



**Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc.**

**Administrative Manual**

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## Table of Contents

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Chapter 1	National and General Matters	1
Chapter 2	Organization	5
Chapter 3	By-Laws	7
Chapter 4	Insurance Information	18
Chapter 5	Accounting	20
Chapter 6	Legal Issues	24
Chapter 7	Public and Media Relations	29
Chapter 8	Securing Financial Support	38
Chapter 9	Equipment	45
Chapter 10	Protection	50
Chapter 11	Pop Warner Rules	55
Chapter 12	Hearings and Appeals	64
Chapter 13	Scholastics & All-American Program	72
Chapter 14	Camps, Annual Planning Tips & Misc. Items	78

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Pop Warner!! Thank you for taking the time to become part of the almost 40,000 dedicated volunteers that manage Pop Warner programs throughout the U.S. and in several foreign countries. We are pleased that you have chosen to be part of this long established organization and have created this manual to assist you in your volunteer duties. You are truly making a difference in the lives of many children!

## NATIONAL & GENERAL MATTERS

This Manual is to be used as an instructional guide for official Pop Warner Leagues and member Associations only. This Manual is the property of Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. and must remain with the Pop Warner member organization after a volunteer's service had ended.

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## POP WARNER LITTLE SCHOLARS

Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. (Pop Warner) is one of the oldest youth sports programs in America. As a representative of a Pop Warner organization, your actions reflect on the entire history and current standing of the national organization. Your local Pop Warner organization offers the children of your community an excellent athletic and recreational opportunity. You are also offering your community the opportunity to be involved with an organization that promotes safe and structured youth activity with other benefits for both youth and adults that only a national organization can supply.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF POP WARNER FOOTBALL

Pop Warner Football was founded in 1929 by Joseph J. Tomlin in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as a four team league, and was then named the Junior Football Conference. However, the name of the league was changed in 1934 in honor of legendary collegiate coach and mentor, Glenn Scobie "Pop" Warner, who was a local Philadelphia coach of the Temple University Owls.

At the close of World War II, Philadelphia's Pop Warner Conference numbered over 250 teams. Unlike the pre-war version, there was a shift away from older players to younger ones. The development of teams consisting of younger players attracted national attention, and in 1947, the first inter-city bowl game took place between a Philadelphia team and a New York team. Soon thereafter, leagues began springing up elsewhere. At the time of Pop Warner's death in 1954, plans were underway to form a national organization, located in Philadelphia. Then, in 1959, the Pop Warner league was incorporated and re-named Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. ("Pop Warner").

Today, Pop Warner Football is played throughout the United States and in a growing number of foreign countries, including Russia, Japan, Mexico and Germany. Almost seventy Pop Warner Football teams compete for the National Championship at the Pop Warner Super Bowl at ESPN's Wide World of Sports each December.

## POP WARNER CHEER & DANCE

Pop Warner Cheer and Dance teams have participated for several decades on the football sidelines (Pep Squads, Majorettes, etc.); however, Cheerleading was not officially introduced until the 1970's. Today, thousands of youth participate in Pop Warner Cheerleading and Dance teams around the United States.

The Cheer and Dance Program offer teams a wide range of opportunity for young athletes at all skill levels. Pop Warner has established one set of Cheer and Dance rules along with JAMZ, the Pop Warner Education Development Partner and the original developer of the Youth Cheer and Dance Alliance (YCADA). Together with YCADA, Pop Warner is able to provide online educational courses for its coaches, administrators and judges on team skill levels for cheer teams PW 1-4 and Core Cheer for Dance Teams, Pom Performance, Theme Dance and Hip Hop. Pop Warner also offers additional competition opportunities in Sideline Performance Cheer.

With continued education, the Cheer and Dance Coaching Staff provides basic instruction, training and conditioning for practices, football games and competition. Teams travel with the football team to home and most away games through to the Pop Warner Super Bowl. In addition to Game Day, teams participate in qualifying Cheer and Dance events (League and Region) through to a Pop Warner National Championship. The Pop Warner National Cheer and Dance Championships (started in 1988) are now held in December located in Orlando, Florida. At the Pop Warner Championships, teams are extended an invitation to YCADA Globals with First Place Teams receiving bids to attend (League – Limited, Region – Partial, National - Full). Coming soon an added competition opportunity, Pop Warner Spring Competitions.

## **POP WARNER SCHOLASTICS**

Pop Warner is the only national youth sports organization in America that requires its participants to perform adequately in the classroom before permitting them to play. We believe that the standards we have set give children a sense of responsibility and an appreciation for academics and athletics that will help our participants develop later on in life.

Each year, the most academically accomplished Pop Warner participants compete for Academic All-American status. This process begins at the association level and up through each of the eight Pop Warner Regions to the National level. We continue to recognize our top scholars each year at the League, Region and National levels in both the Football and Spirit programs. As of this writing, more than 1.5 million dollars in scholarships has been awarded at the National level to deserving Scholar Athletes.

## **POP WARNER GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The mission of Pop Warner Little Scholars is to enable young people to benefit from participation in team sports and activities in a structured environment. Through this active participation, Pop Warner programs teach fundamental values, skills and knowledge that young people will use throughout their lives. Pop Warner seeks to provide fun athletic learning opportunities for children, while instilling the importance of academic success. Specifically, Pop Warner seeks to familiarize players and spirit participants with the fundamentals of football, cheerleading and dance. Pop Warner strives to inspire youth, regardless of race, creed or national origin, gender or sexual orientation to practice the ideals of sportsmanship, scholarship and physical fitness, as reflected in the life of the late Glenn Scobie “Pop” Warner.

### **Objectives**

- To encourage and increase youth participation in football, cheerleading and dance.
- To ensure a structured and positive playing environment for all participants.
- To instill life-long values of teamwork, dedication and a superior work ethic in the classroom as well as on the playing field.

### **Positive Experiences**

- Pop Warner programs have no tryouts or cutting of rosters.
- Everyone participates under mandatory rules of play.
- On-field coaching is permitted for younger age levels.
- Individual awards are given only for academic excellence, not for on-field activities.

### **Structured Playing Environment**

- Players are matched by age only and age/weight levels.
- There are strict mandatory equipment requirements.
- An enforced national rule book incorporates time-tested rules.
- A full-time executive staff supports all local associations and assists in sound policy creation.

## **FIELD-TO-NATIONAL OFFICE CONTACT**

The National Office communicates with league officers only directly or through its local representation, the Regional Management Team, although teams may contact the National Office directly for certain matters pertaining to program management and rule interpretation. Therefore, leagues should have internal guidelines as to which officer(s) will serve as liaisons with the National Office. If individuals seek to file complaints with the National Office after all local and regional avenues have been exhausted in the chain of command, they must do so in writing.

## **CONTACTING THE NATIONAL OFFICE**

If you have any questions concerning matters that cannot be addressed by first contacting your team, association, league or regional officials, you may contact the National Office Monday – Friday, excluding holidays, between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM EST:

Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc.  
PO Box 307  
Langhorne, PA 19047  
(215) 752-2691 Phone  
(215) 752-2879 Fax  
[www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com)

## **NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

Pop Warner maintains a full-time National Staff to help recruit and establish new Pop Warner programs, to interpret rules and regulations, to administer insurance and business matters, and to provide assistance to its member organizations on a wide variety of issues. Currently, the Pop Warner National Staff consists of the following positions:

Executive Director  
National Football Commissioner  
National Cheer and Dance Commissioner  
National Director of Scholastics  
National Events Manager  
National Business Partner Coordinator/Office Manager  
National Marketing & Recruiting Coordinator

## **CORPORATE TITLE & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The legal name of Pop Warner is POP WARNER LITTLE SCHOLARS, INC., (PWLS). PWLS was chartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in March of 1959 and has been designated as a 501 (c) (3) Charitable and Educational Organization by the Internal Revenue Service. PWLS is a membership corporation, and as such, Pop Warner has a set of corporate by-laws, which are distributed only at the National, Regional and League/Conference levels. The Pop Warner National Board of Directors is charged with the overall custody of the corporation while the National Staff has the responsibility for daily business and operational matters. References to “Pop Warner Little Scholars Inc.” or “Headquarters” shall mean “Pop Warner National Office” in publications produced by PWLS.

*SPECIAL NOTE: PWLS requires you to use the name “Pop Warner” in your legal organization name, e.g. “Northern Indiana Pop Warner Football League” for identification with the national program.*

## **USE OF THE POP WARNER TRADEMARKS & TRADE NAME**

The name “Pop Warner”, in whole or in part (Pop Warner Little Scholars or Pop Warner Football, etc.), is fully owned by Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc., pursuant to federal statute (U.S. Patent Office Certificate # 816,322). Similarly, PWLS owns the trademarks on all official Pop Warner logos and other identifying marks, and those marks may not be altered in any manner.

Pop Warner Leagues may use the name Pop Warner on written, promotional and recruiting materials as long as that League maintains its annual Pop Warner membership in good standing, and has its charter approved each year, with the exception of any disciplinary action by the Charter Committee. (Renewal occurs by the act of annual league registration which also renews the sub-memberships of associations.) Any other use of the Pop Warner name or logos must be approved in advance in writing by the National Office. When membership is voluntarily surrendered (failure to register for the season) or revoked (by action of the Charter Committee), former members are required to immediately cease and desist from further use of the Pop Warner name and logos in all verbal and written fashion. Failure to cease and desist will result in prosecution under the law.

Aside from the specific grant of use stated in the preceding paragraph, Pop Warner does not grant any commercial rights to the use of the Pop Warner name and/or marks. Member Leagues and Associations are allowed to contract with businesses and individuals in the normal course of their operations; however, in so doing, they may not confer a “Pop Warner” endorsement of any product or service involved in their contractual relationships, nor may they enter into contracts which confer selling or service rights outside of the member’s own territorial boundaries. All Pop Warner volunteers must comply with Section 1, Article 4, Proprietary Rights, of the

Policies and Procedures of Pop Warner Scholars, Inc., which states that all Pop Warner logos are the trademarked property of Pop Warner Little Scholars. Therefore, no league, association, volunteer, vendor or any other non-licensed party is permitted to use any Pop Warner trademark, including the phrase “Pop Warner,” in whole or in part, without the express written consent of Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. Any violation of Article IV, Policies and Procedures, may result in the revocation of the league charter.

Pop Warner organizations, including Pop Warner regions, are prohibited from contracting for the use of the “Pop Warner” name or logos, in any way for businesses, service providers, media, or other entities that may use the PWLS name and marks for commercial purposes. In accordance with the National By-Laws, **only PWLS (the National Pop Warner Office)** can enter into contracts involving its trade name and/or logos.

Also, **only PWLS licensed vendors, sponsors and partners** are permitted to use the Pop Warner trade name and trademarks, and exhibit and/or sell and National and Regional Meetings and Competitions. Always check with the National Office if you have any doubt regarding the proper use of the Pop Warner trademarks on merchandise and the selection of vendors who are licensed to use the Pop Warner marks in the manufacture of t-shirts, sporting goods and other merchandise and marketing materials.

### **USE OF CHARITABLE ASSETS**

As a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation, all PWLS member organizations must adhere to IRS Regulations regarding the use of charitable assets. Therefore, Pop Warner entities are **not** permitted to sell confidential volunteer or participant/parent contact information to any entity, whether for profit or not-for-profit, as it would jeopardize the non-profit status of Pop Warner National and all local Pop Warner organizations.

### **MEMBERSHIP IN POP WARNER**

Once a league has been granted a charter, it becomes an official member of Pop Warner. It retains this status if it registers annually, pays its fees, follows all rules and regulations, and remains in good standing with the Pop Warner National Charter Committee.

### **DUAL MEMBERSHIP PROHIBITED**

Leagues/Associations and Board Members may not simultaneously join or follow the rules and regulations of any other national or regional youth football program.

### **POP WARNER REGIONS**

Leagues are assigned to regions based on their geographic location. Regions are managed by volunteers called the Regional Management Team who are nominated by the Leagues and/or Regions, and confirmed and appointed by the National Office. Regions are an extension of National Headquarters, but are staffed by volunteers. Each Regional Management Team includes a Region Director, Vice Regional Director, Regional Cheer and Dance Coordinator and a Regional Scholastics Director. Regions Directors, at the approval of the National Office and Region Board, may expand and appoint a Regional Treasurer and committees to assist in running the Regional affairs.

### **ANNUAL REGISTRATION WITH HEADQUARTERS**

Leagues must register with Pop Warner *annually*. This procedure is designed to provide maximum program benefits and efficiency at all levels. Annual Registration Forms are available on-line at [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com) and through the software program selected by the National Office. Failure to register will result in loss of membership. Failure to meet deadlines can delay receipt of program materials and benefits and may cause unnecessary legal complications and/or loss of membership.

## **STRUCTURE**

Pop Warner is divided into levels of play by traditional age/weight classifications and age-base for tackle and age-only divisions for Flag. The traditional divisions are Rookie Tackle, Tiny-Mite (TM), Mighty-Mite (MM), Junior Pee Wee (JP), Pee Wee (P), Junior Varsity (JV), Varsity (V), Age Base divisions are 5-6 (6U), 6-7 (7U), 7-8 (8U), 7-8-9 (9U), 8-9-10 (10U), 9-10-11 (11U), 10-11-12 (12U), 11-12-13 (13U), 12-13-14 (14U).

### **LEAGUES (a/k/a CONFERENCES, or FEDERATIONS)**

The league, conference or federation (PWLS has officially adopted term league for ease of reference, but all terms are interchangeable), is superior to all other local member organizations, and is reorganized as such by Pop Warner Football.

Leagues are responsible for scheduling games, hiring officials and declaring champions. They also enforce National and local rules. In cases of infractions, they investigate, hold hearings and appeals, and determine penalties to be applied against individuals, teams and member organizations. Leagues, especially larger ones, may also host publicity, fund raising, expansion, coaching education, instructional camps, scholastic and cheer and dance functions, with the approval of the Region and National Office.

**LEAGUE:** A league must consist of four (4) or more teams playing in the same Age/Weight & Age/-only level. Most Pop Warner Leagues consist of at least two Age/Weight divisions, each with at least 4 teams in each level. The Associations that make up the League field the teams, and the League oversees the interactions of its member Associations.

### **LEAGUE BOUNDARIES**

A League is responsible for the establishment of its own boundaries which must be approved by the Region and National Office. No League shall be permitted to infringe upon the territorial rights or boundaries of another chartered League.

Leagues must describe boundaries in writing at the time of initial application for membership. In the absence of a description, there is no protection of territory. If permanent membership is granted, the claimed territory may or may not be awarded. If awarded, boundaries may be changed by: (1) the sole discretion of the National Football Commissioner, (2) the order of the Charter Committee, or (3) petition of the League and agreement of the Charter Committee.

The following guidelines are applied to territorial grants and their exclusivity:

- 1) Leagues will be granted the requested territory if they currently serve it, or if they will serve it, in the season following a grant of membership. Applicant Leagues may not “reserve” territory for future expansion.
- 2) A territory is exclusive, and no other League is permitted entry. As such, to service a territory, a League must sponsor play over most of the age spectrum. This does not mean it must cover each playing level, but that its chosen levels must cover the majority of eligible participants in the area. The concept is one of MAXIMUM SERVICE to the community.
- 3) Not serving a territory occurs when the number of teams fielded, and the number of children served is low relative to the area’s population. Areas that are not being fully served may have boundaries re-structured by the National Charter Committee.

**BOUNDARY DISPUTES:** The Region or National Office will intervene in boundary disputes between Leagues as necessary.

In unique cases, where previously awarded territorial areas are in dispute as to whether or not the areas are being fully served, the National Football Commissioner and the Region Director will investigate and request from the parties in question hard data that the areas are being served. If it is found by the National Football Commissioner and the Region Director that the areas in question are not being properly served, then the territorial boundaries will be adjusted.

It is the responsibility of each League to evaluate its claimed territory and advise the National Office & Regional Director of any updates to such territory as necessary. If you are unsure of a League boundary, please contact the National Football Commissioner.

## **Associations and Teams . . The Order of Authority**

**TEAMS:** A team is the universal, basic unit of organization. At minimum, a team consists of a group of participants organized under the direction of a coaching staff in a given Age/Weight division. Each football team may have a maximum of three rostered Cheer & Dance teams.

**ASSOCIATIONS:** Associations are organizations which both sponsor and administer one or more teams. They raise money, buy equipment and recruit coaches and secure fields. They also form and execute policy under the auspices of their League.

Associations may be self-incorporated, or may be sponsored by an existing youth-focused agency, e.g. civic clubs, youth services agencies, municipalities, the military, Police Athletic Leagues, churches, etc. Such sponsoring organizations do not control team or League policy. Teams and associations that do not have sponsors may implement fund-raising drives and other means to support them.

Associations are characterized by specific geographic areas. In cities, they often adopt commonly understood neighborhood names. In the suburbs, they usually take on a town name. In rural areas, an association name may represent an entire county. Teams of one Association play against teams of other Associations within the same League.

**SUB-MEMBERSHIP:** Associations are considered “sub-members” of Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. Associations are represented by their Leagues in corporate matters, and do not have an independent voice. Additionally, sub-members may not participate in any other national or regional youth football program (*please refer to Dual Membership in Chapter 1*).

