

RIVER FALLS
WILDCATS™
Youth
FOOTBALL

River Falls Youth Football Association

**2020 Player & Parent
Information and Expectations
Handbook**

Message from the Board



Welcome to the 2020 River Falls Youth Football Association (RFYFA) season! It is our goal to try to make it a positive and exciting experience for your son or daughter. This RFYFA information and expectations package has been put together in the hopes of helping you better understand the program. Simply stated, our program's goal is to help every player realize a passion for football, gain knowledge/skills, and have fun.

This handbook is a look into what the RFYFA's Board of Directors deems to be the important facets of the league. Youth football should be a positive and memorable experience for all involved – players, coaches, and parents.

Thank you for partnering with the River Falls Youth Football program. We look forward to another great River Falls Youth Football Association season!

Key Pillars of Success

RFYFA strives to provide the framework, organization and resources to help ensure the River Falls youth football program is a positive community experience. The RFYFA Board of Directors and Coaches are all volunteers, but are guided by RFYFA's four key pillars of success – Character, Effort, Development and Enjoyment.

Character

Effort

Development

Enjoyment



Important Links

RFYFA Website	www.riverfallsfootball.com
RFYFA Facebook Account	@rfyouthfootball
RFYFA Instagram Account	@rfyouthfootball
RFYFA Twitter Account	@rfyouthfootball

List of Key Events

Event	Date	Description
River Falls Days Parade	CANCELLED	RFYFA players are welcome to walk in the parade with Coach Crail's Wildcats football team. They kids will toss candy, mini footballs, and hand out the upcoming Wildcats schedule.
RFYFA Booth at River Falls Days	CANCELLED	Look for the Wildcats football tent outside City Hall! Free games for kids, merchandise for sale, and the opportunity to register for the 2019 season!
RFYFA Sponsor Fighting Fish Baseball Game	CANCELLED	Come on down to the FNB of River Falls baseball field and watch the Fighting Fish with RFYFA. We will have prizes and provide an opportunity to register for the 2019 season! One high school football player, one middle school football player, and a youth football player will each throw out a pitch before the game!
RFYFA Coaching Clinic Option #1	08/24/20	All coaches are required to attend a mandatory pre-season meeting. We will discuss the schedule, RFYFA's mission, rules, and youth coaching best practices.
RFYFA Coaching Clinic Option #2	08/25/20	All coaches are required to attend a mandatory pre-season meeting. We will discuss the schedule, RFYFA's mission, rules, and youth coaching best practices.



Parent Orientation Option #1	08/26/20	Parents/guardians are highly encouraged to attend the parent meeting at 6:00 p.m. This meeting will be done via Zoom and RYFA board members will review the program, player and parent expectations, and answer questions.
Parent Orientation Option #2	08/27/20	Parents/guardians are highly encouraged to attend the parent meeting at 6:00 p.m. This meeting will be done via Zoom and RYFA board members will review the program, player and parent expectations, and answer questions.
Wildcats Youth Football Camp	CANCELLED	The philosophy of Coach Crail's one day, two-hour non-contact camp is to provide solid fundamental football skills in a safe and fun environment. The High School coaches and players will teach techniques for both offense and defense. Camp is for 1 st through 8 th graders.
"Combine Night" Grades 1/2 & 3/4 ONLY	CANCELLED	This practice will allow the kids to run through drills that help assess skill level.
"Combine Night" Grades 5/6 ONLY	CANCELLED	This practice will allow the kids to run through drills that help assess skill level.
Teams Announced via Email	08/30/20	The first couple weeks of practice will be used for evaluating players for team placement. This is not a tryout; all kids will be placed on a team. Once teams are formed, we will announce them at practice. All coaches will be given a list of player's names, phone numbers and email addresses based on what was submitted during the online registration.
ALL Grade 1/2 First Practice Night (Teams 1-8)	09/01/20	All first 1 st and 2 nd graders should meet at their team's practice field location at 6pm. Parents will receive coach/team information prior to the first night of practice. Players will always practice at this same field number. Grade 1/2 will practice every Tuesday at 6pm.
Half of Grade 5/6 First Practice Night (Teams 1-4)	09/01/20	Grade 5/6 Teams 1-4 should meet at their team's practice field location at 6pm. Parents will receive coach/team information prior to the first night of practice. Players will always practice at this same field number. Grade 5/6 Teams 1-4 will practice every Tuesday at 6pm.



