



Bensenville Wood Dale Football and  
Cheerleader Association  
Parents Handbook

## **Dear Parents,**

We are happy to welcome all players and parents to this year's football & cheerleading season. We are hopeful that this will be the most exciting and rewarding football & cheerleading season you've ever experienced. Our goal is to develop well-rounded young men and women who learn not only the fundamentals of football & cheerleading, but also the importance of education, in an atmosphere conducive to developing sound mind, body and character - and having a good time along the way. We practice the ideals of sportsmanship, scholarship and physical fitness. Our program stresses learning lessons of value far beyond the playing days, such as, self-discipline, teamwork, concentration, friendship, leadership, and, good sportsmanship.

We, as board members and coaches, will do our very best to ensure that each player is utilized to his utmost potential and their talents are used for the team's best advantage. The team comes before individuals.

Safety is our top concern. Many of the exercises, drills, and team rules are there to ensure your child is physically and mentally fit for football & Cheerleading.

Each child is unique and develops at their own pace. We will exercise their bodies and minds in an effort to develop the skills needed to execute the game of football for football players and build confidence in cheerleaders during games and/or competitions, the completion of full cheer dance routines for all levels is strongly enforced throughout the season.

## **1. The Organization- basic facts**

### **Commitment - Staying in good standing**

#### **Academic Expectations**

BWFCA (players and cheerleaders) are encouraged to strive for excellence in the classroom and on the field. The expectation is for Players to focus on homework first and practice second. Our organizational mission is to help each player develop into a true Student Athlete. Those who excel academically will be acknowledged as a Pop Warner Little Scholar at our annual awards banquet. However, these students/participants are required to maintain a 96% grade point average to participate as Little Scholars.

#### **Player Expectations**

Individuals who have the desire to participate as a player of a team are welcomed into the BWFCA family. Player's are expected to participate (on a regular basis) in practices, games and fundraising events. Each player is expected to follow a general code of conduct that includes treating other player, coaches, parents, opponents, and officials with respect. Player's are also expected to be good citizens and any detrimental behavior on and off the field may result in dismissal from the program. Each Player will be required to sign a code of conduct.

## **Volunteer Expectations**

The parent or guardian of each Player is considered a volunteer of the program. Volunteers can be formal (coach, assistant coach, team mom/dad, board member, coordinator, etc.) or informal (concessions, field setup, etc.) BWFCA expects all volunteers to assist the program in either a formal or informal capacity. A \$50.00 volunteer deposit will be required at time of registration, if you do not meet your required time your deposit will be cashed. If you meet your requirement the check will be given back at the end of the year. If you do not want to volunteer you can "buy out" by writing a check for \$50.00 and you would not be required to volunteer.

## **Code of Conduct**

Each player, coach, board member and parent will be required to sign a general code of conduct.

This code of conducts cover among other things general sportsmanship, use of drugs or alcohol, as well as treating all facilities and equipment whether owned by the BWFCA or other towns with respect and care.

## **The Process**

### **Registration Application**

Registration begins roughly in February and must be accomplished in person. The BWFCA website, emails and fliers will be sent home from the various schools in our area to announce registration dates. Players registering early will receive a discount. Registration is open until the first official weigh-in or at the boards of director's discretion. Registration forms will be available at registration or you can plan ahead by going to the BWFCA website. You will be required to complete numerous documents at time of the registration some Pop Warner requires and some that the BWFCA requires.

### **Physicals**

Per National Pop Warner rules all football and cheerleaders are required to have a sports physical prior to taking the field at any level. This does not have to be a complete physical only sports physical and the doctor must complete the official Pop Warner form. Forms will be available at registration or on our website. Physicals MUST be dated that year of which the participant is registering or they are not accepted and cannot participate in any practices and/or games until this is turned into the team mom or coordinators.