Sub-membership is obtained (or renewed annually) when the League completes the online registration through the National software program. Continued status as a “sub-member” requires the association to remain a member in good standing in its own League. Associations expelled by Leagues lose their “sub-member” status upon notification to the National Office and Region Director by the League.

**ASSOCIATION BOUNDARIES:** Each Association must have written defined boundaries within its League. The Region and National Office do not normally get involved in boundary disputes between Associations within the same League, unless the League is unable to settle the dispute. The Region and National Office may also become involved in disputes between Associations of different Leagues.

**BY-LAWS**

Every Pop Warner League, and each of its member Associations, relies on capable volunteer administrators, whose functions differ significantly from the functions performed by coaches. Understanding and believing strongly in the underlying philosophy of Pop Warner is necessary help volunteers assist in the management of the organization and its programs. As a volunteer administrator, you must agree that your contact information can be used and that you will receive communication from PWLS and affiliates. A few qualifications should be considered before taking on or appointing someone to the position of administrator:

1. Excellent organizational and record-keeping abilities.
2. Proficient in computer programs and web development.
3. Effective communication skills, both verbal and written.
4. Excellent listening and time management skills.
5. Ability to recruit and train volunteers.
6. Skilled in dealing with people from all walks of life and mediating disputes.
7. An understanding of health, safety and liability issues.
8. Patience and a willingness to learn and work with others.

**INTRODUCTION TO CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

Every League and Association is **required** to have its own Constitution and By-Laws and those documents must be in accordance with National policies and procedures. These documents regulate the internal practices and procedures of leagues and associations by defining the relations, rights and duties of the members, and the powers, duties and limitations of the officers and directors. Power to adopt or amend the Constitution and By-Laws is the responsibility of the entire membership. If a conflict arises between By-Laws of a League and an Association, the League By-Laws take precedence. Pop Warner National Policies and Procedures and By-laws take precedence in the case of all conflict. Please note Pop Warner’s Charter mandates the following Board Positions for every League and Association: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Cheer/Dance Commissioner, Football Commissioner & Scholastics Director.

Constitutions cover the fundamental rules. By-Laws explain how these fundamental rules will be administered. For example: A Constitution specifies what offices are to be filled while the By-Laws explain how these offices are to be handled. However, at times, all articles can be combined into the Constitution.

The following information offers some general guidelines and is not intended to be a final and completed document. As Business laws vary from state to state, Constitutions and By-Laws must conform to local and state laws. Therefore, a local attorney should be consulted to review and advise regarding your Constitution and By-Laws prior to adoption by the League or Association.

**NOTE: THE FOLLOWING IS A SAMPLE ONLY. ANY DRAFTED CONSTITUTION AND/OR BY-LAWS SHOULD BE REVIEWED BY A LOCAL ATTORNEY TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL/STATE LAWS**

***----- SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS -----***

**Article I - NAME**

This organization shall be known as the “\_\_\_\_\_” hereinafter referred to as “\_\_\_\_\_”.

**Article II - OBJECTIVE**

**Section I**

The objective of “\_\_\_\_\_” is to familiarize young participants with the fundamentals of football, cheer and dance. To provide them with the opportunity to play in an organized and supervised environment and to teach them that academics and athletics should be joint, communal efforts.

## Section 2

To achieve this, “\_\_\_\_” will provide a supervised program under the Rules and Regulations incorporated herein and referenced in any addendum to this document. All Directors, Officers and Members 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. In accordance with Section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code, “\_\_\_\_” shall operate exclusively as a non-profit educational organization providing a supervised program of competitive athletic activities. No part of the net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual: no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and which does not participate in or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

## Article III - MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1

**Eligibility.** Any person sincerely interested in active participation to achieve the objective of “\_\_\_\_” may apply to become a member.

### Section 2

**Classes.** There shall be the following classes of Members:

1. Participant Members. Any participant candidate meeting the requirements of, and who resides within the authorized boundaries of, “\_\_\_\_” shall be eligible to participate but shall have no rights, duties or obligations in the management or in the property of “\_\_\_\_”.
2. Regular Members. Any person actively interested in furthering the objectives of “\_\_\_\_” shall become a regular member upon election by the Board of Directors or upon registration of their child that meets the requirements of Article III [2-a]. The secretary shall maintain the roll of membership to qualify voting members. Only Regular Members in good standing are eligible to vote at the annual meeting.

All Officers, Board Members, Committee Members, Coaches and other elected or appointed officials must be active Regular Members in good standing.

3. Honorary Members. Any person may be elected as Honorary Member by the unanimous vote of all Directors present at any duly held meeting of the Board of Directors but shall have no rights, duties, or obligations in the management or in the property of the league.
4. Sustaining Members. Any person not a Regular Member who makes financial or other contribution to the “\_\_\_\_” may, by majority vote of the Board of Directors, become a Sustaining Member, but such person shall have no rights, duties or obligations in the management or in the property of the “\_\_\_\_”.

(a) As used hereinafter, the “Member” shall mean a Regular Member unless otherwise stated.

### Section 3

**Other Affiliations.** Members, whether regular or participant, shall not be required to be affiliated with another organization or group to qualify as a member of “\_\_\_\_”.

### Section 4

**Suspension or Termination.** Membership may be terminated by resignation or action of the Board of Directors.

- (a) The Board of Directors, by a two-thirds vote of those present at any duly constituted meeting, shall have the authority to discipline or suspend or terminate the membership of any Member of any class when the conduct of such person is considered detrimental to the best interests of the “\_\_\_\_”.

The Member involved shall be notified of such meeting, informed of the general nature of the charges and given an opportunity to appear at the meeting to answer such charges.

- (b) All coaches shall lose tenure immediately as of:
  - (1) The end of the season, including playoffs and championships, or
  - (2) December 31 of each year, whichever date is earlier.
- (c) The Board of Directors shall, in case of a Participant Member, give notice to the head coach of the team of which the participant is a member. Said head coach shall appear, in the capacity of an adviser, with the participant before a duly appointed committee of the Board of Directors, which shall have the full power to suspend or revoke such participant’s right to future participation.

## ARTICLE IV - DUES

### Section 1

Dues for Participant Members may be fixed at such amounts as the Board of Directors shall determine prior to the beginning of any membership period.

### Section 2

Members who fail to pay their fixed dues within third (30) days from the time the said dues become due may, by vote of the Board, be dropped from the rolls and shall forfeit all rights and privileges of membership.

### Section 3

Registration fees shall be set annually by the Board of Directors. No one shall participate in the programs of “\_\_\_\_” without payment of such fees, unless such fees are waived by direction of the Board of Directors.

## ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

### Section 1

**Annual Meetings.** The annual meeting of the Members of the “\_\_\_\_” shall be held the (day of month and time) (e.g., “the second Wednesday of January”) each year for the purpose of electing a Board of Directors and Members and receiving reports for the transaction of such business as may properly come before the meeting. After the Board of Directors is elected, the Board shall meet to elect the Officers.

### Section 2

**Notice of Special Meeting.** Notice of each special meeting of the Members shall be mailed, emailed and/or sent certified mail or otherwise delivered to each member at the last recorded address at least ten (10) (optional) days in advance thereof setting forth the place, time and purpose of the meeting; or, in lieu thereof, notice may be given in such form as may be authorized by the Members, from time to time, at a regularly convened meeting.

### Section 3

**Special Meetings.** Special Meetings of the Members may be called by the Board of Directors or by the Secretary or President at their discretion. Upon the written request of ten (10) (Optional) Members, the President shall call a Special Meeting to consider a specific subject. No business other than that specific in the notice of the Special Meeting shall be transacted at any Special Meeting of the Members.

### Section 4

**Quorum.** The presence in person, or representation by absentee ballot, of one-half (1/2) of the members, or a number percentage acceptable to the “\_\_\_\_” regular membership in advance of the annual meeting, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.

### Section 5

#### Voting.

Each league shall be represented by one vote per league. This method will be referred to as a class A vote.

Each league will represent the number of teams registered with the National Office for the preceding year. This will include a combined number of the following:

1. Football Teams
2. Flag Teams
3. Cheer Teams
4. Dance Teams

This method will be referred to as a class B vote.

For the purpose of taking any action on National Rules and Agenda Items at a Regional Meeting a class A vote will be taken on each item. A simple majority of those present will constitute passage.

Any league may request a class B vote at any time. In the event a class B vote is called, a simple majority of those present will constitute passage.

In the case where both method A and B are utilized, the item being voted on must gain a simple majority in both class A and B to pass.

## Section 6

**Absentee Ballot.** For the express purpose of accommodating a Regular Member in good standing who cannot be in attendance at the annual meeting, an absentee ballot may be requested and obtained from the Secretary of the Association. The absentee ballot shall be properly completed, signed and returned in a sealed envelope to the Secretary at least three (3) Days prior to the date of the Annual Meeting and the election of Members to the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall present all absentee ballots to the Election Chairman on the date of the Annual Meeting prior to the conduct of the election process.

## Section 7

**Rules of Order.** Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of all meetings, except where same conflict with the Constitution or By-Laws of the “\_\_\_\_\_”.

# ARTICLE VI - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Section 1

**Board and Number.** The management of the property and affairs of “\_\_\_\_\_” shall be vested in the Board of Directors. The number of Directors shall not be less than five (5) (Optional) nor more than fifteen (15) (Optional). The Directors shall, upon election, immediately enter upon the performance of their duties and shall continue in office until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified.

## Section 2

**Required Numbers.** The Board membership shall include the Officers and a minimum of one coach and one non-coach volunteer. The number of coaches elected to the Board shall not exceed a minority of the total Board Members.

## Section 3

**Annual Election and Term of Office.** At each annual meeting, the Members shall determine the number of Directors to be elected for the ensuing year and shall elect such number of Directors. The number so fixed may, within the limits prescribed by the foregoing Section 1, be increased at any Regular or Special Meeting of the Members, and if the number is increased, the additional Directors may be elected at the meeting at which the increase is voted, or at any subsequent meeting. All elections of Directors shall be by majority vote of all members present or represented by a properly executed and signed absentee ballot filed with the Secretary prior to the election meeting.

## Section 4

**Vacancies.** If any vacancies occur in the Board of Directors shall be held immediately following the annual election and on such days thereafter as shall be determined by the Board. The President or the Secretary may, whenever they deem it advisable, or at the request of five (5) Directors, issue a call for a Special Meeting of the Board. Notice of each Meeting shall be given by the Secretary to each Director either by mail at least three (3) days before the time appointed for the meeting to the last-recorded address of each Director, or via email, fax or telegraphic or personal notice twenty-four hours preceding the Meeting.

In case of Special Meetings, such notice shall include the purpose of the meeting and no matters not stated may be acted upon at the meeting.

Five (5) (Optional) members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## Section 6

**Duties and Powers.** The Board of Directors shall have the power to appoint such Standing Committees as it shall determine appropriate and to delegate such powers to them as the Board shall deem advisable and which it may properly delegate.

The Board may adopt such rules and regulations for the conduct of its meetings and the management of “\_\_\_\_\_” as it may deem proper.

The Board shall have the power, by a vote of two-thirds of those present at any regular or Special Meeting, to discipline, suspend or remove any Director, Officer or Committee Member of “\_\_\_\_\_” in accordance with the procedure set forth in Article III, Section 4 (a).

# ARTICLE VII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

## Section 1

The Board of Directors may appoint an Executive Committee which shall consist of not less than three (3) or more than five (5) Directors, one of whom shall be the President of “\_\_\_\_\_”.

## Section 2

The Executive Committee shall advise and assist the Officers of “\_\_\_\_\_” in all matters concerning its interests and the management of its affairs, and shall have such other powers as may be delegated to it by the Board.

## Section 3

At all meetings of the Executive Committee, a majority of the total number of members then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the Committee.

# ARTICLE VIII - OTHER COMMITTEES

## Section 1

**Nominating Committee.** The Board of Directors may appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of not less than one (1) Director and other appointed Regular Members.

The Committee shall investigate and consider eligible candidates and submit at the Annual Meeting a slate of candidates for the Board of Directors.

The Committee shall also submit for consideration by the Board of Directors a slate of Officers and Committee Members.

## Section 2

**Membership Committee.** The Board of Directors may appoint a Membership Committee consisting of not less than one (1) Director and other appointed Regular Members.

## Section 3

**Finance Committee.** The Board of Directors may appoint a Finance Committee consisting of not less than two (2) and not more than (5) Directors and other appointed Regular Members.

The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee.

The Committee shall investigate ways and means of financing various projects including but not limited to team sponsorships, equipment and facilities purchases and long and short term investments, in accordance with Regional and National policies.

It shall be responsible for taking up collections at games, if such collections are authorized by the “\_\_\_\_\_” and shall turnover said collections to the Treasurer immediately after each game.

The Committee may also be responsible for reviewing operating budgets at the request of the Board and making recommendations on those budgets to the Board.

## Section 4

**Building and Property Committee (Optional).** (May be combined with Grounds Committee). The Board of Directors may appoint a Building and Property Committee consisting of not less than one (1) Director and other appointed Regular Members.

The Committee shall investigate and recommend available suitable sites and plans for development, including ways and means, the latter in cooperation with the Finance Committee.

It shall be responsible for repair and improvement recommendations, other than normal maintenance, and supervise and preference of approved projects.

## Section 5

**Grounds Committee.** (May be combined with Building and Property Committee). The Board of Directors may appoint a Grounds Committee, which shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of playing field(s), buildings and grounds. It shall operate within the amount appropriated in the approved budget for that purpose.

## Section 6

**Equipment Committee.** The Board of Directors may appoint an Equipment Committee, which shall make recommendations to the Board for the purchase of needed supplies and equipment. The Committee shall be responsible for the proper issuance of such supplies and equipment and for the repair, cleaning and storage thereof at the close of the season.

## Section 7

**Coaches Committee.** The Board of Directors may appoint a Coaches Committee consisting of not less than one (1) Director and other appointed Regular Members.

The Committee shall interview and investigate prospective coaches for appointment and subsequent approval by the Board of Directors.

It shall, during the playing season, observe the conduct of the coaches and report its findings to the President of “\_\_\_\_\_”.

It shall, at the request of the President of the Board of Directors, investigate complaints concerning coaches and other volunteers and make a report thereof to the President or Board of Directors as the case may be.

### **Section 8**

**Auditing Committees.** The Board of Directors shall appoint an Auditing Committee consisting of three (3) Directors. The President, Treasurer or signatory of checks is not eligible.

The Committee will review the books and records of “\_\_\_\_\_” annually, prior to the Annual Meeting, and attach a statement of their findings to the annual financial statement of the President and Treasurer: or may, if directed by the Board of Directors or Membership, secure the services of a Certified Public Accountant to accomplish such review.

### **Section 9**

**Hearings Committee.** Consisting of an odd number, not less than three (3), to ensure due process in any rules or policies violations.

### **Section 10**

**Scholastic Committee.** The Board shall appoint a Scholastics Committee consisting of three (3) members, one of which is from the Board and two additional members. The purpose of this committee will be to enforce National Scholastics requirements and set up local academic programs for local recognition in addition to National program.

### **Section 11**

All Committees listed shall research and review, ways and means, to improve “\_\_\_\_\_”. The Chairpersons of said committees should report findings and recommendations back to the Board of Directors for its consideration. The Board of Directors then may have thirty (30) days to act on the recommendations.

## **ARTICLE IX - OFFICERS, DUTIES AND POWERS**

### **Section 1**

**Election.** Immediately following the annual meeting, the Directors present, provided there is a quorum, shall meet for the purpose of electing Officers and appointing committees for the ensuing year.

### **Section 2**

**Officers.** The Officers of “\_\_\_\_\_” shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer a Cheer Coordinator and a Scholastics Coordinator; all who shall hold office for the ensuing year or until their successors are duly elected. (Regulation 1 (b).

The Board of Directors may appoint such other Officers as it may deem necessary or desirable, and may prescribe the powers and duties of each and may fill any vacancy which may occur in any office. Appointed Officers shall have no vote on actions taken by the Board of Directors unless such individuals have been elected to the Board by the Membership or have been elected to fill a vacancy on the Board.

### **Section 3**

**President.** The President shall:

- (a) Conduct the affairs of “\_\_\_\_\_” and execute the policies established by the Board of Directors.
- (b) Present a report of the condition of “\_\_\_\_\_” at the annual meeting.
- (c) Communicate to the Board of Directors, such matters as deemed appropriate, and make such suggestions as may tend to promote the welfare of “\_\_\_\_\_”.
- (d) Designate in writing other officers who have power to make and execute for/and in the name of “\_\_\_\_\_” such contracts and leases they may receive and which have had prior approval of the Board, if necessary.
- (e) Investigate complaints, irregularities and conditions detrimental to “\_\_\_\_\_” and report thereon to the Board or Executive Committee, as circumstances warrant.
- (f) Prepare and submit an annual budget to the Board of Directors and be responsible for the proper execution thereof.
- (g) With the assistance of the Board, examine the application and support of proof-of-age and any other required documents of every participant candidate and certify to residence and age eligibility before the participant may be accepted.

