from the League website for your specific grade level.



TEAM ADMINISTRATION

Team Administration can be broken down into several different aspects, from communication, to putting together a team practice plan to interacting with the parents and fans. In this section, we will focus on three (3) aspects of team administration:

1. Communication – team and parents
2. Organization
3. Assembling a coaching staff

Communication:

Your ability to communicate effectively with your players, coaches, parents, officials and fans will go a long way into determining your success as a coach. It was once said, that the style and tone of your communications are messages in and of themselves. Effective communication has many forms, both verbal and non-verbal. In this section we will focus our communication skills with our players, our coaches and our parents.

Communication with your team:

Perspective/Expectation:

1. As a coach, make sure you have the correct perspective on the game. These are young kids and for many of them, this will be their first experience with football. Remember, your goal should be that each one of your kids has a positive football experience and that they can't wait to come back the following season.
2. Set the tone from day one. Have a team meeting to go over goals and objectives, as well as your expectations for your communication with them (when the coach talks, all eyes on him) and their communication with you (respect, yes sir, no sir).
3. Be Positive, encourage and be honest. Tell them what they did well, encourage them to continue to try and help to correct their performance at each phase of the drill, play, etc. in a positive manner.
4. Speak to them on their level. If you are one on one with a player, take a knee and speak to them at eye level. It will be the little things that make the biggest difference.



Three (3) “C’s” of Effective Communication:

1. Clear – Organize your thoughts and understand your subject as completely as possible. Do not beat around the bush trying to make a point. In fact, the simpler, the better.
2. Concise - Don’t feel that you have to belabor a point in order to get it across. Many times you can say more with using fewer words.
3. Consistent – be consistent in your approach. If you are all over the board in your communication, your kids will have no idea what direction you want them to follow.

Non-Verbal Communication:

Just as important as the words we use are the actions that you portray. Nonverbal communication is just as important as verbal communication. Your body language can speak louder than words to a player on your team.

A pat on the back, a quick high five or a fist bump can speak volumes just as much as a stern look.

Communication with the Parents:

A coach can really set the tone for the season with his interaction with the parents. A positive interaction with the parents will go a long way into making for a positive experience for you, your team and the league.

1. Discuss your expectations of them during practices and games, especially in cheering for their team and not yelling at the officials.
2. Discuss your coaching philosophy and how you are going to handle playing time for games.
3. Discuss your discipline policy in regards to practice attendance, behavior, and academics.

DEALING WITH PARENTS

Coaching Crusader 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:

1. Always listen to parent’s ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement however 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!!
2. 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.



3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 League Director and schedule a meeting to iron out any differences.
6. 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.
7. 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".
8. Ask your player's 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.
9. 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: carpooling, keeping statistics, reporting scores to the newspaper, cleaning the field after games, score keeping, fund raising, Team Commissioner, etc.
10. 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.
11. 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.

GUIDELINES FOR THE REQUIRED PRE-SEASON PARENT MEETING

Every Crusader 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, plus allow you to explain your coaching philosophy, rules and regulations.

Arrange to have your meeting at a time convenient to you and to the parents. If you can, arrange for a meeting room at a school, church, office or community building. If you cannot manage a pre-practice meeting, then meet at your first regular practice location before or after practice. Once you have decided on the date, time and location, call all your parents.



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

1. Introduce yourself and your assistant(s). You should give a little background information on yourself and each assistant.
2. Pass out a schedule that lists location of practices, dates of practices, start and finish times of practice, dates and location of games, etc.
3. Go over each piece of equipment the league provides or requires. Explain the purpose of the various pieces of equipment and demonstrate the proper way to put the equipment on.
4. **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.**
5. Tell the parents what should be done prior to checking equipment in -- cleaning helmet, washing pants, etc. Explain what type shoes should be used – players may never use baseball cleats.
6. Talk about providing water during practice sessions and pop or treats after games. Ask for parent help in providing both or none at all.
7. Go over all of 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.
8. 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 emphasis that players should never lead with their facemasks into the chest of another player.
9. 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.
10. Talk about car-pooling for practices and for games. Thank the parents for their support.

