



# **2025 ATHLETE/PARENT HANDBOOK**

### **Central Illinois Youth Football League (CIYFL)**

The objective of CIYFL is to offer the youth of Central Illinois with the opportunity to play competitive full contact football in an organized and supervised environment throughout the greater Central Illinois region. We will teach the fundamentals of football. We will strive to instill in them the concepts of good sportsmanship, teamwork, discipline, and respect for authority. All Directors, Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Parent Volunteers, and Players shall bear in mind that the attainment of exceptional athletic skill or the winning of games is secondary, and molding of future citizens is of prime importance.

### **Champaign-Urbana Football Program**

CIYFL governance and bylaws are managed and voted on by the Board of Directors and Champaign-Urbana Football Program Representatives. CIYFL shall govern and manage the Champaign-Urbana Football Program.

### **Champaign-Urbana Football Mission**

Our mission is to provide a safe and positive environment where children can learn and grow through the sport of football. We strive to install values such as teamwork, sportsmanship, and discipline in our young athletes, while also promoting a love of physical activity and healthy competition. We are dedicated to developing the skills and confidence of all our players, regardless of their level of experience or ability, and to fostering a sense of community among our players, coaches and families.

### **Program**

- Teams
  - CU Broncos
  - CU Mustangs
- Colors – Orange, Navy & White
- Divisions:
  - Varsity
  - Junior Varsity
  - Freshman
  - Pee Wee

### **Rules & Regulations**

All players and parents/legal guardians must review and adhere to the CIYFL Rules & Regulations found on the CIYFL.org website.

### **Zero Tolerance Policy**

Our football program is committed to providing a positive and inclusive experience for all participants. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any form of verbal or physical abuse, harassment, bullying, discrimination, or unsportsmanlike conduct. This policy applies to players, coaches, parents, and spectators. Any concerns should be shared with the CIYFL Board of Directors (CIYFLinformation@gmail.com).

Any individual found in violation of this policy will face immediate consequences, which may include but are not limited to warnings, suspension from games, expulsion from the program, and reporting to the appropriate authorities.

We expect all participants and stakeholders to demonstrate respect for each other, the officials, and the spirit of the game. Let's work together to create a safe and enjoyable environment for our young athletes to learn, grow, and have fun.

## **Registration**

All players must be registered with the CIYFL Champaign-Urbana Football Program prior to Equipment Handout Day of each season. Late registrations will be on a waitlist to be considered by the Board of Directors if spots are available.

All players must get clearance before they are permitted to practice. Parents/Legal Guardians must sign all forms. Forged or misleading documents will result in disciplinary action. The following documentation must be submitted PRIOR to equipment distribution:

- Original / Certified Birth Certificate
- Sports Physical (within same calendar year as season)
- Proof of Residency

## **Registration Fees**

The registration fee is \$240. Payment plans are available online.

## **Academic Eligibility**

The Champaign-Urbana Football Program recognizes the importance of both academic and athletic excellence. Players must remain in good academic standing in their respective schools in order to participate. Because the Champaign-Urbana Football Program is not directly affiliated with any school district, it must rely on the integrity of the players and parents to identify situations where players become ineligible for academic shortfalls. Unless directly notified by parents/guardians, the Champaign-Urbana Football Program has no ability or responsibility to monitor a player's academic status.

## **Playing Time**

All players, who are not deemed ineligible are entitled to participate in at least three (3) plays per half. Special teams (punts, punt returns, kicks, kick-offs) are considered in the minimum play rule.

Parents need to be mindful that players sometimes voluntarily avoid insertion into a game. Players need to be attentive during both the game and practice sessions. Coaches are not responsible if players don't respond when their unit is called.

Coaches, at their sole discretion, may suspend or remove players from their rosters when players become disruptive or refuse to participate in practice sessions. Suspension from practice sessions may result in decreased playing time in games.

- Academic ineligibility
  - Determined by the Parent/Legal Guardian
- Disciplinary ineligibility
  - Suspension by the Head Coach
  - Suspension by the CIYFL Board of Directors

Practice schedules are established by the Head Coach and approved by the Board of Directors. Typically most teams will practice Monday through Friday of each week. Practices generally last between one and a half to two hours. Head Coaches, at their sole discretion, may suspend or remove players if they become disruptive or refuse to participate in practice sessions. Suspension from practice sessions may result in decreased playing time in games.