### **Report Cards**

The Pop Warner Little Scholars Program requires each football and cheerleader to turn in a report card from their current school year. Since our registration is early in the year and report cards are handed out at the end of the school year all copies must be turned in NO LATER than late July with the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter grading period, these grades are used to calculate the Little Scholar participants. This requirement gives the true definition to "student athlete"

### **Refunds**

Please see our refund policy on our website

## **Equipment Pick-Up and Return Policy**

Prior to the start of the Season, BWFCA will announce specific dates and times for football equipment pick-up. In mid June a date will be set up for Cheerleaders to be fitted for Uniforms and warm ups, this is required so all cheerleaders have the proper fit of uniform for performance and competitions, if you miss this date we cannot guarantee you will have proper size to fit. If you miss your pick up date, other arrangements can be made through the football or cheer coordinator.

A \$150 deposit is required at the time of pick up; this check will not be cashed and will only serve the purpose to re-coup some money if equipment/uniforms are not returned. We also urge parents and players to regularly clean and inspect the equipment during the season and remember that all the dirt, sweat and other elements can cause the equipment to spread bacteria and germs. In addition, damaged equipment places a player's health at risk. Any damaged equipment should be presented to the player's coach for repair or replacement immediately.

After the season ends equipment/uniforms have to be returned again on specific dates and times that will be sent home on a flier. It is important that the equipment/uniforms are returned in good condition. Cooperation is essential to keep this process running smoothly. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure lost equipment is replaced with the same or equal too replacement value or money will be deducted from your deposit check. Any normal wear and tear on equipment will not be deducted from your deposit check. If all equipment/uniforms are returned in good condition your deposit check will be returned.

## **ID cards**

All football players and cheerleaders must have an ID card. The ID is required for the official Pop Warner weigh-in and all games, cheerleaders are required to have these ID's to enter any exhibition/competition that is a Pop Warner event. All players, cheerleaders, team volunteers will need to attend picture day which usually occurs about two weeks after the start of practices in August. ID cards will be given to coaches. There is no cost for the ID card to the registrant.

## **Player Assignments to Teams**

Per Pop Warner Youth Football League rules, each player shall participate at the proper level of his/her ability. Therefore, players will be placed on teams that match their age, weight, and abilities. The football coordinator works closely with coaches to make sure this is followed to the rule. There are no exceptions; they must play to their age/weight. You can find the age/weight matrix on the Pop Warner website.

Cheerleaders are assigned by age level only. However, experience is taken into consideration and based on the coordinators discretion, for example an 8yr old can technically be on 2 squads according to our age matrix but if never cheered previously it is then up to the coordinator, and/or coach to place accordingly so the cheerleader feels most comfortable and builds up confidence. The coordinator will communicate all decisions to the parent.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

### **BWFCA Fundraising**

BWFCA has the lowest registration fee. It is not cheap to run a football and cheerleading program, and we must do fundraising to keep our fees low for our members. Each year we must buy new equipment, uniforms, and supplies and have some helmets reconditioned for safety reasons. We must also pay the Pop Warner league fee which covers the cost of the officials and other costs associated with running the league. It is important that everyone participates in fundraising. Please contact our Board Members if you would like to volunteer or have ideas for fundraisers. In addition, we are always looking for sponsors.

### **BWFCA Board**

If you are interested in being more involved please come to one of our monthly meetings. Board meetings are open to the public and we are always looking for more volunteers in this area. Please see our web site for our by-laws to find out how you can become a board member.

### **Football/Cheerleading Coaches/Assistant Coaches**

All of our coaches are Volunteers. They are the key to our organization. All of our Football and Cheer Coaches and Coordinators are certified. We expect our coaches to attend coach's clinics and scheduled meetings to meet our goal of having a consistent message to the players. Our experienced coaches are expected to assist and teach other coaches. We provide each coach a coach's handbook that instructs them on BWFCA coaching philosophy. All coaches; including assistant coaches, must sign a code of conduct and their behavior is monitored by BWFCA and Pop Warner. All coaches are required to be certified by our Conference and Football USA also.

### **Team Mom/Dad**

Each team is expected to have a Team Mom/Dad who is there to assist the Coach with administrative tasks such as game schedule, snack schedule, team party, etc. The Team Mom/Dad will also be the contact person for the team when organizational information needs to be relayed to the parents.

### **Driving other kids to practice/games**

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to get their son or daughter to practices and games. Coaches are not expected to pick up and drop off players. Parents and guardians are expected to work out car pools; this is not the responsibility of the coach. Establishing parent/guardian car pools on practice and game days is another way to get involved and helps make our operation run smoothly.