ALL Grade 3/4 First Practice Night (Teams 1-8)	09/03/20	All first 3 rd and 4 th graders should meet at their team's practice field location at 6pm. Parents will receive coach/team information prior to the first night of practice. Players will always practice at this same field number. Grade 3/4 will practice every Thursday at 6pm.
Half of Grade 5/6 First Practice Night (Teams 5-8)	09/03/20	Grade 5/6 Teams 5-8 should meet at their team's practice field location at 6pm. Parents will receive coach/team information prior to the first night of practice. Players will always practice at this same field number. Grade 5/6 Teams 5-8 will practice every Thursday at 6pm.
Scrimmage During Halftime of Wildcats Game	CANCELLED	This is one of the highlight events of the season. During a River Falls Wildcat home game, Head Wildcat Football Coach Crail invites the RFYFA players to run out on the field at halftime, scrimmage each other, and be recognized for their involvement with River Falls Youth Football. Register your player by emailing rfyouthfootball@gmail.com by August 23.
First Game "Thursday Night Football"	CANCELLED	For the first time, RFYFA will play the first game of the season at River Falls High School. Grade levels 1/2 and 3/4 will play on the practice fields, while grade level 5/6 will play on the new field turf. The rest of the games will be on Saturday mornings at 10:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. on the same fields where practices take place. The schedule of all games will be posted on the riverfallsfootball.com website once finalized.
Game Day	09/19/20	Games will be on Saturday mornings at Meyer Middle School. Grades 1/2 will play at 10:00am, Grades 3/4 will play at 11:15am, and Grades 5/6 will play at 12:30pm.
Picture Day	CANCELLED	Team and individual pictures will be taken prior to your game. As we get close to picture day we will hand out picture packets along with a picture day schedule. We ask that every player gets a picture taken, but we do not require that you purchase any pictures.
Game Day	09/26/20	Games will be on Saturday mornings at Meyer Middle School. Grades 1/2 will play at 10:00am, Grades 3/4 will play at 11:15am, and Grades 5/6 will play at 12:30pm.
Practice with the Falcons	CANCELLED	For those of you new to the program, this is always a fun event. The UWRF football team invites us to practice/scrimmage with them at Ramer Field.



Game Day	10/03/20	Games will be on Saturday mornings at Meyer Middle School. Grades 1/2 will play at 10:00am, Grades 3/4 will play at 11:15am, and Grades 5/6 will play at 12:30pm.
Game Day	10/10/20	Games will be on Saturday mornings at Meyer Middle School. Grades 1/2 will play at 10:00am, Grades 3/4 will play at 11:15am, and Grades 5/6 will play at 12:30pm.
End of Year Celebration & Punt/Pass/Kick Contest	CANCELLED	The end of the year banquet is held during the last game of the year. The RFYFA provides hotdogs and treats for you and your families to enjoy after your child's last game of the season. In addition, this year we will have a free Punt/Pass/Kick event for all players that want to participate. 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd Place awards will be provided by grade group.
Coach Appreciation	TBD	This is an event for RFYFA volunteer coaches and their significant others. Every year we host a Coach Appreciation event to say THANK YOU to the coaches for volunteering their time and energy.



Communication to Parents

The River Falls Youth Football Association will make every attempt to keep our players and their parents/guardians up to date on anything related to the youth football program and upcoming events. We have four ways of communicating with parents and players. They are email, website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

- Please be sure that your email is updated during player registration. If you feel that you are not receiving emails from RFYFA, please email us at rfyouthfootball@gmail.com and ask to have your email address added to our distribution list.
- Please refer to the website regularly. Important information is available including game schedules, program updates, meetings, calendar updates, etc. (www.riverfallsfootball.com)
- Sign up, follow and like our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts to receive RFYFA Football updates.

Parent Expectations

Be positive with your athlete. Let them know you are proud they are part of the team. Focus on the benefits of teamwork and personal discipline.

Encourage your athlete to follow all rules. Help the coaches build a commitment to the team. Set a good example in your personal lifestyle.

Allow your athlete to perform and progress at a level consistent with his/her ability. Athletes mature at different ages; some progress earlier than others.

Insist on positive behavior in school and a high level of performance in the classroom. Numerous studies indicate extracurricular involvement helps enhance academic performance.

Cheer for our team and players. Opponents and referees deserve respect. Realize that players, coaches and referees will make mistakes. Your support is needed during these times.

Promote having fun. Having fun is so important at this age in order for the kids to learn and grow.