## **Scholarships**

While the Champaign-Urbana Football Program does not have a fee waiver to play for free, the league does

have scholarships available. No scholarships will be awarded or considered any time after the registration deadline for the season. The Champaign-Urbana Football Program scholarship form must be completed by a Parent/Legal Guardians. Applicants are required to provide written proof of eligibility outlined in the form.

The submitted proof of eligibility will be checked by the Board of Directors and will remain confidential. The applicants will be brought forth to the Board of Directors for approval of those eligible players.

Scholarships will be awarded each year based on the financial status of the program.

Scholarships awarded are for the one season applied for. There will be no assumptions or continuations from season to season.

### **Refunds**

Parents will be eligible for a refund of 75% of the registration fees up to the equipment handout date for their specific division. After that day up to but not including the day of the first regular season game, parents can receive 50% of the registration fees, provided all of the equipment is returned to the Head Coach in good condition.

The date after the first regular season game, and the subsequent season, NO refund will be given.

### **Equipment**

The Champaign-Urbana Football Program provides each player with proper equipment that is clean and in good working condition. Only Champaign-Urbana Football Program issued gear is allowed for participation for safety reasons. In certain instances, players may purchase their own equipment with a signed Insurance Liability Waiver from the Parent/Legal Guardian.

The equipment provided is as follows:

- Helmet – White Shell, Gray Cage (must be NOCSAE certified or recertified no more than 1 year prior to the year of play)
- Shoulder Pads
- Black pants with Pads
- White pants with Pads
- Practice jersey (black with white numbers)
- Game jersey

The Parent/Legal Guardian is expected to provide the following:

- Rubber Football Cleats
  - Only 100% rubber cleats are acceptable by IHSA rules
  - Cleats containing metal will not be allowed with no exceptions
- Mouthpiece
- Rib Protectors (if needed)
- Athletic Supporters
- Game Day Socks
- Practice T-shirt / Shorts

Safety is paramount. Players are required to wear all equipment while participating in both games and full contact practice sessions. Failure to bring the necessary equipment to a game will disqualify the player for

that game. Failure to wear the necessary equipment during a game may result in a penalty for the team. Practice requirements may vary based upon weather conditions and the level of contact anticipated at the Head Coach's discretion. When helmets are worn, players are required to wear both a chinstrap and mouthpiece.

Players that damage equipment can face ineligibility by the Head Coach or CIYFL Board of Directors.

**Players that do not return equipment will face a fine of \$500 plus the cost of collection.**

All equipment is required to be returned at the end of the season on player's team equipment hand-in date. If all of the equipment is not returned, the Parent/Legal Guardian will be billed. If the equipment or payment is not received after 30 days, further action will be taken. The player will not be permitted to register for the following season until payment is made in full or equipment has been turned in.

The Champaign-Urbana Football Program requires that all equipment be returned clean at the end of the player's season. There will be a \$25 fee for equipment returned without being cleaned.

Suggested cleaning instructions:

- Do not use bleach
- Bleach will break down the fibers in the clothing likely turning yellow
  - Oxy-Clean is a suggested alternative to getting whites whiter
- Washing should be done with like color clothing
- Do not dry clothing on high heat
- Medium or low heat is suggested

**Team Assignments**

At the beginning of each season, players are assigned to the Champaign-Urbana Broncos or Champaign-Urbana Mustangs. The Board of Directors will work until all of the teams in each division have close to an equal number of players.

Players are not permitted to pick their teams, however parents may petition the Board in writing for approval to change teams. Players will be permitted to change teams only if there are valid reasons. Transfers must be approved by both coaches involved and then cleared by the Board of Directors. All transfers must be requested before the first day of practice.

Practice Field Assignments will be set each season by the Board of Directors.