## **The Season**

### **Mini Camp**

Usually in the middle of July a special camp will be held to introduce basic football/cheer skills to first year participants and reinforce skills and techniques for more experienced participants. This three day camp will be mandatory for first year participants and experienced participants are encouraged to participate. We will have constructive drills and instruction that has improved the talent and prepared participants for the upcoming season. Testing and evaluation during this period allows coaches to address individual needs of participants and familiarize the participants with what is expected of them during the upcoming season.

### **Season Kick-off meeting w/Parents**

Right around the first week of practice your coach should organize a parent meeting to explain to you what should be expected. It is important to attend this meeting and ask any questions you may have about practice, games, schedule, player selection and participation, etc. At this meeting the assistant coaches, team mom/dad, and other team volunteers should be introduced, the preliminary team roster with contact information should be provided, if not already provided, and any other information needed to plan for the season.

### **Practice time and schedule**

The BWFCA per Pop Warner rules can start practices on August 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year. During the month of August practice will be no more than five times a week and right around when school starts three times a week from 6:00 to 8:00. Your coach will confirm your teams practice days and times. Practices require a lot of organization and every minute of the 2 hours is planned and needed to prepare the team. It is important to have your player arrive 15 minutes prior to practice start time fully dressed and prepared to go. Practices will be held at DiOrio Field in Bensenville in August and move to Community Park in Wood Dale for the remainder of the year.

Cheer teams will use various schools in our area when the weather turns cold.

### **Games**

All home games are played at Redmond Park. There will be some travel involved in away games. We have no control over our schedule as our conference handles that. We do our best to get the schedule to our parents as early as possible but we are at the mercy of the league. Games can be either played on Saturdays or Sundays depending on field availability for every town. All cheerleaders are required to cheer at games unless there is a scheduled competition otherwise Coach/Team mom must be notified by parent with and excused absence.

## Awards

All participants will be able to attend the end of the year Awards Banquet fee of charge as long as they are in good standing with the organization. Parents and family members are more than welcome to attend also, but there will be a small fee assessed at time of ticket purchase for those individuals.

## Summary of Important Contact Information

BWFCA Hotline (630) 474-5450  
Physical Address: Po Box 437 Wood Dale Il. 60191

### **Name Title Contact Info:**

|                             |                   |  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--|
| President                   | Jason Sabala      | <a href="mailto:fbcoach1969@gmail.com">fbcoach1969@gmail.com</a>           |
| Vice President              | Tyrone Brooks     | <a href="mailto:tyrone.brooks@ymail.com">tyrone.brooks@ymail.com</a>       |
| Secretary                   | Brian Adkins      | <a href="mailto:hairiestturtle@hotmail.com">hairiestturtle@hotmail.com</a> |
| Treasurer                   | Tina Koch         | <a href="mailto:btcone00@hotmail.com">btcone00@hotmail.com</a>             |
| Board Member                | Aaron Stewart     | <a href="mailto:atrainchoochoo69@yahoo.com">atrainchoochoo69@yahoo.com</a> |
| Board Member                | Annette Adkins    | <a href="mailto:a.adkins3@yahoo.com">a.adkins3@yahoo.com</a>               |
| Board Member                | Diana Staszal     | <a href="mailto:staszal@yahoo.com">staszal@yahoo.com</a>                   |
| Board Member                | Jessica Castaneda | <a href="mailto:jdiego@lumc.edu">jdiego@lumc.edu</a>                       |
| Board Member                | <b>OPEN</b>       |  |
| Board Member                | <b>OPEN</b>       |  |
| Board Member                | <b>OPEN</b>       |  |
| Football Coordinator        | Jason Sabala      | <a href="mailto:fbcoach1969@gmail.com">fbcoach1969@gmail.com</a>           |
| Cheerleading Coordinator    | Diana Staszal     | <a href="mailto:staszal@yahoo.com">staszal@yahoo.com</a>                   |
| Business Coordinator        | Aaron Stewart     | <a href="mailto:atrainchoochoo69@yahoo.com">atrainchoochoo69@yahoo.com</a> |
| Little Scholars Coordinator | Annette Adkins    | <a href="mailto:a.adkins3@yahoo.com">a.adkins3@yahoo.com</a>               |
| Team Mom Coordinator        |                   |  |
| Fundraising                 |                   |  |
| Communication/Media         | Jessica Castaneda | <a href="mailto:jdiego@lumc.edu">jdiego@lumc.edu</a>                       |