An athlete's self-confidence and self-image will be improved by support at home. Encourage your child to do their best and to have fun.

Emphasize the importance of well-balanced meals and regular sleep patterns. An athlete functions best when care is taken to consume nutritious food and obtain sufficient rest.



Expectations of RFYFA Coaches

The function of a coach is to educate the kids through participation in the RFYFA. All RFYFA coaches must realize the game is played for the benefit of the participants/kids. An emphasis will be placed on developing lifelong values. Coaches are role models and will set positive examples for players, parents, and spectators. The coach shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

Be a positive role model. As a coach you shall uphold the honor and dignity of Coaching. In all personal contact with the children, officials, parents, and the public, each coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct. Carry yourself in a professional manner at all times, on the field and in the community. Players and community members are always watching, as a representative of the program your actions will reflect on everyone, not just yourself. Make sure your interactions on the field reflect how you would want your own child to be treated.

Communicate. A football program consists of many parts, it is important that everyone works hard to stay on the same page. All coaches should make sure to communicate to their teams parents on a weekly basis. It is important that coaches, parents and players are all on the same page. Coaches need to be approachable if a player or parent wants to talk.

Coach every player. “Kids won’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” We coach players to help prepare them to achieve their greatest potential. Each player is putting in the time and effort to make the team better and it is the responsibility of the coach to help the player improve their skills.

Commitment. It is expected that coaches shall know the contest rules and teach them to his or her team members. A coach will not seek an advantage by bending or ignoring the rules. We ask our players to invest a lot of time into this program and therefore the same commitment is needed from each coach. In turn, the program will try to place a priority on using time wisely during meetings, practices, and team activities.

Coaches will be required to pass a background check and will be required to participate in the “Coaches Certification” meeting that is held before the beginning of the season.



Player Expectations

As a player I will...

- Have fun
- Have a positive attitude and never quit
- Practice and play to the best of my ability
- Respect my coach, teammates and opponents
- Respect officials and accept their decisions without question
- Only give positive encouragement to fellow teammates
- Arrive prepared for all games and practices with a proper mental attitude and equipment
- Learn and obey the Rules of the Game
- Win without boasting and always display sportsmanship
- Practice football skills, condition, play and practice on my own, outside of practice
- Notify the coach if I will be late or unable to make a practice or game

As a player I will NEVER...

- Allow my enthusiasm and commitment for football to override my responsibilities to my education
- Use profane or vulgar language
- Leave the game or practice without the permission of the coach
- Disregard any instructions of my coach
- Forget that I represent River Falls Youth Football

Attendance

All players are expected to be present and on time to practice. If a player is not able to make practice the parent must contact their coach to let them know that the player will not be attending practice. It is important that parents arrive for pick up prior to the end of practice. There are times that practice will end early, so it is important that you are there to pick up your child once practice has finished.



Equipment

All players must come to every practice with a mouth guard, non-metal cleats/tennis shoes, and a water bottle. Players will be playing flag football and will NOT be wearing hard shell helmets. Players are allowed to wear soft shell helmets, receiver gloves and similar equipment accessories.

RFYFA coaches will provide players with practice flags each practice and game flags each game. The registration price for each athlete covers two game shirts, one pair of game shorts, and game flags for each player.

Program Alignment

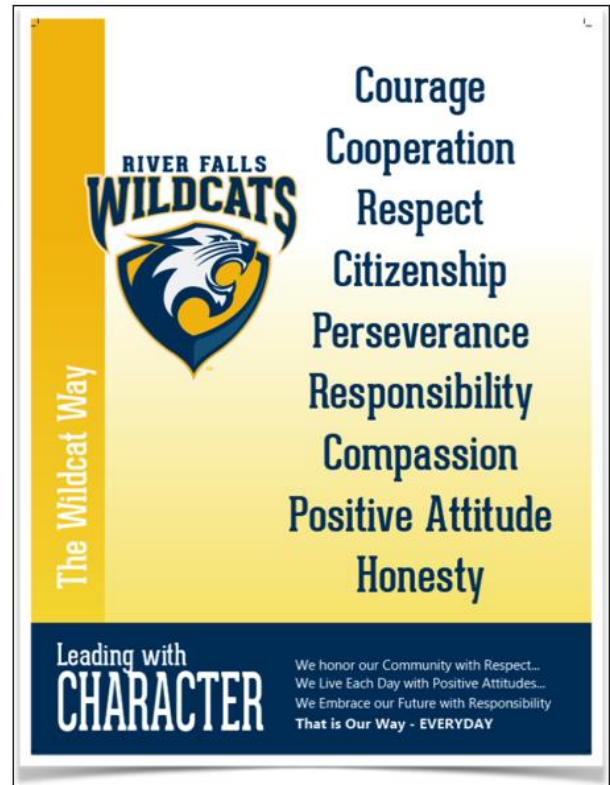
The River Falls Youth Football Association has created a plan for specific items we would like to be able to focus on at each grade level. These plans were created to help coaches and parents understand what the youth athletes should be learning and working on at each level. We researched and gathered information from other national groups like USA Football, NFL Flag, UA Flag, Pop Warner Football, etc. and modified it to represent River Falls Youth Football. In addition, the league format, rules and playbook were developed with an eye on the River Falls High School football program.