#### Section 4

**Vice-President.** In case of the absence or disability of the President, and provided he/she is authorized by the President or the Board so to act, the Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of that Office, and shall have such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Board of Directors or by the President. The Vice-President will countersign all checks with the Treasurer.

#### Section 5

**Secretary.** The Secretary shall:

- (a) Be responsible for recording the activities of “\_\_\_\_” and maintaining appropriate files, mailing lists and necessary records.
- (b) Perform such duties as are herein specifically set forth, in addition to such other duties as are customarily incident to the office of Secretary or as may be assigned by the Board of Directors.
- (c) Maintain a list of all Regular, Sustaining and Honorary Members, Directors and Committee members and give notice of all meetings of the “\_\_\_\_” Board of Directors and Committees.
- (d) Keep the minutes of the meetings of the Members, the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, and cause them to be recorded in a book kept for that purpose.
- (e) Shall conduct all correspondence not otherwise specifically delegated in connection with said meeting and shall be responsible for carrying out all orders, votes and resolutions not otherwise committed.
- (f) Notify Members, Directors, Officers and committee members of their election or appointment.

#### Section 6

**Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall:

- (a) Perform such duties as are herein specifically set forth and such duties as are customarily incident to the Office of Treasurer or may be assigned by the Board of Directors.
- (b) Receive all monies and securities, and deposit it in depository approved by the Board of Directors.
- (c) Keep records for the receipt and disbursement of all monies and securities, approve all payments from allotted funds and draw checks therefore in agreement with policies established in advance of such actions by the Board of Directors. All disbursements by checks must have dual signatures. The signatures will be those of the Treasurer and Vice-President.
- (d) Prepare an annual budget, under the direction of the President, for submission to the Membership and the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting.
- (e) Prepare an annual financial report, under the direction of the President, for submission to the Membership and Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting.

#### Section 7

**Fundraising Chairperson.** The Fundraising Chair shall:

- (a) Evaluate and administer fundraising activities for the organization
- (b) Promote the necessity of fundraising and assist with the implementation of national fundraisers as necessary

#### Section 8

**Football Commissioner.** The Football Commissioner shall be responsible for the following:

- (a) Represent each level of play for all contact football teams in their respective districts.
- (b) Be the liaison for the coaches to the Board.
- (c) Maintain file of rosters with an update of adds and drops as provided by Associations.
- (d) Receive weekly report of game scores and forward copies to the President and retain copies of such reports.
- (e) Receive and retain in the files, weekly mandatory play sheets from the coaches. Report to the Board any coach in violation of the mandatory play rules.
- (f) Investigate weekly any lopsided scores of games per Pop Warner guidelines. Report any such findings to the Board with recommendation of sanctions if any are required.
- (g) Field from coaches any violation of Pop Warner playing rules, investigate and file complaints from coaches to the appropriate league/association party. If you are unable to resolve the problem, send a written recommendation to the Board for investigation.

#### Section 9

**Cheer and Dance Coordinator** *(Region, League, Association)*.

Cheer and Dance Coordinator (Region, League, Association)

- (a) Each Region, League, Association shall have a Cheer and Dance Coordinator who is a voting member of equal status on their respective Board.
- (b) All Coordinators must be at least 21 years of age.
- (c) All Certifications in the Y100 Series are now valid for One Year Only. Once coaches have completed the Y101 & Y102, they will then rotate between the Y103 and Y102 (until such time when other courses are created). This is to ensure all coaches are current on any rule changes/updates that are made each season of certification. All coaches who took the Y101PW2020 course must re-certify and take the Y103PW2022 for the 2022 season. All coaches who took the Y101PW2021 course must take the Y102PW2022 Refresher Course for the 2022 season.
- (d) Complete the online YCADA Coaches' Competitive Edge Program to better understand YCADA - Pop Warner skill levels and scoring guidelines. Highly Recommended.
- (e) Reporting Relationships:
  - 1. The Cheer and Dance Coordinator reports to their respective Director (ACDC to AD; LCDC to LD; RCDC to RD)
  - 2. The Cheer and Dance Coordinator reports to the National Cheer and Dance Coordinator (Association to League to Region to National)
  - 3. Liaison for the Association Coaches/Coordinators to their Respective Board.
- (f) The Cheer and Dance Coordinator is responsible for the following:
  - 1. Delegate to their respective Meetings (Association, League, Region or National).
  - 2. Chair all Cheer & Dance meetings, often held separately from the football meetings.
  - 3. Reporting Forms
    - (a) Certify Cheer and Dance Rosters – Absentee Forms in Team Book.
    - (b) Category Declaration Page Summary to the National Cheer and Dance Coordinator.
    - (c) Event Request Form - The Coordinator is responsible for approving all Association/League or Region events “other than League/Region/National Championships” by means of Event Request Form.
    - (e) LCDC/RCDC only for Championship – Scores Reporting Form to National at close of event.
  - 4. Coordinate formation of “Cheer/Dance without Football” Teams, Associations and/or Leagues.
  - 5. Provide Coordinators/Coaches with information on managing teams and skill declarations.
  - 6. Enforce Pop Warner and YCADA (Youth Cheer and Dance Alliance) Rules and Regulations.
  - 7. Liaison between National Partners and events to provide guidance on Coaches Clinics, Athlete Camps, Association/League/Region Meetings.
  - 8. Review recruiting/media/social media, retention and loss procedures annually.
  - 9. LCDC/RCDC Only - Administer Championships
    - a) Secure Facilities: Admission/Ticket Sales, Concessions, Spectator Seating/Restrooms, Sound System/Emcee, Electrician, Trainer/Ambulance, Parking, Security, and Maintenance/Housekeeping.
    - b) Purchase Awards/Trophies
    - c) Hire/Provide Entertainment Decorations/Backdrop.
    - (1) Provide Timeline, Order of Performance, Practice Schedule, Music Upload/Order Perform, Event Script
    - d) Secure Matted Surface for Warm-up and Performance Areas.
    - e) Secure Approved PWLS Approved Licensed Vendors for Concessions Area.
    - f) Select Volunteer Job Responsibilities in each area of the event.
    - g) Hire YCADA Trained Judges to include Head, Legality, Point, Panel, Tabulation, Timers and Spotters. Trained Judges/Staff have successfully completed the YCADA Judges' Education Course and participated in both Spring and Fall Judge Webinars.
    - h) Confirm Eligibility, Audit Book Check
    - i) Release Event Date, Location and Event logo on Region Website and Social Media Outlets, October 1<sup>st</sup>.
    - j) Communicate Pertinent Information (including Order of Performance) to Officials, Coaches, Parents and Athletes.
    - k) Coordinate and Release Score Sheets to Head Coaches on Event Day.
    - l) Communicate Advancement Procedures for PWLS National Event.
    - m) Post Placements (First to Last) on Region Website listing scores of Top Five Placements Only.

## Section 10

### A. League Scholastics Director (“LSD”). The LSD shall:

- (1) report to the Regional Scholastics Director.

- (2) be responsible for: maintaining communications with each association scholastic coordinators by meeting with them at least twice a year at regularly scheduled league/conference meetings, working with association coordinators to establish a team to determine conference All-American candidates for regional/national recognition, conducting conference workshops for association coordinators to ensure consistent application of scholastic policy, working with local coordinators to recruit sponsors for a conference recognition banquet, and organizing a league/conference scholastic banquet.

### **Reporting Relationships:**

- Maintain regular communications with each association scholastic coordinator
- Work with association coordinators to establish a team to determine conference All-American candidates for regional recognition.
- Once the Conference coordinator has identified the All-American candidates from their associations, they will send them to the Regional Scholastic Coordinator.
- Association coordinators can serve on the conference screening committee.

### **B. Association Scholastics Director (“ASD”) The ASD shall:**

- (1) report to the League Scholastics Director (“LSD”).
- (2) be responsible for: verifying scholastic fitness of each boy/girl in the association. (report cards from the school year ending in May or June) and making sure that any child with a 96% grade point average or above receives an All-American Application, following up with those parents whose child(ren) received the application and making certain that all applications are completed in full, as well as the addendum, and signed by the child and his/her parents. The ASD must also send the applications to the League Scholastic Director, once the local coordinator has identified the All-American candidates from their associations. Association coordinators can serve on the conference screening committee (to screen conference candidates for regional and national consideration)

### **REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:**

- It will be the responsibility of the local coordinator to follow-up with those parents whose child received the application. The application must be completed in full, as well as the addendum, and signed by the child and his/her parents.
- Once the Association coordinator has identified the All-American candidates from their associations, they will send them to the Conference Scholastic Coordinator.
- Association coordinators can serve on the conference screening committee.

## **Section 11**

**Insurance Coordinator.** The Insurance Coordinator shall be responsible for the following:

To ensure that the League and Associations within that League have the appropriate amounts of insurance coverage required to participate in Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. The insurance coordinator must also prepare the application to bind the insurance for the current season. They will need to discuss with the League and Association the optional coverages offered by Pop Warner (Directors and Officers, Fidelity Bond, Sexual Abuse/Molestation Coverage, etc., as further explained in the Insurance Chapter). The Coordinator should be responsible for the handling of medical and liability claims within their League/Association. This person will need to sign contracts with parks and recreation, school districts and other facilities that the League and Associations might be using in the season and be prepared to discuss and explain Risk Management issues to local organization members.

## **ARTICLE X - FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING**

### **Section 1**

The Board of Directors shall decide all matters pertaining to the finances of “\_\_\_\_” and it shall place all income in a common treasury, directing the expenditure of same in such manner as will give no individual or team an advantage over those in competition with such individual or team.

### **Section 2**

The Board shall not permit the contribution of funds or property to individual teams but shall solicit some for the common treasury of “\_\_\_\_” thereby to discourage favoritism among teams and to endeavor to equalize the benefits of “\_\_\_\_”.

### Section 3

No Director, Officer or Member of “\_\_\_\_” shall receive, directly or indirectly, any salary, compensation or emolument from “\_\_\_\_” for services rendered as Director, Officer, Member or coach.

### Section 4

All monies received shall be deposited to the credit of “\_\_\_\_” in the local financial institution selected by the Board of Directors and all disbursement shall be made by check. All checks shall be signed by the Treasurer and Vice-President.

### Section 5

The fiscal year of “\_\_\_\_” shall begin on the first day of (month) and shall end on the last day of (month).

### Section 6

Distribution of Property upon Dissolution. Upon dissolution of “\_\_\_\_” and after all outstanding debts and claims have been satisfied, the Members shall direct the remaining property of “\_\_\_\_” to another Federally Incorporated entity which maintains the same objectives as set forth herein, which are or may be entitled to exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or any future corresponding provision.

## ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended, repealed or altered in whole or in part by a majority vote at any duly organized Meeting of the Members, provided notice of the proposed change is included in the notice of such meeting

----- **END OF SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS** -----

## CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS RECAP

Again, the above Sample Constitution and By-laws is simply an outline to help guide you in the creation of your own document. **A local attorney should review any draft Constitution and By-Laws before adoption.** Pop Warner strongly recommends incorporation at both the League and Association levels for the liability protection of local officers and other volunteers, as incorporation offers some protection for volunteers in cases of personal liability for damages.

## THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

The General Membership refers to the makeup of the organization. In an association, membership is typically granted to all adult volunteers, and may also be extended to parents. Some Associations permit others in the community to become members if they are willing to contribute service, time and/or money. The General Membership elects the Board of Directors. On the other hand, a league membership consists of its member Associations, and does not include individuals like an association.

## ROBERT’S RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Robert’s Rules govern the conduct of meetings at all levels of Pop Warner. At least one member of an organization should be designated Parliamentarian, or the interpreter and reader of the Rules and that person should be knowledgeable of and proficient in explaining and carrying out Robert’s Rules. This Parliamentarian’s position is an appointed position, and does not need to be specified in the Organization’s By-Laws. The position may NOT be filled by the President (or Commissioner), but is open to all other individuals. To obtain a current copy of Robert’s Rules of Order, please visit [www.robertsrules.com](http://www.robertsrules.com) or contact the National Office for information.

## GUIDE TO MEETINGS

League business meetings should include a specified representative(s) from each member Association and be scheduled separately from coaches’ meetings. A chair person should be named to preside over the meeting and should be responsible for keeping the general order, encouraging discussion, adhering to a reasonable time frame and the set agenda, and in general keep the meeting moving along positively.

## BEFORE THE MEETING

1. Select the meeting location, such as a youth or community building or a business office. Choose a site that is convenient for the majority of those attending. Select the date and time.

Make arrangements for the items needed for your meeting room, such as adequate seating, special equipment (a movie or slide projector), podium, public address system, etc.

2. Send an advance meeting notice to those who should attend the meeting. The notice should include the purpose of the meeting, the proposed agenda, phone number to call and/or an e-mail address to respond to the notice. The meeting planner may also want to include minutes of the last meeting to determine anticipated attendance.

3. Prepare any materials you may want to distribute at the meeting as well as a sign in sheet.

## **MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes of a meeting are the permanent record of that meeting and must be kept on file so the organization maintains an official record of what transpired at the meeting. Most importantly, minutes should be taken and kept on file so that decisions made are recorded to eliminate any disputes arising at a later time. The Secretary should record the proceedings with an audio device, and take a written record if needed; Minutes of previous meetings must be brought to all meetings and made available to the membership.

The order of the minutes should be:

- A. Time (date and hour)
- B. Location (physical address)
- C. Statement that meeting was duly called:
  - 1) By whom?
  - 2) What kind of notice?
    - a) Attach copy of notice of duly signed waiver of notice.
- D. Presiding Officer
- E. Secretary of meeting
- F. Names of those present
- G. Quorum requirement, and whether present or not
- H. Proposal to adopt and Adoption of the Minutes from the previous meeting and any reading or correction of all or part of those Minutes.
- I. Record of what occurred at the meeting, including:
  - 1) Resolutions proposed
  - 2) Resolutions adopted
    - a) Record the names of proposers and seconds of all items of business, as well as vote counts
- J. Adjournment (time)
- K. Signature of Secretary
- L. Counter-Signature of Presiding Officer (obtained at beginning of next meeting, when the minutes are adopted)

## **POST-MEETING**

1. The Secretary transcribes the Meeting Minutes. A complete written record must be kept in the Minutes Book or on file. Only members are entitled to receive copies of Minutes or inspect the Minutes Book.

2. The Secretary then extracts, in writing, the important details of the minutes, and then sends those details to the members of the group, including those who were not able to attend the meeting (via email, fax or mail).

3. Communicate and implement decisions and other matters arising from the Meeting.

## INSURANCE

Every Pop Warner organization is required to carry insurance for the following reasons:

- 1) Players, cheerleaders, coaches, volunteers and spectators may become injured and require insurance to cover medical expenses.
- 2) Valuable equipment and other property can become damaged, destroyed or stolen, and insurance covers the value or replacement of that property.
- 3) Volunteers may not handle funds honestly and insurance can protect from that dishonesty.
- 4) Volunteers and their organizations can be sued for a variety of other reasons and may require insurance.

Since insurance is of vital importance to the success of the programs, an Insurance Coordinator should be appointed who will spend considerable time on this major responsibility.

### MANDATORY LIMITS

**Every Pop Warner organization must have minimum insurance limits of \$100,000 Medical, \$1,000,000 General Liability, and \$1,000,000 Sexual Abuse/Molestation in order to participate. Policy must also include specific coverage for concussion and head injuries. The Pop Warner National Insurance Program offers these overages at competitive rates.** Local organizations that decline the Pop Warner insurance and take other insurance must send in their proof of insurance in all 4 categories and receive approval from the National Office, through their corresponding League or Region, prior to beginning any Pop Warner activities.

### WHY INSURE?

Parents/guardians expect sufficient insurance coverage in order to permit their children to participate in Pop Warner. One of the requirements of membership in Pop Warner is that you have adequate insurance coverage. Such coverage consists of: (a) Medical/accident insurance in the minimum amount of One Hundred Thousand dollars (\$100,000), (b) Liability insurance on all participants and volunteer adults in the minimum amount of One Million dollars (\$1,000,000), and (c) Sexual Abuse/Molestation insurance in the minimum amount of One Million dollars (\$1,000,000).

### ACCIDENT AND HEALTH COVERAGE

Accident and health insurance provides reimbursement for medical expenses resulting from injuries which may occur at games or practices, and, in some cases, at other official Pop Warner functions. Pop Warner's medical plan also includes a Disability Income Benefit. This provides payment to adults who miss work and lose wages as the result of injuries sustained during the preceding Pop Warner activities.

### PROPERTY AND CASUALTY COVERAGE

Property and Casualty (P&C) insurance primarily provides liability insurance in the event of a lawsuit. P&C insurance also includes equipment insurance, in the event your equipment is damaged, destroyed or stolen. Additionally, P&C insurance provides Directors' and Officers' (D&O) coverage which helps protect the volunteer directors and officers in case of legal action. Finally, P&C insurance provides fidelity bond/crime coverage which protects against loss from dishonest acts, usually the mishandling of funds.