## Websites

BWFCA : <http://www.bwfca.com>  
Email: [bwfcabandits@gmail.com](mailto:bwfcabandits@gmail.com)

**BWFCA Board Meetings (open to public) Monthly, 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday normally 7 pm  
(check website as they change from time to time)**

# **BWFCA Football Program**

## **General Information**

First time players should come to camp and practices full of desire, respect for others and a willingness to learn. Ability and athletic potential are bonuses but a player's desire to improve and learn is the most important qualities to bring to a new sport. A young athlete must understand that good football players are always working to improve their technique and athleticism and must allow themselves to be corrected and motivated to play to their potential. The team concept that football is built upon demands sacrifice. Every player won't be in a position to carry the football and shoulder the glory. It takes every position on the field and a team spirit to be a successful team. Parents and players who come into the season with unrealistic expectations should remember that no single position on the football team is more important than another. Our coaches have years of experience in football and parents have to trust their decisions about playing time or position assignments. All parents should expect to get their players to the field at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled practice time and at least 1 1/2 hours prior to scheduled game times. Coaches will assign a parent as Team Mom or Dad who will aid in arranging the contact list and help organize carpooling. Please be aware that a player being late for practice or missing a practice is extremely disruptive to building team chemistry and causes players to lose focus and miss vital information that hurts the entire team. **Football coaches plan their practices and game strategies on the assumption that everyone is on-time and present so please take punctuality and attendance seriously. We urge parents and players to always have equipment and uniforms in an equipment bag so there is never the potential to forget something at home.** Attendance is vital for a player, but parents should also take time to be at practices and most importantly games. If a serious injury were to occur and a player needed emergency care, only a legal guardian may authorize certain procedures or make decisions regarding the health of the child. Also, being present during the development of your young athlete will not only show you're interested in their progress, it will also allow you to see how your child interacts with others and brings out shared moments and countless laughs that will never be forgotten. It should also be noted that parents who take part in their children's development tend to get better results at home regarding responsibility and discipline.

**Do not expect BWFCA or BWFCA coaches to pick-up or drop off players. You must make arrangements for your own child. Liability laws are very clear and it is unfair to place volunteers in compromising positions. Transportation of your child to and from practices and games is the parent's responsibility alone.**

## **First-Year Players**

Many parents and players suffer anxiety and worry about what to expect their first year. Parents often worry about the aggressive and violent nature of the sport and the potential for injuries. The most important thing to remember is that football players are well protected and the number of football related injuries is statistically low compared to other sports. Soccer, lacrosse and basketball rank ahead of football in potential for injuries and while football is a contact sport, the helmet, pads and numerous safety devices are there to prevent serious injuries.

## **Practice**

Regular practices begin the August 1<sup>st</sup>. All football players are expected to be in attendance. This is the time when players are separated by age and weight class and are introduced to their coaches and teammates. Attendance is vital to the success of the season. The identity and character of the team depends upon the organization and execution of constructive practices to build a cohesive squad. Practices are two hours long and are held 5 days a week until the start of the school year.

Then practices are held 3 times per week with additional times scheduled for games. Parents and players need to understand the importance of punctuality and attendance. Absence and tardiness is as destructive to a team as a bad attitude. Additionally, cooperation and communication between parents and coaches is vital to keep the team on course and running smoothly. Teams develop quickly through positive and productive preparation and the results are measured not just in touchdowns but in growth of spirit and esprit de corps.

Often bad weather plays a factor in rescheduling of games and practices and flexibility is paramount. Scrimmages, weigh-ins, bowl games and tournaments may be scheduled in conjunction with normally

scheduled events so cooperation and communication is vital. Parents should make themselves readily available to help make the season a success.