Youth Football: More Than Just a Game

River Falls Youth Football really is more than “just a game”. We want your child to be able to learn the game of football in a safe and fun environment, but we also want them to experience more than just football. We feel that youth football and other youth sports help children to learn many life lessons.

The River Falls School District has been promoting their Leading with Character program (see right) and we feel that youth football also helps your children build on those same character traits. Here is how we feel River Falls Youth Football can help your child build on the River Falls School District’s 9 Positive Character Traits.



We also feel that youth sports help promote and build upon the following:

Friendships – Lifetime relationships are developed through participation in youth sports.

Better Grades – Numerous studies indicate students active in school activities perform better in the classroom.

Success in Life – According to the American College Testing Service, participating in school activities and sports is a major indicator of success later in life.

Work Ethic – Each age group is different, but it is important to always work hard and never give up.

Enthusiasm – In order to be successful and have fun, both football and life must be approached with enthusiasm.

These are all great lessons to learn through youth sports, but these things won’t happen unless your child is **HAVING FUN** and you as a parent are positively supporting them, their teammates and their coaches.



COVID-19 Mitigation

River Falls Youth Football has been very thoughtful in its approach to the 2020 fall season. We are committed to providing area kids the opportunity to play flag football in a fun but prudent environment.

Because of the current COVID-19 circumstances, this fall RFYFA will focus on spacing out players and families, minimizing physical contact and providing a sanitary environment. We will still maintain our goal of helping kids realize a passion for the game of football in a positive, structured setting.

Typically, RFYFA has held practices at the Meyer Middle School (MMS) athletic fields every Tuesday and Thursday between late August and mid October. In addition, games have taken place on MMS fields Saturday mornings during that same timeframe. As noted below, teams will only practice one time per week in an effort to increase the amount of space between practicing teams. In addition, there will be four (instead of the usual six) Saturday games. The 2020 RFYFA game schedule limits the number of games taking place at the same time, which increases space and reduces exposure between different parties.

The following outline details the specific actions RFYFA is executing to mitigate COVID-19 risk this fall.

Increasing Space

- Grade 1-2 Practicing 1X per week on Tuesdays
- Grade 3-4 Practicing 1X per week on Thursdays
- Grade 5-6 Practicing 1X per week with 1/2 teams on Tuesdays and 1/2 teams on Thursdays
- Grade 1-2 Saturday Games at 10:00am
- Grade 3-4 Saturday Games at 11:15am
- Grade 5-6 Saturday Games at 12:30pm
- Urge family members to limit spectators at practices and games
- Request spectators from different households to sit/stand at least six feet from each other



Minimize Physical Contact

- Request teams to not line up for a handshake after the game
- Request teams not “break down” in a tight huddle
- Urge huddles on field spaced out
- Request players to space out on sidelines if not on the field

Hygienic Focus

- All balls, flags and cones will be sanitized before and after practice
- Hand sanitizer will be provided for each team
- Coaches to take team attendance each practice and game
- Request players, families, coaches, and refs to check for fever and other signs before practice and games
- Players will use same flag belt for practice and games
- No concession stands will be provided
- Masks will be available for coaches and players and given to every team
- COVID-19 lead from RYFA Board for coaches and families with questions or concerns and contact if someone in family catches CV-19

Cancelled Events to Limit COVID-19 Exposure

- Wildcats Youth Football Camp
- Player “Combine” Night
- Team Picture Day
- Halftime Scrimmage at Varsity Home Game
- UWRF Falcons Practice Night
- Pass, Punt & Kick Contest
- Thursday Night Under the Lights on new RFHS field