### POP WARNER INSURANCE PROGRAM (For Tackle, Flag Football and Cheer & Dance Programs)

Pop Warner offers low-cost, broad insurance coverage as a benefit to its members. The Plan is specifically written to meet the needs of Pop Warner Little Scholars. The Pop Warner Insurance Committee, in conjunction with its Broker, periodically reviews the cyclical insurance marketplace to obtain the broadest possible coverage at the most competitive price. The Official Insurance Plan Brochure is updated annually, typically, in late April of each calendar year. Plan information is then posted on the Pop Warner website ([www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com)) and forwarded to all members.

Pop Warner is well positioned, based on its 90 year history, national scope and impressive safety record, to secure competitive rates and comprehensive coverage while maintaining an excellent reputation and close working relationships within the insurance marketplace. All insurance carriers participating in the Pop Warner Insurance Program are rated either A+ or A by A.M. Best.

***SPECIAL NOTE:***

*Depending on the insurance marketplace, specific details may change from year to year; accordingly, please refer to the Official Pop Warner Insurance Plan Brochure to review the most current update. The Plan Brochure can be accessed at [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com) or by contacting the National Office.*

*If you are currently purchasing insurance coverage through another source or might be considering such an option, we would certainly appreciate the opportunity to discuss how to improve our insurance offering to meet your needs, by providing competitive pricing, comprehensive coverage and excellent customer service. Please call the National Office to take advantage of this opportunity.*

**TYPES OF COVERAGE AVAILABLE UNDER THE PROGRAM**

**Excess Accident Medical Expense Insurance:**

Pop Warner requires coverage on all team personnel. This includes adult volunteers as well as participants – players, cheerleaders and dancers. The Pop Warner Insurance Program covers the entire team as well as all practices and games (including pre-season and post-season).

Since many families already have their own medical insurance, the Pop Warner Insurance Program provides medical benefits on an excess basis. This means that other medical insurance that covers the injured person must be used first (when other medical insurance is used, no deductible applies).

Excess Accident Medical Expense Insurance will be applied to all covered expenses which are not recoverable from any other valid and collectible insurance (if there is no other collectible insurance, this Plan becomes primary).

**Liability Insurance:**

Commercial General Liability (CGL) Insurance covers claims for Bodily Injury, Property Damage and Personal Injury liability. Pop Warner also offers Sexual Abuse and Molestation Coverage at limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$1,000,000 aggregate (at the time this manual went to print) as part of the CGL Policy. Please refer to the Plan Brochure for a more complete description of who is protected, major coverages afforded by the policy as well as major exclusions that apply under this policy (Excess Limits are available in addition to the Primary Limits).

**Equipment and Property Insurance:**

Coverage is provided for all equipment and property owned by the Insured Association while stored in any designated building (including the homes of volunteers) and while in transit from the designated storage location to and from activity sites.

**Blanket Fidelity Bond:**

Crime coverage for financial loss resulting from dishonest acts for only those persons holding the positions designated while such persons are engaged in activities sanctioned by Pop Warner.

**Directors & Officers Liability Insurance:**

A special form of liability protection for football leagues and management; including: officers, directors, managers/coaches, scorekeepers, player's agents, committee personnel and other volunteers for their errors and omissions.

**Official Insurance Plans**

For details and procedures regarding the current policy year, please visit [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com) to access the Brochure and learn more about:

- Highlights of the current year's Program
- Coverage synopses
- Claim Procedures including toll free numbers
- General information regarding all plans
- Enrollment forms
- Coverage applications

ACCOUNTING/FINANCE

Each Pop Warner organization must keep a set of detailed financial records. This provides a system of control and a permanent record of all income and expenditures so each Pop Warner organization can effectively manage its resources. Also, proper record keeping is essential as you may be required by the IRS and/or State or Local government agencies to submit Financial Statements for review. As a member of the Pop Warner family and as a non-profit organization that may receive funding from citizen, private and public entity donations, it is imperative that the financial records of your organization be current, organized and ready for review at all times.

**TREASURER/BOOKKEEPER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Responsibilities of the Organization Bookkeeper/Treasurer/Accountant are as follows:

- Perform operational reviews and help you find ways to run more efficiently.
- Prepare periodic financial statements and annual audit reports.
- Assist in analyzing financial statements, looking for problems or opportunities for improvement.
- Help set up your accounting systems, including computer based systems.
- Determine current fundraising profitability and look for new ways to raise funds.
- Help develop a budget and setup system for your review of budgeted vs. actual results.
- Determine working capital and cash flow requirements.
- Prepare tax returns and assist with tax planning if necessary.
- Assist with determining loan or capital requirements.
- Act as an advisor and sounding board in financial and administrative matters.

**THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Financial statements are declarations of information in financial terms about an organization that are believed to be fair and accurate. They describe certain attributes of the organization that are important for decision makers, particularly donors and creditors.

Three primary financial statements exist: the Balance Sheet, the Income Statement (or Statement of Profit and Loss), and the Statement of Cash Flows. The typical Pop Warner Organization will have a 2-page Financial Statement consisting of only a Balance Sheet and an Income Statement. The three financial statements are based on the same underlying transactions. They are not alternative views of your organization’s financial information and offer three distinct means of looking at the financial activities of the your organization.

**The Accounting Equation**

The essential notion in financial accounting is that **Assets = Liability + Owners’ Equity**.

**Assets** are what an organization owns, such as equipment, buildings and inventory. **Claims on assets** include liabilities and owners’ equity. **Liabilities** are what an organization owes, such as notes payable and bonds. **Owners’ equity** represents the claims of owners against the organization.

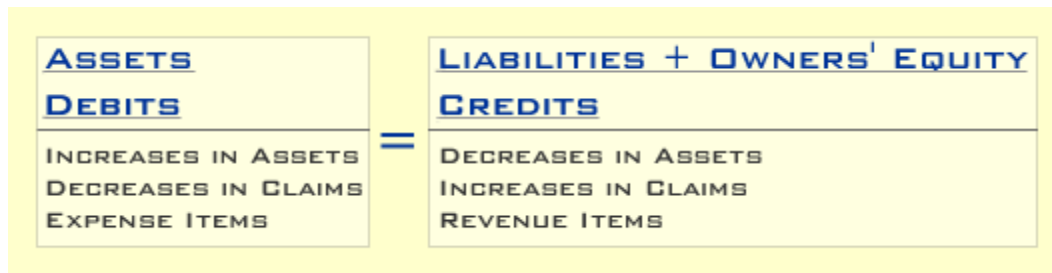
ASSETS	CLAIMS ON ASSETS	
ASSETS =	LIABILITIES +	OWNERS' EQUITY
CASH	ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	PREFERRED STOCK
INVENTORIES	WAGES PAYABLE	COMMON STOCK
BUILDINGS	TAXES PAYABLE	CAPITAL SURPLUS
LAND	NOTES PAYABLE	RETAINED EARNINGS
EQUIPMENT	BONDS PAYABLE	
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	INTERMEDIATE TERM DEBT	
MARKETABLE SECURITIES		

Source: Bizzer Professional Training

## Recording Accounting Transactions

For every transaction that is recorded, there have to be two components that make up an entry—a debit and a credit. A debit is an increase in an asset or a decrease in a claim or expense. A credit is an increase in a claim or a decrease in an asset or revenue. Generally, debits are listed first and credits second. The dollar amount of the debit appears on the left and the dollar amount of the credit appears on the right in the record book. For every debit there must be an offsetting credit. One helpful tool to understanding debits and credits might be to think in terms of the left and right side of the accounting equation. The left side represents the assets and the right side represents the claims on those assets; i.e., liabilities and owners' equity. Generally, anything that increases the left side or decreases the right side would be considered a debit and anything that increases the right side or decreases the left would be considered a credit.

Therefore, revenues and expenses may also be thought of in terms of the accounting equation. Since owners' equity is a claim on assets, it would therefore fall on the right-hand side of the equation. Revenues would be considered credits because, in essence, they would eventually tend to increase ownership in the business. Expenses would take away from the ownership and so they would fall on the left-hand side of the equation.



*Source: Bizzier Professional Training*

## The Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet is a statement or snapshot in time detailing what an organization owns (assets) and claims against the organization (liabilities and owners' equity) **on a particular date**. Items on a balance sheet are listed in order of **liquidity**. Liquidity takes on a slightly different meaning for assets and for claims on assets. For assets, liquidity means **nearness to cash**. For this reason cash is the first item on the balance sheet.

### Sample Balance Sheet (Pop Warner, Inc.)

December 31, 2019

Assets	Claims on Assets																																										
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Current Assets</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Cash</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 123,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Marketable Securities</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 200,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Accounts Receivable</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 345,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Inventories</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 100,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;"><b>Total Current Assets</b></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;"><b>\$ 768,000</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Long-Term Assets</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Building (Gross)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 350,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">-Accumulated Depreciation</td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">\$ -50,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Net Building</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 300,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Land</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 325,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;"><b>Total Long-Term Assets</b></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;"><b>\$ 625,000</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;"><b>Total Assets</b></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 3px double black;"><b>\$1,393,000</b></td> </tr> </table>	<b>Current Assets</b>		Cash	\$ 123,000	Marketable Securities	\$ 200,000	Accounts Receivable	\$ 345,000	Inventories	\$ 100,000	<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 768,000</b>	<b>Long-Term Assets</b>		Building (Gross)	\$ 350,000	-Accumulated Depreciation	\$ -50,000	Net Building	\$ 300,000	Land	\$ 325,000	<b>Total Long-Term Assets</b>	<b>\$ 625,000</b>	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,393,000</b>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Current Liabilities</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Accounts Payable</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 100,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Notes Payable</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 150,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;"><b>Total Current Liabilities</b></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;"><b>\$ 250,000</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Long-Term Note</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 300,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;"><b>Total Liabilities</b></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;"><b>\$ 550,000</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Owners' Equity</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 843,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;"><b>Total Claims</b></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 3px double black;"><b>\$1,393,000</b></td> </tr> </table>	<b>Current Liabilities</b>		Accounts Payable	\$ 100,000	Notes Payable	\$ 150,000	<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 250,000</b>	Long-Term Note	\$ 300,000	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 550,000</b>	Owners' Equity	\$ 843,000	<b>Total Claims</b>	<b>\$1,393,000</b>
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*Source: Bizzier Professional Training*

## **The Income Statement**

The Income Statement shows an organization's revenues and expenses, and any taxes associated with those expenses for some financial period. The Balance Sheet is organized and read from left to right, but the Income Statement is printed in a top-down format.

## **The Statement of Cash Flows**

The statement of cash flows represents the change in cash for a period of time in terms of the organization's operating, investing, and financing activities. Cash is one of the most important assets, and the statement of cash flows shows in detail how the organization's cash balance changed between the beginning and ending of the accounting period and is useful for internal planning.

## **Recommended Practices**

### *The Sarbanes Oxley Act*

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act was signed into law on 30th July 2002, and introduced highly significant legislative changes to financial practice and corporate governance regulation. It introduced stringent new rules with the objective of improving the accuracy and reliability of financial record keeping. The act is named after its main architects, Senator Paul Sarbanes and Representative Michael Oxley, and followed a series of very high profile corporate financial scandals, such as Enron. The Act is also intended to "deter and punish corporate and accounting fraud and corruption, ensure justice for wrongdoers, and protect the interests of workers and shareholders." (President George W. Bush). The Sarbanes Oxley Act has received much attention in the media and serves as a reminder of the importance for financial honesty in record keeping.

## **Important Policies**

At every regular League or Association Meeting, the Treasurer should present a financial report for the members. It is vital that any Pop Warner organization's finances be crystal clear, especially being non-profit organizations.

General accounting recommendations are as follows:

- Pop Warner strongly recommends a written policy to require co-signatures on checks over a set amount, usually \$100.00
- A written policy requiring at least two individuals to count all cash received and to co-sign a receipt for that cash (especially at concession stands).
- A written policy requiring separation of responsibilities, so that the person responsible for receiving and depositing funds does not have access to the disbursement of funds.

Today, many organizations use computers and software programs to make it easier to follow good accounting practices. There are several good, relatively inexpensive software programs available, which provide valuable assistance in tracking revenue and expenses by type and class. *Quick Books*, *Simply Accounting* by ACCPAC International, and *Peach Tree* are some relatively easy and low cost programs to use.

***Special Note: Under IRS Regulations, even if a Pop Warner League or Association is registered with our office as a subsidiary under the National Group Federal Exemption, that organization must file its own IRS Form 990, which is the year-end filing form for non-profit organizations.***

## **IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS**

In-kind contributions are donations of items or services, rather than money such as when a local restaurant provides food for your event at no charge or when an advertising agency donates the services of its staff to design a brochure for you. The "fair market value" of these contributions, the cost of the hotdogs or the hourly salary of the ad agency staff, should be recorded as a contribution. Please note that IRS Regulations currently do not allow donations of services to be tax deductible for the donor.

## **OTHER ACCOUNTING PRACTICES**

When making purchases for your organization, be sure to always request receipts whether you are paying in cash or writing a check. Pay only those expenses backed by receipts if the expense ordinarily produces them. For credit card charges, it is wise to keep a copy of the monthly card statement on file. When possible, always provide receipts when money is received by your organization especially

for sign-ups, where cash may be taken. A system of serialized receipts will assure all cash is turned in since one copy stays with organization. Again, the person collecting the money should not be the same person depositing the money on behalf of the organization.

### **CASH ADVANCES**

If utilized, cash advances should require a follow-up Expense Report, which should detail the amount advanced and the amounts spent by classification, and, finally, the overage, or amount to be reimbursed to the organization.

### **EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY**

Limit expenditure authority to one or two people. Large expenditures should be authorized only with Board approval.

### **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

It may not be necessary to hire a CPA to look over the books, prepare statements and issue an opinion. However, an Audit Committee, composed of several Board members, should review all items in the Treasurer's custody and report to the membership at large. The Committee should pay special attention to receipts and checks made out to "cash" and any which are missing.

**LEGAL**

**Special Note:** *The information contained in this chapter is not intended as a substitute for the advice of a competent attorney. Its purpose is to serve as a basic introduction to those areas of law which you are likely to encounter in the daily operations of your organization.*

*Typically, laws are not uniform from state to state. Accordingly, when a legal issue arises, seek the opinion of an attorney who practices law in your state and has expertise in the area of law which has been called into question, i.e., personal injury, taxation, civil rights, etc.*

As you will read in this chapter, certain responsibilities befall local Pop Warner organizations as well as the individual volunteers of that organization. Both coaches and administrators must be extremely careful to avoid potential personal liability for failing to uphold their responsibilities, for committing negligent acts and/or failing to act. Even when covered by liability insurance, the individuals still may face personal liability for failure to meet their responsibilities.

**HELPFUL TERMINOLOGY**

**Arbitration:** The process of resolving a dispute (as between a volunteer and an association/league) or a grievance privately without the involvement of the court system by presenting it to an impartial third party or a panel for a decision that may or may not be binding.

**Assumption of Risk:** The doctrine of assumption of risk means that a plaintiff (a party that initiates a lawsuit) may not recover for an injury received when he voluntarily exposes himself to a known and appreciated danger.

**Due Process:** A course of formal proceedings (similar to court proceedings) carried out regularly, fairly, and in accordance with communicated and/or established rules and principles (*also known as procedural due process*).

**Duty:** A legal or moral obligation. With regard to your organization’s administrators, duty may be defined as those obligations of performance, care or observance which rest upon a person in an official or fiduciary capacity. In negligence cases, duty may be defined as an obligation, to which the law will give recognition and effect, to conform to a particular standard of conduct toward another.

**Duty to Warn:** The obligation to point out any foreseen or unforeseen danger. The purpose of a “warning” is to advise a person of the existence of danger of which he is not aware to enable him to protect himself against it.

**Hold Harmless Agreement:** A contractual agreement whereby one party agrees to assume for a second party the liability for which the second party is responsible.

**Incorporation:** The act or process of forming or creating a corporation. Incorporation procedure and requirements are governed by state statutes.

**Legal Duty:** The obligation to take some action or refrain from some action to prevent harm to another. The failure to act may subject someone to liability depending upon the circumstances and the relationship of the parties to each other.

**Malfeasance:** The act of committing a wrongful or unlawful act involving or affecting the performance of one's duties.

**Negligence:** The failure to act or refrain from action in the same manner as a reasonably prudent and careful person would under a given set of circumstances. *Negligent Conduct* is behavior which falls below the standard established by law for the protection of others against unreasonable risk of harm.

**Proprietary Rights:** Rights belonging to an organization for something (for example logos or written materials) that is used, produced, or marketed under exclusive legal right of the inventor or owner. Proprietary rights include Trademarks (a name or symbol identifying the origin of goods or services), copyrights (the right to publish or otherwise exploit original writings) and patents (inventions that have been granted Patent protection).

**Ultra Vires Acts:** Acts beyond the scope of the powers of a corporation, as defined by its charter or laws of the state of incorporation. An act is ultra vires when the corporation is without authority to perform it under any circumstances or for any purpose.

**Waiver or Release:** A promise by one party to forego a claim against another party. In order to be enforceable, waivers and releases generally need to be express, in writing and specific as to the kind of claim waived or released, and should recite consideration for the waiver or release. Consideration is something given in exchange for a promise to make it legally binding. An agreement to allow one to participate in an activity may be valid consideration, depending on the circumstances.