## **Conditioning**

Strength and conditioning training for youth athletes is vital to achieving peak performance in any sport and football is especially demanding. The nature of the game necessitates an athlete to engage in quick, controlled burst of speed with rapid repetition. There are several key areas an athlete needs to focus on to be successful on the football field. Aerobic exercise, stretching, strength training, agility and ply metric exercises are all important to building a football body. Always consult with a doctor prior to engaging in any exercise program to ensure that any health related issues are addressed.

## **Official Pop Warner Weigh-in process/Certification**

All football players must attend an official Pop Warner weigh-in. The first weigh-in is usually conducted during the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in August. There is no cost to attend the first weigh-in. Players must meet the weight limit for their weight class. If a player is over the weigh-limit, they will be moved up to the next weight class. If they are too young to move up, they can come back to subsequent weigh-ins at no cost. If you player does not make weight they will not be allowed to participate in practices or games but can remain on the roster in case that weight is made later in the season. Parents will not be allowed to be inside the building during the weigh-in process, normally each team will car pool to the location. Also, weigh-ins will be done one hour prior to all games.

## **Getting Prepared for Football Equipment**

### **What BWFCA provides - Uniform**

BWFCA provides the following equipment for the fall football season.

- game jerseys (Home & Away)
- 1 pair of game pants

- practice jerseys
- 1 pair of practice pants
- 1 helmet with mouth piece and chin strap.
- 1 set of shoulder pads
- 1 Belt
- 1 Girdle
- 1 Rib Pad (optional while supplies last)
- 1 Game Sock
- 7 piece pads set (2 knee pads, 2 hip pads, 2 thigh pads, and 1 tail bone)

### **What parents need to buy**

Parents and players are responsible for the following equipment.

#### **Required**

- 1 athletic supporter with cup.
- 1 pair of field cleats

#### **Optional**

- Football gloves -- either receiver or lineman depending on player assignment especially helpful during the colder days
- Chin pad cushion
- Forearm pads or elbow pads
- Butterfly restrictor, rib protectors and neck rolls
- Under armor or equivalent t-shirt

## **BWFCA Cheerleading Program**

### **Getting Prepared for Cheerleading**

#### **Selection Process**

Age groups form BWFCA cheerleading teams. Special requests considered and accommodations are made when appropriate. Parents may request for their cheerleader to be assigned to a specific squad based on carpooling, previous teams, etc. Any request cannot create a situation where more than three girls are requesting to cheer together.

#### **Equipment**

##### **What BWFCA provides - Uniform**

BWFCA provides the following equipment for the fall cheerleading season.

- 1 Cheer Vest/Shell—returned at end of season during uniform turn in
- 1 Cheer Skirt—returned at end of season during uniform turn in
- 1 Midriff crop top Jr. Pee Wee and all upper levels turn in at uniform turn in
- 1 pair of white anklet socks
- 1 Hair Tie
- 1 bloomer

BWFCA will provided cheerleaders jackets and sweatshirts (warm-ups)

## **What parents need to buy**

### **Required**

Parents and players are responsible for the following.

- 1 White pair of athletic shoes preferably cheerleading shoes
- 1 pair of sports shorts and t-shirt for practice
- 1 water bottle for practice and games

## **First-Year Cheerleaders**

As with football, first year cheerleaders are required to attend the Cheerleading camp held in August. This camp is designed to get girls comfortable with cheers and movements prior to introducing the more experienced girls in the league. If a girl does not attend this camp, they may feel they are not keeping up with the others and may not want to continue to participate.

## **Competitions**

Competitions are scheduled events by Pop Warner, 2 competition fees are included in registration dues. Typically we have 2 or 3 Competitions, middle/end of October and then another in November. We possibly have an extra competition in late September depending on budget.

Please note not all cheer levels are competitive, Tiny & Mitey Mite levels(these are 7/8 years of age and under) are exhibition only(NON COMPETITIVE), competition fees are included in registration, T-shirts may be purchased extra at event. All Jr. Pee Wee levels and up (8/9 years of age and older) are included in 2 competitions. Conference and Regional, if cheerleaders place 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Regional competition then the entire team advances to compete in Disney Florida the week of December 7<sup>th</sup>, and the team competes only 1 day during this time, more information to follow as needed. This trip if team qualifies is scheduled entirely by the Cheer Coordinator with Pop Warner and fundraising is our key to defer all costs of this trip, so if parents are not willing to participate in fundraising/volunteer NO FUNDS will be disbursed to those families and parents are required to come up with funds, please remember we are one team and it is not fair to the rest of the team if a cheerleader drops out of the routine during or prior to a competition that coaches have worked so hard all season to put together and advance this far.