- CU Broncos – Behind Jefferson Middle School
- CU Mustangs – Zahnd Park

**Parents' Responsibilities / Participation**

Parents/Guardians must recognize that the Champaign-Urbana Football Program functions on a volunteer basis. As a result, Parents/Guardians are required to participate in Champaign-Urbana Football Program activities. Participation can come in any of the following ways:

- Parents Reps
  - Each team is recommended to have **at least two parent reps** who will act as a liaison between the coach and the team's parents. In addition, Parent Reps for the away team will serve in the capacity of site supervisor for their respective division on game days.
  - Spouses of coaches, significant others of the Head Coach and assistant coaches are not permitted to fill the role of Parent Rep. This allows for more open communication between the parents and the coaching staff. Parent reps are responsible for assigning parent volunteers for game day activities as further outlined below. At the option of each team, parent reps may also be responsible for organizing postseason banquets, etc.
- Game Day Duties
  - At each game one team will be designated as the "home" team. The Champaign-Urbana Football Program will attempt to equalize the number of "home team" designations as much as possible. Home teams will be responsible for providing parent volunteers to perform certain jobs that make the games run more smoothly. Champaign-Urbana Football Program requires that individuals be at least 18 years of age. These tasks and the number of volunteers needed are as follows:
    - Field Set-up - 4 Volunteers
    - Chain Crew - 3 Volunteers
    - Score Board Operator - 1 Volunteer
    - Field Tear-Down - 4 Volunteers
- A Board member will provide direction to the parent reps and team volunteers for set up and close of the field for each game day. They will also provide access to the yard markers, down marker, chains, and scoreboard controls prior to the first game. **Parent Reps and coaches are responsible for leaving fields in acceptable conditions after each game.**

### **Managing Heat and Humidity**

These guidelines will be used by head coaches when the air temperature is at least 80 degrees. Coaches will make the decisions to suspend activity in accordance with these guidelines.

- Thirty minutes prior to the start of an activity using a weather app to see what the Heat Index will be
- If the Heat Index is:
  - Below 95 degrees
    - Ensure players have hydration
    - Athletes should be able to take in as much hydration as they desire.
    - Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action
  - Between 95---99 degrees
    - Ensure players have hydration
    - Athletes should be able to take in as much hydration as they desire.
    - Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action
    - Helmets and other possible equipment removed while not involved in contact.
  - Between 100 (more than 99 degrees)---104 degrees
    - Ensure players have hydration
    - Athletes should be able to take in as much hydration as they desire.

- Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action
- No Helmets and other possible equipment
  - Above 104 degrees
- All activities are canceled

NOTE: When the air temperature is below 80 degrees, there is no combination of heat and humidity that will result in the need to curtail activity or implement this policy.

### **CIYFL & Champaign-Urbana Football Program**

PO Box 3264, Champaign, IL 61826

CIYFLinformation@gmail.com

[www.CIYFL.org](http://www.CIYFL.org)

#### **Parent/Guardian Code of Ethics**

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my player participating in youth sports by following this Parent/Guardian's 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 player ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will support coaches, officials, and league administration working with my player, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will remember that the game is for youth – not adults.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my player.
- I will demand a sports environment for my player that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will ask my player to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
- I will read the Athlete-Parent Handbook and do what I can to help all youth sports organizations implement and enforce them.
- I will communicate this code of ethics to any guests I invite to CIYFL events.

#### **Corrective Action Policy**

Parents/Guardians who do not follow the Code of Ethics will be subject to a Corrective Action Policy. It is the philosophy of CIYFL that parents'/guardians' actions should not spoil the experience of participation in youth sports for the players. Furthermore, CIYFL will work to not punish a player for the actions of his or her parent(s)/guardian(s). Therefore, the following guidelines have been established for addressing problem parents/guardians. For violations of the Code of Ethics, the following steps will be followed:

#### **Step 1 – Verbal Warning/Written Warning**

- Verbal Warning - Coach will discuss undesirable conduct with parents/guardians and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated. Coach will document conversation and give to a Board member.
- Followed by a Written Warning - Coach or official will notify the league of continued breach of Code of Ethics

and the 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)/guardians stating that the next offense will lead to parent/guardian banned from the venue for a period of 1 game.

### **Step 2 – Game Suspension**

League will ban the parent/guardian from attending the next scheduled contest and another letter will be given to parent(s)/guardian(s) stating that the next offense will lead to parent/guardian being banned from all future contests.

### **Step 3 – Season Suspension**

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be banned from attending all league contests after a 3<sup>rd</sup> offense. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will then have to make a formal request to be re-instated into this league. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will then have to meet with the Board of Directors prior to the start of the season to determine if the parent(s)/guardian(s) are 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).

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent/Guardian Full Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*