## **Volunteer Standards of Care**

### **1) The Law Of Negligence**

The law of negligence is founded on reasonable conduct or reasonable care under all circumstances of a particular case. It is the duty of every person to exercise due care in his or her conduct toward others from which injury may result. Generally a charge is failure to supervise or control subordinates. This standard of care varies from state to state. An award of monetary damages to the injured party, assessed against the negligent party, is the usual result of a judgment of civil negligence. In case of criminal negligence, a fine or jail sentence (or both) may be imposed on the negligent party.

### **2) Assets & Liability**

An individual is always responsible for his or her own actions or omissions. Even when actions are performed within the scope of one's volunteer duties, if a volunteer's actions or omissions (failure to act) fall below the standard of accepted conduct and result in an injury to another, the person whose conduct was negligent or reckless may face personal liability as a result of such actions or omissions to act, depending on state law.

Additionally, incorporation of a league or association does not necessarily provide complete protection from personal liability. Most lawsuits will name the organization and all the volunteers involved in the particular incident. For example, administrators may be named and held liable for the acts of their coaches. However, having an incorporated organization can shield a member of the organization who was not negligent in his/her actions.

Furthermore, a liability insurance policy typically requires certain performance standards to be met for coverage to apply. Liability policies are designed to defend claims based on a breach of duty - negligence. The source of duty may be common law (the theoretical "reasonable man"), statutory (e.g., a speed limit), by course of conduct (having acted in a particular fashion toward a third party, one may be held to that standard of conduct in the future) or by agreement (e.g., not to put big kids on the field with smaller kids). Each situation creates a duty, the breach of which (coupled with a resulting injury) gives rise to a claim which, in the ordinary sense, will be defended by your liability policy.

Liability policies will generally deny coverage for intentional acts. An intentional violation (e.g., coach put a big kid in knowing he was not within the guidelines, big kid hurts smaller kid, who is playing within the guideline) may prompt a disclaimer or a reservation of rights by the carrier.

One last point is that in judgments of negligence, courts generally evaluate the assets of a defendant. The typical youth football organization has few, if any, liquid assets. A Comprehensive General Liability insurance policy covers individual volunteers by title. However, the Limit of Liability of the policy must be high enough to cover the highest judgment which may be awarded. If the liability limit is less than the judgment, the difference in the award will be allocated to the personal assets of the volunteers and/or from the organization's assets.

### **3) Importance Of Training And Supervision**

The Organization's Administration or Board is responsible for training and supervising the volunteers in the organization. Coaches' training may include seminars and testing, which are a prerequisite to coaching.

Supervision implies an active role on the part of administrators to insure that everyone stays within the rules, regulations and accepted norms of behavior. At least one administrator must be present at all practices, scrimmages and games. Supervision also involves the capability of safely moving an injured person to a medical facility, and taking immediate, forceful action to correct misbehavior or negligence.

A supervisor can be subject to personal liability for negligence if there is an injury during practice and it is determined that the supervisor was not acting in the same manner as a "reasonably prudent" supervisor should have acted in accordance with state law.

#### 4) Duty To Warn

All volunteers have a duty to warn. Failure to warn is another act of negligence. As part of the registration process, no child shall be permitted to participate in any activities until the child's parent or guardian as well as the child himself has signed the standard Pop Warner release and indemnification agreement. All supervisors should insure that the child, parent and guardian are made fully aware of the provisions of these agreements before signing.

As early as possible, you should also verbally warn parents that football is a contact sport and may be dangerous, and that cheer and dance participants may also risk injury as in any physical activity. Simultaneously, you can advise the parents of the positive safety aspects practiced in your program as well as Pop Warner's safety track record (See Chapter 7, Publicity and Public Relations).

The duty to warn also covers many football techniques, cheer stunts, behavior at all team functions and at hotels, and transport to and from team functions. Specifically, football coaches should clearly read and explain the helmet warning statement (see Chapter 9, "Equipment"), and the Coaches should provide instruction in helmet fitting and care.

#### 5) Defenses To Claims Of Negligence

##### a) Hold Harmless Agreements

"Hold Harmless" agreements, where individuals or entities attempts to be exonerated from liability for any harm caused as a result of their own negligence, is generally considered contrary to public policy; meaning courts rarely agree that these agreements absolve an organization from liability. However, these agreements are important and should be signed by both the player and his parent or legal guardian, since the enforceability of such agreements varies greatly from state to state and in relation as well as to each particular set of circumstances.

Some organizations erroneously believe that if a parent signs a "hold harmless" agreement on behalf of his or her child, the organization will be protected from all claims of negligence. No one has the right to waive the rights of a child's health, safety and welfare, not even a parent. Courts have little tolerance for hold harmless agreements which attempt to relieve an individual from any acts of negligence, particularly where minors are involved.

##### b) Assumption Of Risk

An organization and its coaches are not generally protected from charges of negligence by asserting that players have "assumed the risk" or by having parents sign "hold harmless" agreements. The defense of assumption of risk is very rarely a complete defense to a cause of action where a person is allegedly injured as a result of the alleged negligence of another, even though the person may be voluntarily participating in competitive and/or contact sports. These agreements should not be relied on as a replacement for demonstrating reasonable care and proper risk management techniques.

The requirements for upholding the defense of assumption of risk are: (1) the plaintiff had knowledge of the facts constituting a dangerous condition; (2) the plaintiff knew the condition was dangerous; (3) the plaintiff appreciated the nature or extent of the danger; and (4) the plaintiff voluntarily exposed himself to the danger. Please note that it is extremely difficult to ascribe such knowledge to a Pop Warner football player or spirit participant given his/her young age, and therefore, the assumption of risk defense has been steadily eroded over the years by the courts. The most prudent course is not to rely on this defense because most youth football players or spirit participants lack the maturity and knowledge to assume the risk.

#### **MANDATORY BACKGROUND CHECKS**

In order to address the growing concern of safety for our participants, in 2003, Pop Warner mandated annual background checks for its volunteers. All Coaches, Board of Directors' members and any other persons or volunteer workers who have repetitive access to or contact with youth participants must undergo a background check. Each League shall require and be responsible for enforcing all league and association personnel to annually submit a fully completed official "Pop Warner Volunteer Application." No League shall permit any person to participate in any manner, whose background check reveals a conviction for, or guilty plea to, any crime involving or against a minor. Each League shall also require and be responsible for enforcing that an Officer of each member Association complete and submit an official Pop Warner "Association Confirmation of Compliance with Background Checks" affidavit to the League for the League to retain. Then, each League is required to file an official Pop Warner "League Confirmation of Compliance with Background Checks" affidavit annually with the National Office. All forms are available on <https://www.popwarner.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1579737> each year or can be obtained by contacting the National Office. The Association Affidavits should **NOT** be sent to the National Office.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the suspension and/or revocation, temporary or permanent, of the league charter/association membership, and/or dismissal of involved individuals from the organization. Please refer to Part III, Article 21 of the *Pop Warner Little Scholars Official Rules* (effective 2003) for more details on the mandatory background check policy.

## **FINANCES & DEBTS**

### **1) Maintaining Good Credit**

Maintaining good credit on behalf of your Pop Warner organization is essential. Furthermore, failing to pay bills and uphold your contractual obligations **can subject the organization to suspension and/or loss of charter and results in permanent removal of volunteers**

Many bad debt cases occur when former volunteers build up considerable bills for the organization, and depart, leaving the current volunteers to handle the mounting debt. Changing the name of the organization or forming a new one is not a defensible position, as the organization legally remains responsible for the debt. The organization is legally obligated to pay off all of its bills. First steps should involve contacting the creditors and explaining the situation and establishing a payment schedule. Many nationally-affiliated entities are willing to work with local organizations by implementing a repayment plan

### **2) Remedies and Causes of Action for Bad Debt**

The organization should consult with a local attorney as it may have a cause for action against the individual who improperly created the indebtedness. Also, in bad debt cases, incorporation may minimize or eliminate personal liability. In order to avoid lawsuits and any legal ramifications, all parties should deal honestly with creditors and attempt to come to terms with repaying the debt in a timely fashion.

### **3) Selection of Volunteers Entrusted with Funds**

Persons entrusted with funds must be of impeccable character. Regular financial reports should be made to the board of the organization, and those officers should closely involve themselves with the income and expenditures. At least two non-related volunteers should be involved in handling funds and separate accounts should be maintained when necessary. If theft is discovered, it must be reported to the authorities immediately. Such notification is usually required before filing an insurance claim for the missing funds.

### **4) Right Of Inspection**

As a non-profit organization, Pop Warner members have the right to inspect all books and records of their local organization. When membership is multi-tiered (several classes), inspection rights may be restricted to the highest class(es) of membership (Please see Chapter 3, Personnel Structure and Operations). However, under IRS regulations, as a non-profit, your Form 990 (the year-end form filed by non-profits) must be available to anyone who requests it. Please be advised that privacy laws and other restrictions may apply under local law. Therefore, although members may generally have the right to inspect Pop Warner books and records, good practice requires that the request be evaluated by the Board and possibly the League before a response is provided as some areas of inquiry might require discretion or denial, like requests for player information.

### **5) Custody And Surrender Of Books, Records & Equipment**

Possession is legal when it is within the duties of a position, or if there is agreement among members that custody is valid. For example, a coach may store equipment in his home to avoid storage charges if the association agrees. However, when someone leaves office, all property of a team, association or League in one's personal possession must be surrendered (including this manual). If not, a court may issue an order for the surrender. In case of ownership dispute, an injunction stops the sale or other disposition of an asset until the court decides true ownership.

### **6) Tax Deductions**

Unfortunately, a volunteer cannot deduct the value of his or her time, despite the great worth of this asset to the Pop Warner organization. However, volunteers itemizing deductions for federal income tax returns may deduct all expenses they incur on behalf of the program ***for which they are not reimbursed***. Mileage on personal vehicles used to go to practices, games, meetings and other official functions can be deducted at the rate allowable per mile under current IRS regulations. To claim expenses that were not reimbursed, receipts should be maintained. The organization may be asked to furnish statements backing up claims, so careful documentation is important.

## GENERAL ORGANIZATION LAW

### 1) Discrimination, Civil Rights And Due Process

The general objectives of Pop Warner are to inspire youth, regardless of race, sex, creed, religion or national origin, to practice the ideals of sportsmanship, scholarship and physical fitness. As a non-profit organization, Pop Warner programs must be available to the public. Denying sign-ups on racial, religious or ethnic grounds is illegal, and blatant, and even well-intentioned, restrictions are subject to legal challenge. Some frequent issues that may arise are girls wanting to play football; boys wanting to cheer or dance; over/under weights or ages, players demanding to play outside a boundary; and the right to a hearing for a person charged with a violation. It is imperative you treat all of the above and any similar situations with utmost care and within the framework of Pop Warner rules and policies.

Specifically, the following notes pertaining to specific rules of Pop Warner may assist you:

- a) Age and Weight limits are not in place to deny individuals the opportunity to play instead they exist to protect the safety and interests of our youth participants.
- b) Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. welcomes all youth participants and does not discriminate; although occasionally for safety or other reasons, the rules may result in denial of sign-up (i.e. cannot participate in a competing program). Boys and girls may play football, flag football, cheer or dance.
- c) To date, no court has ever forced a higher number of players on a roster than Pop Warner's limit of 35 players. The Pop Warner rulebook is the first line of defense.
- d) Denial of a sign-up based on boundary is not discriminatory when the League establishes boundaries and enforces them equally. However, any past waiver a League may have allowed creates a precedent, which may be difficult to argue against in a future case.
- e) Due process is guaranteed each citizen and applies to all private and public groups. The only way to penalize or remove offenders is to hold a hearing of the type described in the Hearings and Appeals Chapter of this manual (Chapter 11).

### 2) False Arrest and Wrongful Eviction

In the unfortunate circumstance where someone is misbehaving at an event hosted by or involving your organization, please remember to first call the police and explain the reasons you would like this person removed from the premises immediately. Never forcibly remove a person from the stands or field, except in the event of extenuating circumstances, such as when a threat of violence or abuse is present and immediate action may be necessary and legal. If your organization owns the property hosting the event, trespassers may be evicted, although no physical force may be utilized. At public facilities, eviction may be accomplished only by the facility owner or the police.

### 3) Meetings

The membership has a right to scheduled meetings, with proper advance notice of date, time and place. If meetings are not held regularly or are not published, they are illegal and any business decided is subject to challenge. Those responsible for such activities are subject to charges of malfeasance, conduct which is illegal, unjustified or detrimental.

### 4) Ultra Vires Acts

Acts performed by an organization that are beyond the authority given to the organization by National Rules and Policies or by the By-Laws or Charter of the organization, are known as ultra vires acts. Ultra vires acts are not legally binding on the organization, because the organization did not have the proper authority to commit the act. An example of an ultra vires act is when an organization enters into a contract that it has no authority to sign (for example granting use of National trademarks to an unlicensed vendor). Ignorance is not a defense, and a contractor would have cause for action for breaking a contract. Members of the organization can bring charges of malfeasance against those who took part in the decision.

### 5) Proprietary Mentality

All volunteers in a Pop Warner organization serve their respective league or association --whether incorporated or not. No individual has any proprietary (personal ownership) rights to the organization, its teams or assets (equipment, uniforms, etc.) as these items remain with the organization not the individuals.

*This chapter makes no attempt to provide full legal expertise. It is meant only to provide awareness of some of the laws that may affect you and your organization. Consult a local attorney with any specific legal questions.*

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

Community interest and support are vital to maintain a successful organization. Public Relations (PR) efforts help develop and preserve that necessary interest in two ways;

- (1) It keeps your community current on the happenings in your organization, and
- (2) It creates and sustains a positive image for your group.

Effective public relation campaigns can increase the number of participants and volunteers. It is recommended that when possible, Pop Warner Leagues have a volunteer whose sole function is to manage public relations/publicity.

This type of PR program must be an ongoing one. Don't expect too much from the first effort, or even the first few. Instead, think of PR as a long-term campaign. Try to develop positive personal relationships with local media people, so that you are credible and helpful to them. Regular news releases are a must to maintain community awareness of your program.

Schedule a calendar of events that are newsworthy such as sign-up dates, games, championships, banquets, and fund-raisers. When possible, try to spread items over the whole year. On April 1, Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. announces the All-American Scholars from your area. Before or during the season, do a story on former PW participants who have done well after their PW days, or write a piece on PW volunteers who are role models for the community.

Please Note: The Pop Warner Player Contract provides programs communication and promotional consent for use of images, photos and likenesses of kids for their websites and other publications.

### **WHAT IS THE BEST MEDIA OUTLET TO GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS?**

That answer depends on many factors. First, you need to determine what you wish to accomplish with your communication. Then, you must pinpoint whom you are trying to reach with your message. Once you have narrowed down your target audience, begin researching the media outlets that directly reach your designated audience. You can ascertain what types of media outlets affect your target by learning as much as you can about your audience. A number of characteristics, such as education level and geographic location, can assist in selecting effective media outlets. For example, if you are trying to reach a group of potential donors and your target is defined by income level, use your online state census bureau to obtain income levels of individuals living within a certain zip code. Use this information to target the local newspapers, or send a direct mail postcard to the specified area.

There are pros and cons to using each media outlet and you need to weigh these factors when dealing with each media type. Following are a few tips for working with the various outlets:

- **Print media**: like newspapers and magazines, offers more of an opportunity to tell your story. Research which reporters cover your organization's issues. This is as simple as going to your nearest library or bookstore to read targeted publications. Call reporters to schedule a brief meeting so that you may introduce yourself and explain what your organization does. Reporters are on a constant deadline and are often looking for resources and stories. Offer yourself as a resource for that reporter in your area of expertise. Another way to get your message heard through print publications is to write letters to the editor and submit opinion pieces. Many non-profit groups use such opinion pieces to get their point across in print publications. News outlets seek information that is relevant to their readers. That is why it is important to learn about a target publication's readership. You have a better chance of being published or quoted in a newspaper or magazine article if you can speak directly to the interests and needs of the readers. A genuine effort to provide relevant content and story ideas helps in building a relationship with editors who may continue to use you as a source for future articles.
- **Public Service Announcement (PSA)**: to be heard on local radio and television stations may also be an effective way to get your message across. One of the largest media conglomerates, Clear Channel Communications, has a Web site that offers non-profits the opportunity to add a PSA (<http://publicservice.clearchannel.com/>). Affiliated radio stations pick up these announcements to fill airtime. The cost of producing a PSA can add up because radio and television PSAs are similar to commercials. You might have to write a script and hire voice talent or actors. Instead, seek out sponsorship by for-profit companies. Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. has PSA's available at the National Office for your use, please just contact us for a copy of our PSA.