## **Coaching the Cheerleaders**

All coordinators, coaches, assistant coaches, team moms are YCADA certified as well as Mid-America Pop Warner Region certified. Cheerleading practice begins in August. We will break into smaller, age-based groups for certain activities, but want to make sure the league as a whole learns all cheers, movements, dances, etc. It is important for all cheerleaders to bring water to each practice. We will warm up and stretch as a group, but girls are encouraged to drink plenty of fluids throughout the day and stretch a bit prior to coming to practice. In addition, we also emphasize the need to practice the cheers, chants and dances at home as well as on the fields. Knowing all the words and movements to the BWFCA cheers will give your daughter confidence and motivation as she performs in front of her audience the first game in September. The head coach is responsible for the actions of the assistant coaches, parents, and team players, prior to, during, and after each game and practice. All coaches must be committed to the

program and association, and support all BWFCA events and fundraisers. Coaches must maintain communication with cheerleaders, parents and BWFCA organization. If a cheerleader misses a practice or game, it is the coach's responsibility to follow up and identify any issues. If a cheerleader decides to drop from the program, notify the cheerleading coordinator immediately. Cheerleaders cannot be left unattended. It's the coach's responsibility to communicate with the parents to ensure each child departs practices and games with a guardian or parent. All practices that are held outdoors with football player but on cold day's practices will be indoors. At least one member of the team's coaching staff must carry a first aid kit to all practices and games. All coaches will be in uniform with their assistant coaches and easily identifiable at all games and BWFCA functions. Any coach not wearing the appropriate attire will not be allowed on the sidelines.

## **Coaching structure**

BWFCA Cheer coaches are volunteers. Dedicated parents and friends that give their time each week to work with our daughters to learn chants, movements and all in all, help them have fun. Coaches are placed on a team with their daughters and others are added primarily based on age. However, girls will be added to an age group outside of their own to accommodate certain requests (siblings, carpool, etc). We will accept and try to place girls together, however, requests for more than three girls to be on a single squad without a parent volunteer to coach, will be disregarded. In addition, coaches need a team parent who will manage and seek parent volunteers for:

- Setting up a Parent Meeting at the beginning of the season to set expectations
- Maintain a snack list
- Arrange team party
- Notify families of changes to the schedules
- Collection of money
- Team communications

## **How the Coaches get prepared**

One coaches clinic for returning cheer coaches is held mid-July. At this clinic, we go over a high percentage of the cheers to make sure we are in synch on movements, words, etc. Once camp begins, coaches join in the group of girls, learning and recalling the cheers side by side with your daughters. We do encourage you to do the same. Especially mothers of younger girls, these girls need the most help with arm movements, leg placement, etc.

## **Relationship with cheerleaders**

The coach-player relationship is very important to the athlete. Coaches many times become mentors and/or an alternative adult to rely on and confide in. For some young athletes, a coach is just a friend. And for some others, a coach is someone that is simply teaching them a particular sport. That said, all BWFCA coaches strive to establish and maintain a relationship based on individual needs.

## **During the Season**

### **Game Day**

#### **Proper times to cheer:**

- Before game starts
- During half time
- Time outs
- Once a play has started

#### **Improper times to cheer**

- During a huddle
- After an injury
- During an injury

**If there is an injury on the field that requires a lengthy time .out, cheerleaders should sit or take a knee quietly on the sideline**

### **After the Game**

At the end of game a show of good sportsmanship is important. It is polite to create a tunnel with parents from the football team, cheerleader's parents, and most of all the cheerleaders to all raise their arms and allow your team to pass underneath. This is a custom to show support to your team. Or the girls may line up with the team and congratulate the opponent showing good sportsmanship whether a win or lose. The older age groups seem to prefer this over making tunnels.