- **Wire Services:** To reach a large audience, non-profits should **consider using wire and video services** to broadcast press releases. Wire and video services disseminate news to a variety of media outlets. Journalists often use the broadcasted information for current stories or to assist in brainstorming for future articles. Usually, a fee is required for each broadcasted press release and a membership fee may be necessary. Examples of reputable national wire services include Associated Press, MediaLink, Reuters, and PR Newswire.
- **The press as well as prospects are using news search engines**
  - 98% of journalists go online daily
  - 92% for article research
  - 81% to do searching
  - 76% to find new sources, experts
  - 73% to find press releases

**On an average day, 68 million American adults go online**

  - 30% use a search engine to find information
  - 27% get news

*Sources: Middleberg/Ross Survey and Pew Internet and American Life Project*
- **Television:** Develop a story and pitch it to the appropriate reporter or assignment editor. Be sure to have your facts ready and an idea for visuals. The more visuals you offer, the better. B-roll video (prerecorded, specially formatted video) will save television stations time and money and provide a quick fill-in. In addition, let the reporter or assignment editor know who can be interviewed for the story and the expertise of the interviewee.
- **Radio:** Send your news releases to radio stations. The on-air personality (or program manager) can pick from it what he or she wants. Call for instructions. You may be told to write for a 10 second or 30 second announcement. The public service director may invite you to the station to tape an announcement. Most stations accept cassette recordings. Ask what the station's requirements are for such recordings. Some stations have interview shows, or listener call-in shows. Check to see how you can participate. If a station is strong on sports, talk to the program director about a feature on youth sports, which would include Pop Warner.
- **Internet/Email:** offers many great opportunities for non-profits to communicate their stories. Great Internet media outlets for non-profits include the Non-Profit Times Web site ([www.npt.com](http://www.npt.com)), the Chronicle of Philanthropy's site [www.philanthropy.com](http://www.philanthropy.com), and the Philanthropy Journal's site [www.philanthropyjournal.org](http://www.philanthropyjournal.org). Search your targeted Internet site for the editor's name and contact information. Devise a story and pitch it to the editor just as you would pitch a story to a television reporter or a newspaper journalist.

As you have read, there are many ways your story can be vocalized through the media. In order to reach the largest audience, use a variety of media outlets. With that in mind, it is best to use a mix of media. You also should consider the difference between controlled and uncontrolled media and the effect it may have on your message. A PSA is an example of a controlled message. Alternatively, when a reporter interviews your organization or covers an event, you have no control over that story. For example, if you hold a groundbreaking ceremony, you have no assurance that the story will be told in the way that your organization wants it to be told. Thus, it is important that prior to starting any public relations campaign, your organization develops key messages. In the event that members of your organization are interviewed, the key messages must be shared with everyone in your organization – from the board to the staff.

## **WORKING WITH THE MEDIA/DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS:**

Members of the media are very busy people with many events to cover each day. The best way to get a grasp on how to get better coverage of your events is to ask your local media what information they need in order to cover your competitions. The easier you can make it for them to accurately and efficiently touch on your event, the more successful you will be in attracting coverage.

Contact the media in your area to introduce yourself and to find out what kind of publicity is best suited to their format. Will a newspaper run a feature story on your program, list your meeting notices, print the results of your games? Does a radio station have interview programs or a call-in-talk show or a community bulletin board that would be useful to you?

Try to make an appointment for a personal visit with newspaper editors and station program or public service people. Before your visit, read a copy of the newspaper or listen to the radio station. It will help you make a positive impression during your visit if you can refer to a particular feature. This shows your interest and may prompt connections to some of your volunteers or participants. Extend an invitation to your functions and games. Offer any printed material you have available.

Newspaper editors and station people may not have the time to see you, but will probably talk to you on the phone for a few minutes. Follow up by sending a brochure and a short note including your phone number so they can call you for further information. Keep a media file containing pertinent information on each media outlet in your area (i.e. --newspapers, radio and television stations,

magazines, cable and satellite television providers, billboard companies, advertising agencies, etc.) Your file should have key contact information including names and numbers of those you have talked to in the past. A log of all communications made with media outlets should be kept in the file as well.

Creating a personal relationship with your local media members takes time and a consistent effort. Give them as much detailed information as you can up front and make sure they have plenty of lead time to prepare for covering your event. If you have a newsworthy event (a league or region championship for instance) you should contact the media no later than two weeks prior to the event as they must schedule their time and also get a photographer and/or cameraman. If a press conference or special event (such as a trophy presentation) is to take place, early afternoon is usually the best time to attract a media presence. Newspaper reporters typically don't work earlier than 2:00 PM each day and television crews are often out in the community in the early afternoon gathering material for their evening shows.

In general, the media are very cooperative toward non-profit organizations. Here are a few tips on dealing with the media to assure good relationships:

- Observe their deadlines. If you promise to deliver information, such as game scores, by a certain time be sure that you do.
- Do not call to complain that your release or game score was not used. Since you do not pay for publicity the media has no obligation to use it. Stress to parents and volunteers that only the assigned PR person will contact the media. An irate parent shouting at an editor may result in none of your game scores being run in the future.
- Do not promise an exclusive to a newspaper or station, and then send the same information to its competitors. This is breach of faith and will greatly damage your relationship. If there are two competing papers in your area, you can alternate feature stories between them. Example: A feature on a long-time volunteer might go to one paper, a story on a former Pop Warner youngster who is a star quarterback for his college could be sent to the other paper.
- Creating "Tip Sheets" for the media can be helpful. Story leads or "tip sheets" are a list of good community interest stories in your area that have not been explored by the media. If you can generate some solid story lines, make a contact with the sports department and the community interest department of your local media outlets and send them the listing.
- At the end of the year, send a "thank you" letter to the media who have helped you. Regardless of whom you deal with at a newspaper, send a copy of your letter to the editor. He may print it in his "Letters to the Editor" column, generating additional publicity.

**Some of the most important information the media will need in covering your games and special events include:**

- Game times and locations
- Accurate rosters with numbers and names of each player
- Key contact once the reporter is on site
- Phone number the media can call for follow up questions (usually a cellular number of a high ranking association/league official)

**INTRODUCTORY BROCHURE**

Why is your organization important? Why do you merit newspaper space or air time? Why should a business become a sponsor? Why should people volunteer their time? You must have good answers to these questions to have a successful publicity/public relations program.

Start with a brochure presenting Pop Warner and your organization in a way that motivates the reader to become involved with your program. It should explain what Pop Warner is, who you are, and how your program benefits the community.

Some basic points to cover:

- How long your program has been in existence.
- Your community coverage (geographical areas served), number of youngsters served, and their ages.
- What you do for the community.
  1. Structured, wholesome recreation for the youth of the community.
  2. Keep kids active, interested, and occupied.
  3. Coaches and other volunteers serve as positive role models.
  4. Keep kids physically fit and teach important lessons about teamwork.
  5. Scholastic benefits of the Pop Warner program.
  6. Community involvement and good will.

The brochure can be a letter-sized sheet folded in thirds to yield six panels, or it may be printed flat and folded as if it were a regular letter. It should fit a #10 business envelope and weigh less than an ounce, including the envelope. If creating a three sided brochure, leave the center panel of one side blank so you can address it and mail without an envelope.

Write the brochure so the information will be valid several years from now, not just this season, and do not date it. Order a large, economical print run. By doing this you can use the brochure for years to come. If possible, include photos in the brochure. Show that the program is for both boys and girls. A photo of a Scholar-Athlete will go a long way to convey the concept that Pop Warner is much more than kids playing football on Saturday mornings.

You may have access to desktop publishing and save the cost of a professional typesetter. Colored ink makes a brochure stand out and adds only a small amount to the cost. Your brochure should not be overly expensive. A flashy and obviously expensive brochure may lead the reader to think that you spend the organization's money on printing rather than on programs, or that your organization is so wealthy that you do not need financial assistance.

Create an individual logo for your organization if you do not already have one. The logo should also be used on all news releases and correspondence. The National Office can provide assistance on the development of print materials and customized logos for your League or Association.

## **NEWSPAPERS**

You have a better chance of getting your news releases into community newspapers than into large metropolitan dailies. Remember that community newspapers are only interested in events in their coverage areas. This also applies to the suburban editions of the metropolitan dailies.

There are two basic categories of publicity for newspapers; news and features. News is determined by what is happening (I.e. -- player/cheerleader registration, game scores, meeting dates, awards banquets, fundraising campaigns, names of new coaches or volunteers, or an announcement of a speaker at your opening game or banquet). The same release should be sent to all of the newspapers in your area.

Features are stories that are not time-sensitive. Examples: a story on father and son volunteers, a former Pop Warner player now serving as a volunteer coach, former Pop Warner players or cheerleaders who have gone on to successful careers in sports or other fields. A feature story should be given to only one newspaper. Before writing it, call the editor to see if he is interested. If not, try another paper in your area. The editor may ask you to send him the facts and he will arrange to have the story written.

## **WRITING A NEWS RELEASE**

Send a news release on your letterhead making sure all contact information for follow-up questions is listed on the first page. You do not need your name and address on the following pages if there are more than one. Keep the release as short and specific as possible. One page is usually more than enough. Releases should be typed and double spaced.

Sports editors receive a large number of news releases each day. Whether your release is used depends on its news value, and how it is written. Many community newspapers have a limited staff, so if your release can be used as written, it has a better chance of getting in the paper than if it has to be completely rewritten. If you can e-mail the release directly to the sports editor or your key contact at that particular media outlet, it may assist you in getting the information published. E-mails can be cut-and-pasted into the copy of the newspaper without having to be retyped; this is always an advantage as many editors/writers do not have time to spend retyping documents.

The first paragraph of your release should answer five questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why. If editors do not intend to use your entire release, they will probably eliminate paragraphs from the end. So your release should be written with the most important facts coming first. Paragraphs should not be longer than 2 or 3 sentences. Double-check all spelling, particularly of names. Do not editorialize. Report only the facts. Do not make assumptions or give opinions.

The following page is a sample news release using a typical one-page format for releases. Here is a brief explanation of the elements within a typical release:

- **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** -- or the date to be used.
- **CONTACT** -- This should be the name of your PR person who can answer questions about the news release. You may want to include both office and cell phone numbers, along with your email address.
- **HEADLINE** -- This should be short. Its purpose is to tell the editor the subject of your release. The actual headline will be written by someone at the newspaper. Optional: You may also use a sub-headline containing other pertinent information.
- **OPENING:** The opening paragraph is key, for you want to portray as much factual information as possible. You want to include

as much of “WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and WHY” in the opening sentence of your release, without making it a run-on sentence.

- **BODY OF NEWS RELEASE** -- Start with the most important information. Then put in a paragraph about your organization. Finish with further information that you would like to be in the paper, but is not crucial.
- **CLOSING** -- Print “# # #” at the end of your release, so the editor knows it is the end. Note: If your release runs more than one page write “more” at the end of the first page. Start the second page with something to identify the release. Example: “Bux-Mont Pop Warner Sign-ups, page 2.”
- **DATE** -- Always include the date the release is sent. A release may be in the editor’s file for several weeks. He may want to check with you to see if the information in it is still valid.

## Sample Press Release

### Pop Warner and Sideline Gear Announce Partnership

**LANGHORNE, PA & WOODSTOCK, GA** - Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc., the nation's oldest and most prominent youth football, cheer and dance organization, and **Sideline Gear**, a portable stadium chair manufacturer, have announced a three-year partnership, which will run through 2022.

Under the new partnership, Sideline Gear becomes "The Official Stadium Chair Provider of Pop Warner," an exclusive category. The agreement is part of Pop Warner's ongoing initiative to partner with companies that ensure a positive experience for all involved in the Pop Warner community, including spectators.

Sideline Gear provides ultra-padded stadium chairs so spectators can comfortably watch games from the sidelines. The chairs have a built-in carrying handle and sturdy grip, and weigh just 7.6 pounds, making it the lightest of its kind while supporting up to 500 pounds. Rubber strips on the bottom prevent the seat from sliding, and a built-in bleacher hook provides added stability when sitting on wooden or metal bleachers and easily pivots out of the way to sit on the ground.

"We're excited about this partnership with Sideline Gear," said Sam Mutz, Pop Warner Football commissioner. "It's important to us that friends and families come out and support our young athletes and a partner like Sideline Gear helps ensure they enjoy their experience on the sidelines with comfortable seating."

"Pop Warner has been the preeminent youth football, cheer and dance organization in the United States for decades," said T.J. DoVale, President of Sideline Gear. "Sideline Gear is more than thrilled to say that we are affiliated with such a fantastic program. Our mission and core values could not be more aligned with those of Pop Warner, resulting in the perfect partnership."



#### About Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc.

Founded in 1929 and headquartered in Langhorne, PA, Pop Warner Little Scholars is the nation's oldest youth football, cheerleading and dance organization and the only youth sports organization that emphasizes academics as a prerequisite for participation. Pop Warner participants enjoy the opportunity to learn and compete in their sports in an atmosphere that emphasizes fun, academics and character. For more information on Pop Warner and its programs, visit [popwarner.com](http://popwarner.com) or follow Pop Warner on Twitter [@Pop\\_Warner](https://twitter.com/Pop_Warner), Facebook [@PopWarnerLittleScholars](https://www.facebook.com/PopWarnerLittleScholars), Instagram [@popwarnerlittlescholars](https://www.instagram.com/popwarnerlittlescholars) and Snapchat [@popwarner1929](https://www.snapchat.com/add/popwarner1929).



#### About Sideline Gear

We are Neil and T.J., the founders of Sideline Gear. We have been best buds for over 30 years and share our relentless entrepreneurial spirit, love for sports, and the desire to give back to our community. Over the years, we have both spent countless hours with our butts on a bleacher. We've purchased foam cushions, metal chairs, fabric chairs – basically anything that would make the experience less miserable. Finally, we decided to solve our own problem. We wanted to design a chair that was not only comfortable, but also lightweight, sturdy, attractive, and affordable. Next, we wanted to figure out a way to give back to the sports that have given so much to us. So, we decided to give 20% of the proceeds from the sales of our chairs back to the sports programs that help us get them into the hands of discerning fans. Visit [www.sidelinegear.com](http://www.sidelinegear.com) for more information.

## PHOTOS

Newspapers like photographs. You can send them alone or with a news release. A photo must have a caption, typed and double-spaced, which tell your story. The caption should contain complete information, even though some of the information is in the accompanying news release, because the editor may use only the photo. The caption must identify all people in the picture, what they are doing, the event, and any other pertinent information. When sending a media outlet a photo make sure you keep a copy of the image as you are not likely to get it back.

### Sample caption:

*John Jones, 12, a member of the North Texas Varsity, holds a certificate designating him as a member of this year's Pop Warner Scholar All-American Team. With him are (from left) his parents, Mary and Sam Jones; Dick Smith, North Texas Varsity Coach, and Alex Warren, North Texas Pop Warner League president. John was one of 250 Pop Warner players and cheerleaders throughout the country to be named to the All-American Scholar First Team by Pop Warner National Headquarters. The selection was based on academic excellence.*

### Photo Credits:

If you are sending a photo to a newspaper or other print media company, they will usually ask for a photo credit for your photograph that you are providing. Keep it simple, for example:

*"Photo courtesy of Pop Warner" or "Orange Empire Conference Pop Warner (2019)"*

### **OTHER PRINT MEDIA**

- **Magazines:** Check in your area to see if there are any local magazines. If so, contact the editor.
- **Company Publications:** Some of your volunteers may work for companies which have publications for employees, and they may be able to get something published.
- **Billboards:** Check your billboard companies. Some of them may be willing to give you free space on some of their boards. However, you would have to pay for the production costs. A good time for a billboard message would be a month before your sign-ups. Use a simple message in large letters with a phone number prominently displayed. If the billboard company will not give you space, perhaps you know someone who will donate the cost of renting the space. A billboard, in the right location, is a great way to focus attention on your organization.

### **OTHER PUBLICITY TIPS**

Here are a few other ways to get publicity:

- **Bumper Stickers or window decals.** These can be given to every family in your program. They are expensive, but perhaps you can find someone to donate the cost of the printing, or you can sell them at nominal cost.
- **Posters.** Inexpensive to print, they can be displayed in windows or on counters of local businesses. From year to year the National Office produces recruiting posters for use by member organizations. *Check with the National Office to inquire about recruiting posters.*
- **Paper Flyers.** You can create these yourself on a computer.. Flyers can be emailed through local schools (with permission), post them on bulletin boards of churches, schools, supermarkets, etc.

Always make sure that any uses of the Pop Warner name or logos in promotional activities are approved by the National Office in advance.

### **THE LEAGUE ROLE**

Associations generally are more heavily involved in publicity/public relations than Leagues. Weekly game scores and standings are obvious League matters, as are post-season, League-sponsored bowls (local championships or outside competitions). But the League may be called upon to resolve touchy matters.

Suppose one association develops a superior publicity/public relations effort which others cannot match. Over a period of time, all media attention seems to go to one group. In the community, the public perceives the group to be the sum total of Pop Warner

Football. The association becomes better known than the League. Over time, donations, volunteers and even kids try to go to that one club, and that is when trouble begins.

While it was not the club's intent to dominate the local scene, that can result because others were less successful. At this juncture, the League must step in to realign things. Appropriate steps should be taken before crisis level is reached. Preventive steps include assigning media by territory. Just as a team does not recruit outside of its area, media outlets can be allocated to share resources and not confuse the public. As long as it is done up front, it is not discriminatory. If the League rules after the fact and the dominant association is uncooperative, serious problems can arise.

Can a League shut off the free flow of information to the media? It can if the association is cooperating by channeling sign-ups, volunteers and contributions to other clubs in relation to their boundaries. Do Leagues have the right to take action if the program is being damaged? They do, but the solution is not to harm the successful association, but to educate others, possibly by having the League start a media campaign on behalf of all members. A wise administration enlists the aid of the association whose volunteers know how to publicize successfully.

## **HANDLING CONTROVERSIES**

Never use the media to air local controversies. If controversies develop within an association, the proper spokesperson is an executive officer of that association. When a controversy involves two associations, the proper spokesperson is the League president or commissioner (depending upon your by-laws). If the controversy involves the League and a member association, a short factual statement, presenting both sides, should be delivered once, by the League.

Controversy attracts a different breed of reporter. TV news thrives on what's wrong rather than what's right, and street reporters will thrust a microphone in any direction to stir up controversy. Sound bites can slant a story tremendously. A minor matter may appear as a major one, with no one the winner except the station, which keeps its ratings up. The media has a vested interest in controversy; you and your association do not. When a story dies out, the media will go on to something else, leaving you to pick up the pieces.

A team or association that uses the media to air controversial matters is subject to disciplinary action by the League. However, a parent or parent group acting independently presents a different set of circumstances. An association must try to defuse parents, and to allow due process to take its course within the League structure. Beyond this process, associations cannot control statements by parents.

If a juvenile is caught saying something harmful, remember that the standard of conduct expected of an adult cannot be applied. Although participants are subject to discipline (see Chapter 12), a juvenile used by the media must not be punished. However, juveniles used by official team personnel (dressed and parading before cameras, perhaps cutting school), are subject to discipline.

A year or more of successful publicity/public relations can go down the drain in a single edition of a newspaper or one TV news brief. Do not expect the media to ignore real news when it involves a youth program. The media may stay with such a story longer. Society tends to regard youth sports and its corps of volunteers as pure. When a problem occurs in youth activities, it often times creates a strong knee-jerk reaction by the media.

We hope the media will take the time to do justice wherever the facts lead. As a national association we have all agreed to handle controversy by established policies. This does not include trying a case in print or over the air. "No comment" is an easily remembered and valuable phrase.

## **STATEMENT RE: SAFETY OF POP WARNER & DUTY TO WARN**

You may draft your own statement or copy the one below. Feel free to add local facts and figures to the following. **BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE NEXT-TO-LAST BULLET POINT**, the key warning statement. Offer a telephone number for questions on your recent safety record.

Here are some facts about Pop Warner Football which are important to you:

- Well over 10 million youngsters have played Pop Warner Football since 1929. Our program (name your program) joined in (year).
- Safety is our primary concern. Pop Warner Football is safer than many youth activities, such as swimming, bicycling, and skateboarding, according to the Consumer Products Safety Commission.

For more safety information regarding Pop Warner Little Scholars, visit the national website:

- ▶ Football: <https://www.popwarner.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1476161>
- ▶ Cheer & Dance: <https://www.popwarner.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1476206>

## FUNDRAISING

### Introduction and National Fundraising Programs

Fundraising is one of the most challenging yet critical aspects of youth sports, and with proper planning, it can enable your organization to take advantage of many great opportunities. In most cases, fundraising is accomplished at the association level as the association has closer ties with the participants and parents. Leagues are encouraged to become involved in the process as well, but most often the association administers most of the fundraising activities. Fundraising requires innovative thinking since other organizations also compete for limited charity dollars. Given the Enormous costs of travel, equipment and facilities', it is especially important that fundraising efforts are well organized and planned well in advance.

### MANDATING FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

**The only fundraising requirement** a local organization can impose upon its participants is that each child partake in fundraising for the organization. Organizations can **not** mandate that each child must raise a certain number of dollars. This protects families from hidden sign-up costs, a practice that generates ill-will for Pop Warner. However, families should be given an option to make a reasonable cash donation (based on the average contribution of the child to the organization if he/she had participated in the fundraising) in lieu of fundraising, especially if other commitments prevent the participant and/or family members from participating in the fundraising activities. Policies should be communicated clearly in advance.

### Tips for Successful Fundraising

Selling products as a fundraiser is a valuable source of revenue. Product sales can be very profitable if the necessary ingredients are present:

- Adequate number of homes and businesses.
- Desired product.
- Product priced for high-perceived value.
- Adequate number of participants and volunteers to organize, transport, and sell the product
- Advance planning to allow sufficient time for a successful campaign.
- Ability to re-order products as needed.

Consider selling products your own families make, such as baked goods. Try to obtain permission to sell in a mall or shopping center or to collect money for your organization at that locale. Service-oriented fundraisers such as car washes and fundraising events like golf tournaments can be extremely lucrative fundraisers and a lot of fun.

### Avoiding Fundraising Pitfalls

Some issues to guard against are: food, candy or confection delivered stale, and anything, which is not climate-proof at time of delivery. Chocolates delivered in summer months must arrive in refrigerated packing and require refrigeration while awaiting sale. Order sensible quantities and refill only as necessary.

Many outside companies use charts to encourage large orders. Typically, a chart reads: "If you need \$1000, order X-amount of cases; if you need \$2500, order Y-amount of cases; and if you need \$5000, order Z-amount of cases". Be realistic about quantities ordered. Reputable companies may take back unsold merchandise, but storing, mailing and otherwise handling it may prove cumbersome. Avoid suppliers who do not give a written "take back" provision in the literature. Remember, opened cartons usually cannot be returned. Freight charges eat up profits. Determine who pays freight both inbound and outbound (on returns) before committing. Ask questions. The written clauses are binding, no matter what the sales representative says. Attempt to develop a good working relationship with the supplier. Order realistic quantities and pay invoices in a timely manner, to maintain the relationship.

Sales require volunteer participation in large numbers. Sales between November and the beginning of the following August are difficult without year-round group activities. Often the majority of sales are to parents, immediate neighbors and relatives, so quantities ordered should be carefully considered. Research the products available, be realistic about the size of the territory to be covered, and count carefully the number of participants you will have.

## SPONSORSHIPS

### Introduction

Sponsorship is an excellent method of securing partial or total funding for your organization. Sponsorship typically involves an entity providing cash, goods or services in exchange for exclusivity, an affiliation with your organization, some publicity or other consideration. For example, many businesses may donate significant funds in exchange for goodwill, such as placing that business' name on signs or jerseys. Teams may be named for sponsors, and the sponsor's name may appear on the back of jerseys. PWLS programs should not enter into a sponsorship with any entity associated with gambling, adult materials, alcohol, tobacco, firearms or any products directed at adults 21 yrs. or older.

There are two types of sponsorships, cash and value-in-kind, and many sponsorships contain elements of both. While cash sponsorships involve an entity paying a fee to your organization, value-in-kind sponsorships are budget relieving donations that relieve the organization of having to purchase something they need. Value-in-kind sponsorships can be service-related or product-related. Examples of value-in-kind sponsorships include a local printing shop offering free printing in exchange for signage at your games or a food supplier providing exclusive items for the snack shop. Many businesses would rather trade than give cash, so keep the door open to the thought of in-kind sponsorships.

### National Sponsorship Program

On a national level, Pop Warner has various national sponsors and partners which are the preferred providers for certain goods/services. Thus, local organizations may not enter into agreements with other providers of these goods/services that would interfere with the national relationships. National Sponsors are committed to offering you quality products/services at affordable prices and may be able to assist you in running your programs, fundraising, and providing fun products and contests for the participants. Please refer to [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com) or contact the National Office for information on current National Sponsors. The National Office is also available to assist you in drafting and submitting sponsorship proposals.

### Event Sponsorships

Events such as jamborees, competitions, scholastic banquets, bowl games, golf tournaments, barbecues, picnics, etc. are a fun and valuable source of revenue and help foster community support for your organization. Ticket sales, merchandise sales, 50/50's, raffles and silent auctions held at these events are relatively easy to organize and quite profitable.

Event sponsorship packages may include a tiered structure with different levels like "Gold, Silver, and Bronze". Typically, a basic bronze level is offered at the lowest price (i.e. \$500 to put your sign up at the event), an upgraded silver level is offered for additional money (i.e. \$1000 for signage, insertion on the event flyers, advertisements and giveaways) and a Gold Level would be the most expensive (\$1500 to include all previous level offerings and a hospitality area, and Title Sponsorship Branding: the Marriott-Santa Clara Pop Warner Golf Tournament).

**Note:** One caution about using the word "advertisement". The IRS has made a case to designate advertising revenue from sponsorships as unrelated business income. This means that you may be required to pay taxes on advertising revenues even though your association falls under the National Pop Warner 501(c) (3) umbrella for tax exemption. Be wary of the word "advertising" and use words such as "acknowledgement" or "promotional page" when dealing with this issue.

## EXAMPLE OF A LOCAL SPONSORSHIP

### League Donor and Sponsorship Levels

Rocky Mountain Pop Warner Football and Cheerleading offers a wide variety of donor and sponsorship levels for individuals and businesses.

#### Sponsorship Levels

##### I. Game Day Events

##### Honor Roll Sponsorship Package: \$500

- Web banner ad/link on website home page
- Listed as spreadsheet on website
  - Logo in Program Book
  - Logo on Banner at field

##### First Down Sponsorship Package: \$1000

- 3' X 2' yard sign at selected game every week

- 10 second corporate ad during every web broadcast and Digital copy of team games
- Web banner ad/link on home page
- Team sponsor team picture plaque
- Listed as Team Sponsor on web site
- Public service announcement at games

#### **Field Goal Sponsorship Package: \$2,500 to sponsor a team**

- Corporate logo on front of every players jersey for local team
- 3' X 2' yard sign at every game
- Corporate banner displayed in team picture
- 20 second corporate ad during every web broadcast and Digital copy of division games
- Web banner ad/link on home page
- Team sponsor team picture plaque
- Listed as Team Sponsor on web site
- Public service announcement at games

#### **Touchdown Sponsorship Package: \$10,000 to sponsor an entire division**

- Corporate logo on front of every player's jersey in the division
- 3' X 2' yard sign at every game
- 30 second corporate ad during every web broadcast and Digital copy of division games
- Web banner ad/link on home page
- Division sponsor team picture plaques (each team in division)
- Listed as League Sponsor on web site
- Public service announcement at games

#### **Champion Sponsorship Package: \$25,000**

- Company has naming rights to league championships and qualifiers
- 30 second corporate video at start of every web broadcast and Digital copy
- 6' X 3' Banner at every game, qualifiers and championships
- Web banner ad on League home page
- League sponsor picture plaque
- Listed as League Sponsor on web site with hyperlink to your company's website
- Public service announcement at games

## **II. Event Sponsorship Examples**

### **\$250 Recognized as Contributing Event Sponsor**

- Announcement during event and in promotions

### **\$500 Recognized as First and 10 Event Sponsor**

- Announcement during event and in promotions
- Banner displayed at event (Must be provided by sponsor and approved by RMPW)

### **\$750 Recognized as End Zone Sponsor**

- Announcement during event and in promotions
- Banner displayed at event (Must be provided by sponsor and approved by RMPW)
- CAPWFL may determine additional benefits

### **\$1000 Recognized as Event Sponsor**

- Company receives Exclusive Event Billing rights. Your company name will be added to the name of the event.
- Announcement during event and in promotions
- Banner displayed at event (Must be provided by sponsor and approved by RMPW)

- RMPW may determine additional benefits

## **GRANTS**

### **Sources of Grants**

Two sources of grants are available: public and private. Public grants may be available from local, state or federal agencies. Generally, seed grants are available only to economically depressed communities and only for particular types of programs. These grants usually involve specific reporting requirements and a high degree of regulation/auditing. Private grants are obtained from foundations or corporations. Foundations are plentiful and many fund youth activities. Try to find a foundation which makes grants in your area by researching on-line.

Most grants are secured by submitting a written proposal to the granting organization after meeting the eligibility requirements of the granting agency or foundation. Furthermore, most grants typically impose strict timelines and feedback requirements. Approval may take time and as most granting institutions have narrow specifications, you should not become discouraged after receiving numerous rejections. Some grants are long-term and are renewable from year to year. Some are one time contributions.

Foundations do not normally give to unincorporated groups without a federal tax exemption. Public grants may go to a community “umbrella” agency with tax exempt status. That agency accepts individual grant proposals for those funds. United Way is an example of an umbrella organization.

Some large businesses also make grants. Emphasize local offices of national corporations. Research the company, find out if any children of employees of that company are Pop Warner participants, and apply to the company Public Affairs Officer/Manager.

### ***Travel Grants for National Youth Football/Spirit Championship Games Program***

Pop Warner provides Travel Grants to the maximum extent possible each year.

### **Key Elements for Successful Grant Writing**

#### **501(c) (3) Classification**

Grant writing takes a significant time commitment and has a low rate of successful return. However, the resources generated from corporate or foundation grants can make a big impact on local associations. One of the major benefits of being a Pop Warner member association is the ability to utilize the 501(c)3 classification held by the National Office. This IRS classification is usually required by grant making entities in order for you to receive funds. The National Office will gladly supply any information you may need in submitting a local grant for your association’s benefit.

#### **Research**

General grant search engines can be found through The Foundation Center ([www.fndcenter.org](http://www.fndcenter.org)) and also through The Grant Center ([www.grantcenter.com](http://www.grantcenter.com)). Most of the research or database programs available in the marketplace are quite expensive. Also, your public library reference desk will usually have the most current grant guides available.

#### **Community Foundations**

Your best chance to obtain grant funding may be through your local community foundation. Many cities have a community foundation that gives funding to non-profits within that geographic area. Most of these types of foundations can be found on town/city websites. Usually community foundation grants are “challenge” grants where your organization will be required to raise matching funds in order to receive the grant monies.

#### **Corporate Headquarters Communities**

Communities that have a large national or international company headquarters have an opportunity with those companies in securing funding. Most large companies make gifts to those communities where they have a large employee base and those employees are involved in that program. If you can find a parent or coach within that large company, that person may be able to help carry the ball for you internally when the company considers your application for funds.

## Scholarships

Writing grants and soliciting foundations for scholarships are very similar. The scholarship request process is usually much more targeted than grant programs and will often times have more strings tied to the recipient. The same rules that apply to grant writing apply to scholarship applications to foundations. Keep in mind that the focus of scholarships are almost always very narrow so doing your homework may save you a lot of valuable time.

## ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF FUNDS

### Sale of Services

Instead of products, consider marketing the labor of your players and volunteers in car washes, trash removal, lawn cleanup and other projects for which households or businesses are willing to pay. Since labor is involved, projects must be free of hazards and easily performed. There is no need to consider taxes, as compensation for the work is received directly by the team or association. Projects such as community breakfasts at the fire hall, chicken or barbeque bakes, etc., combine services and product sales.

### Direct Contributions

The general public may be solicited for outright contributions. Sometimes a token item is given in return, such as a window decal or a keychain or other trinket. Often times all that is given is a letter of thanks.

Printed matter may also be distributed throughout the neighborhood or town. The notice should briefly outline the upcoming campaign including dates, times, and authorized volunteers. This campaign can greatly benefit public relations, recruiting, and attendance.

### Sign-up Fees

#### ▪ Definition

Sign-up fees are the most common revenue streams utilized by youth sports organizations. Sometimes called an equipment rental fee, sign-up charges should compensate the association over time for upfront costs the organization faces such as field rentals, insurance costs, equipment fees, travel expenses, etc. For example, sign up fees can cover the replacement cost of equipment so that if a team spends \$175 to put a player on the field, and the equipment lasts four years, \$175 over four years yields an annual cost of \$43.75 and represent part of the sign-up fee. Community knowledge is essential in determining an appropriate fee and it is helpful to provide families with multiple participants with discounts and waive the fee or provide discounts for participants from lower income families. Fee increases should be implemented on an as-needed basis as consistent increases may drive certain families away.

#### ▪ Refunds of Fees

Refund policies should be clearly communicated to the parents/guardians when they sign up for Pop Warner. ***Participants who pay and are unable to participate at all during the season should have their fees refunded in full prior to the beginning of the season, or as soon as reasonably possible after the start of the season, but no later than the end of the season.*** Partial refunds should be given whenever possible in order to maintain the integrity of the organization and any prevent ill-will and bad publicity. Partial refunds should be administered within the same time frames and given for reasons such as illness, lack of funds, relocation, failure to make weight, etc. Organizations may allow for a deduction from the refund if it can substantiate that the deduction money was necessary to spend in conjunction with the sign-up and is not recoverable.

#### ▪ Other Elements of the Sign-up Fee

- Organizations should provide parents paying fees with a written explanation of expected benefits covered by the fee. Organizations cannot expect and should not mandate that any fees arising later on in the season be paid if the policy was not clearly communicated.
- The fee may vary within the same organization in different divisions of play or among teams in the same division of play belonging to different associations of the same League.
- No player on a waiting list should be charged a fee until assigned to a team.

## Game/Competition Opportunities

- Admission Fees: Teams may request contributions at their games or competitions, but admission charges require bookkeeping and, usually, tax returns.
- Snack Shacks: Refreshment stands can be another solid revenue source. Consider the potential number of spectators and the number of adult volunteers available. Scale the operation accordingly to maximize profits without overspending. Never put children behind a refreshment counter where electrical, hot water and other hazards are present! Responsible people must handle money, making quick and accurate change. If you rent refreshment rights, monitor the action to estimate gross revenues.

## **Program & Ad Books**

Many organizations publish an annual book. These books should serve as a memento of the season for kids, parents and volunteers. To facilitate ad sales, the book should have story and picture appeal. Equal amounts of space should go into editorial matter and ads.

Book profits depend on:

- Expertise your volunteers provide in printing, advertising/PR, photography, etc.
- The quantity, sizes and prices of ads sold.
- How much of the book is done by the organization and how much is farmed out to professionals.

Planning for annual books usually starts in winter with delivery slated for the following fall. Advertisers are contacted to gauge interest. Be sure to adjust the planned size of your book to the amount of interest by potential advertisers. It may be a necessary business decision to eliminate the planned book if advertising sales are not as brisk as anticipated.

Business ads yield a wider range of prospects than canvassing contributions. Businesses will appreciate a thank you letter and some businesses may advertise purely for public relations' value and to show their support of the community.

Pricing of ads is based on variables, including the profit you seek. There is no set scheme except that smaller ads should sell for more per square inch than larger ones. This is a standard publishing practice. Don't overlook 1/8 and 1/16 pages. Business card ads add up in a hurry, as do "booster" lines from parents and friends. Line up full-page and half-page ads first, then go after progressively smaller space. The inside front cover, inside back cover, and back cover areas usually sell for a premium.

Use signed contracts when selling ad space. Do not take verbal contracts for space or messages. Forms need space for the advertiser to approve his message with a signature. Request payment with the ad application.

The easy, but more costly, way to produce the program is to engage the services of a professional. These services are available in part or as a full package: design, story, photo, ad sales and production. Get a written contract and oversee performance. Make sure all job tasks for the production company are specifically defined and clearly outlined and agreed upon in writing prior to any work being done on the program.

Do not expect a professional to deliver an exceptional editorial copy. Professional writers are not necessarily familiar with football or cheer & dance. They also may not be familiar with your program in particular and may put emphasis in the wrong places. Consider drafting the editorial copy yourself and let the professional writers polish it.

If the professional sell ads, insist on knowing prices charged so the accounting is totally accurate. Also know up front what revenue sharing arrangement has been agreed upon between your association and the professional. Professionals are notorious for soliciting ads outside of team territory. Get these items agreed upon in writing prior to any solicitations. Have an agreement signed by both parties.

## **Banquets**

The traditional end-of-season banquet is often regarded as a necessary evil, requiring a lot of preparation with little or no profit. Proper planning and preparation can help provide a net gain.

Giving participation awards and notifying parents of their children's honors will increase attendance markedly. Holding the banquet in a central location at the right time can greatly increase attendance and profit potential.

Combine the banquet function with an Annual Report. Honor you Scholar-Athletes, outstanding volunteers, etc. Banquets are promotional vehicles with profit potential. Make them a time of recognition for all kids and teams, a time of learning for parents, and a time of fun for everyone. Limit trophies by giving participation awards, such as the Pop Warner emblem. Think of a banquet as another time for a news release to create favorable public relations.

Keep the banquet fun and as brief as possible for maximum enjoyment by all attendees.

**WHAT PRODUCTS/SERVICES DO YOU LIKE?**

If you would like to relay feedback on any fundraisers, sponsors, grants or persons whom you have worked with to support your organization, whether positive or negative, or would like to suggest a product or service, please contact the National Office.

**EQUIPMENT**

ALL Pop Warner participants, football, cheer & dance, and flag, must have the Official Authorized Pop Warner patch displayed on every uniform for games and competitions in order to participate. Patches may only be placed on designated areas on the uniforms as determined by the National Office. Please refer to the Patch Placement Form on [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com) in the forms section for specific instructions on where the patch needs to be placed. Sublimation of the Pop Warner Logo/Patch on uniforms is not approved.

**A. HARD GOODS**

**1) FOOTBALLS**

*Wilson* is the Official Football of Pop Warner and **only Wilson Pop Warner footballs** will be used during Regional & National Championships. Notwithstanding any other provisions in league bylaws, the Wilson/Pop Warner design ball is deemed approved for all Pop Warner play. All other balls used shall be of a good grade of leather, rubber or composite material.

**2) HELMETS**

The helmet is the single most important piece of equipment for football players. However, please be aware that some manufacturers produce toy helmets that are not for use in competitive football. These helmets are usually stamped, “Not intended for competitive play.” It is imperative that football helmets being used meet the standards below and that these toy helmets are not unknowingly worn or used by participants.

**NOCSAE HELMET STANDARDS**

Helmet fit and NOCSAE certification are probably the two most important criteria for helmet safety. NOCSAE (pronounced “nock-see”) is the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment. Both National Federation and NCAA rules require a current NOCSAE stamp on any helmet used in a game. **Only NOCSAE certified helmets may be worn during games and at any practice in which pads and helmets are required.**

In the last several years, helmet manufacturers have established stringent new regulations on the length of warranty on their products and have identified “certified” helmet reconditioners. It is essential to be aware of the legal policies of the producer of the helmets, especially since helmets must periodically be recertified by the established reconditioner for that particular brand. Check with your dealer/reconditioner about the requirements to continue warranty coverage and about the proper intervals between re-certification.

**HELMET RECONDITIONING**

Reconditioning is the process of cleaning and repairing helmets which have been used. The reconditioner works on and repairs the shell, padding, chin straps and mask. A regular reconditioning program prolongs the life of a helmet while maintaining its safety.

NOCSAE (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment Reconditioning) adopted & implemented the following change effective January 1, 2017;

**Initial Certification Life** (new NOCSAE standard ND001 effective Jan 2017)

Helmets intended to be recertified shall have a recertification interval provided by the manufacturer. Certification life is limited to this time period. Helmets not recertified during the stated interval shall no longer be certified. Recertification interval required for warranty validation shall satisfy this requirement.

**Translation - if a helmet is not recertified at least every other year, it will no longer be NOCSAE certified (mfg. initial season 2017). Helmets prior to 2017 are governed under previous standard.**

NAERA (National Athletic Equipment Reconditioners Association) recommends every football helmet should be reconditioned annually. Only companies licensed by NOCSAE to recertify football, lacrosse and baseball/softball helmets can perform the recertification. For a list of NAERA members that are licensed by NOCSAE please visit the NAERA web site [www.NAERA.net](http://www.NAERA.net).

Manufacturers and reconditioners apply warnings to helmets. An example of such a warning is:

“Do not use this helmet to butt, ram, or spear an opposing player. This is in violation of the football rules and such use can result in severe head or neck injury, paralysis or death to you and possible injury to your opponent. No helmet can prevent all head or neck injuries a player might receive while participating in football.”

Keep this caution in mind in conjunction with others in the “Duty to Warn” section of this manual. Pop Warner Requires that All Helmets used in Competitive Play Meet the Current NOCSAE Standards for New Helmets and Reconditioned Helmets and have the above mentioned Warning Label on every helmet.

## **HELMET FIT**

Due to different designs and materials, each manufacturer has its own instructions for proper fitting of helmets. Your dealer and/or reconditioner should provide this vital information.

## **VISUAL HELMET INSPECTION AND CARE**

- Inspect helmet for proper fit according to individual manufacturer’s guidelines.
- Examine shells for cracks or “crazing”, both inside and out, especially around ear holes. Permanently discard any cracked shell.
- Examine and discard any face guards which have bare metal visible, broken welds, and/or distortion.
- Examine and repair/replace any “soft” helmet items, e.g., jaw pads (check for proper fit), sweatbands, snubbers, bumpers, and/or chin straps which are worn and/or damaged.
- Examine padding for proper resiliency and condition. Also check for any missing or altered pads.
- Examine air channels or foam channels, if any, for cracks and/or leaks. Inspect air helmets for proper inflation.
- Check adjustment of chin strap for each player.
- Cleaning and maintenance must follow individual manufacturer’s established policies.
- Instruct each player on daily self-inspection of helmet.

## **PADDED HELMET INSPECTION & CARE**

- Check padding for proper placement and sound condition.
- Check for cracks in vinyl coverings of air, foam or liquid pads.
- Check for altered and/or removed padding.
- Check for inflation on air helmets.
- Check Velcro, rivets, screws and snaps for proper fastening and holding.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: TOP QUALITY HELMETS, PROPER FIT, AND PROPER CARE ARE ALL CRUCIAL TO INSURE MAXIMUM SAFETY FOR YOUR PLAYERS. RESEARCH THE HELMET MANUFACTURERS AND THEIR SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE POLICIES. THIS SECTION IS NOT INTENDED TO INCLUDE ALL PERTINENT DATA ON HELMETS NOR DOES IT CONSTITUTE ANY ENDORSEMENT BY POP WARNER LITTLE SCHOLARS, INC., OF ANY TYPE HELMET OR RECONDITIONING PROCEDURE. CHECK WITH YOUR DEALER AND/OR RECONDITIONER FOR COMPLETE SPECIFICATIONS, FITTING PROCEDURES, AND RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE. ULTIMATELY, IT IS PREFERABLE TO BE TOO CAUTIOUS RATHER THAN NOT CAUTIOUS ENOUGH.**

## **3) EQUIPMENT**

Check [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com) for information on national partners who offer discounts for local programs.

## **SHOULDER PADS**

Youth shoulder pads are sized by age, chest sizes & weight ranges. This sizing assumes a youth of average build for the weights, giving an adjustability range. Care must be taken that pads fit without adjustment at the extremes of the range. Keeping enough pads in inventory assures proper fit for all players.

The following steps are a guideline for fitting players in shoulder pads:

- Determine chest size of athlete by measuring chest circumference around nipple line.
- Check to see that [A] clavicle (collarbone) is sufficiently covered by padding and not exposed, and [B] neck opening is adequate.

- Be sure that shoulder joint is covered by top portion of arch area and deltoid padding which must extend to outside edge of shoulder.  
Check to see that anterior deltoid (front of shoulder) is adequately covered by extension of arch padding.
- Secure elastic underarm strap tightly to achieve proper fit and to stabilize pad so it cannot shift. Straps should be snug enough to allow only a two finger width when inserted under straps.
- Be sure that scapula (shoulder blade) is adequately covered by arch and lateral extension of padding. Arch padding should extend below base of scapula.
- See that there is enough clearance on either side of neck roll when hands are raised in a normal movement.
- Pad should be centered on player, and front laces secured firmly. Check to see that there is not excessive room at juncture of sternum and clavicle.

## FINAL CHECK

Do a final inspection with helmet and jersey on player. Remember that a properly fit and worn jersey also will help hold down pad in proper position. These fitting instructions should be used as a standard guide only. Players with different body build and muscle structure may require special attention.

## GENERAL FITTING GUIDELINES

Certain body proportion criteria are useful in fitting and selecting proper sizes.

[A] Chest size: girth of chest fits normal standard for shoulder width. Chest measurement is used as a guide or starting point because chest size is known more often than shoulder width.

[B] Shoulder measurement: measure from left shoulder tip to right shoulder tip.

[C] Weight range: used as a “starting point” in sizing, taking into consideration narrow or broad shoulder.

## MAINTENANCE

[A] Initially fit shoulder pad with helmet and jersey on.

[B] Periodically check accessory attachments, condition of underarm straps, laces and arch padding.

Inspection of shoulder pads is almost identical to inspection of helmets. They also require periodic cleaning and repair. The basic construction of a youth shoulder pad is standard among all manufacturers.

## OTHER PADS

Rib, knee, thigh, hips and spine (sometimes elbow, hand and upper arm) pads constitute the remaining protective equipment. Proper coverage and protection is determined by fit of both pads and pants. Care of pads requires cleaning as recommended by the manufacturer, with periodic inspections of straps (rib pads) and snaps to ensure they are working as intended.

## MOUTHGUARDS

Mouthguards with retaining straps are mandatory under Pop Warner, National Federation and NCAA rules.

## SCALES

The official Pop Warner weigh in scale supplier is Befour, Inc. Befour portable scales combine extreme accuracy and reliability in a rugged and easily portable design. They go wherever accurate weight measurements are needed. Renowned for their reliability and performance, Befour portable scales are extremely popular with team sports, and for those who need a versatile stand-up scale that can be moved for place to place, Befour tilt & roll portable scales are a great choice. All Befour tilt & roll scales conveniently run on batteries or can be plugged into a wall outlet for power. Please visit [www.befour.com](http://www.befour.com) or call 1-800-367-7109 for more information.

## UNIFORMS

Pop Warner has teamed up with a uniform supplier to develop PW Authentic – a line of Football and Cheer/Dance uniforms. These uniforms come with the required PW Patch and meet all uniform guidelines outlined in the PW Rules. PW Authentic is also the only approved dealer permitted to subliminate the PW Patch on uniforms. [www.pwauthentic.com](http://www.pwauthentic.com) or call 1-888-664-0920.

## 4) CHEER AND DANCE PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE AREAS

### PERFORMANCE AND WARM-UP AREA FOR POP WARNER CHEER AND DANCE TEAMS

- All practices should be held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders/dancers, i.e., use of tumbling mats is highly recommended, away from excessive noise and distractions, free from obstructions/poor lighting, etc. Stunts (mounts, pyramids and tumbling) should be modified to be appropriate to the performing surface/area. The cheer/dance surface, location, and weather conditions should be taken into consideration before engaging in physical activity. Twisting (mounts/dismounts and transitions) and Basket Tosses cannot be performed on the field unless a mat is in place. Stunting or tumbling on concrete surfaces or in other unsafe environments is strictly prohibited.
- For Championships: The matted competition area will be approximately 54' x 42' deep (9 Panels). It is highly recommended that an auxiliary gym is in place to serve as the warm-up area just prior to performance. This area is secured from non-participants and spectators, and includes a matted surface for tumbling and/or stunt warm-up. (54' x 42' Matted Surface Recommended)

## B. SOFT GOODS

### 1) FOOTBALL UNIFORMS

The primary purchasing points for jerseys are fit, durability, material, and appearance. The price of a jersey depends primarily upon material and double-sewing in critical areas. Climate can affect your material decision or you may choose to use two sets of jerseys to handle temperature extremes. A solution in "average" weather areas is to use one jersey and give it to the players as a memento of the season. The best all-around material is nylon. Some Fitting considerations are as follows:

**Shoulder:** The jersey must be large enough to fit over the shoulder pads without distorting the material. Also, if not large enough, it can be uncomfortable for the player.

**Armholes:** These must be large enough to allow unrestricted motion.

**Chest/Waist:** The jersey should taper so it snugly fits chest and waist, but not so tightly that the material easily tears or is uncomfortable. A jersey is ordered two sizes larger than actual chest measurement. As with pants, players of Pop Warner age do not always fit the sizing charts, so keep a large enough inventory so that every player looks and feels good.

Please check Pop Warner Rule 14; for current Jersey Guidelines

### 2) CHEER & DANCE PARTICIPANT APPAREL

Participant Apparel - PW Authentic ([www.pwauthentic.com](http://www.pwauthentic.com)) is the Official Uniform Provider of PWLS.

- Uniform - Participants shall wear apparel (uniform, costume, shoes, etc.) that is appropriate for the activity involved. Uniforms should be properly fitted to each participant. Appropriate undergarments should be worn at all times. (i.e., improper/revealing uniform fit/coverage, bikini briefs, lack of under-garments, extreme length of skirt, etc.) Please use discretion in judgment in selection of uniforms.

When standing at attention, cheer and dance apparel must cover the midriff. PWLS will no longer allow midriffs (covered or uncovered) to show. The midriff is considered the middle section of the bodice, front and back. Also, note that nude bodysuits are not acceptable; the intent of the rule must be obvious to everyone. The Uniform items listed below is the "General Uniform Policy for Pop Warner Cheerleaders/Dancers. Any coaches or athletes needing a variance of the General Uniform policies should contact the Region Cheer and Dance Coordinator.

- MALE CHEERLEADER / DANCER\*:  
Top- Sweater, Shell, T-shirt, Polo, Etc.  
Bottom- Short, Pant, Dance Pant\*, Sweat Pant  
Sneakers, Soft-Soled Shoes\*, Socks  
Megaphone
- FEMALE CHEERLEADER / DANCER\*:  
Top- Sweater, Shell, Dance Wear\*, T-shirt, Polo, Etc.  
Bottom- Skirt, Short, Briefs, Dance Pant\*, Sweat Pant  
Tights\*  
Poms  
Sneakers, Soft-Soled Shoes\*, Socks  
Bow/Ribbon

*\* Dance specific*

- c) Teams are reminded that uniform coverage should completely cover the midriff area. While during the athletic competition a team's uniform may rise up but teams should plan and provide uniforms that give complete coverage during the majority of a team's routine regardless of athletic activity. Midriff includes top of bra line to top of the skirt both front and back. No cutouts below top of the bra line, appropriate sizing for all participants.
- d) For Cheer Teams, Bow/Ribbon and Briefs must be uniform to the entire team. All participants wearing the same item/color(s).
- e) For additional Uniform and Equipment Guidelines, reference the Official Pop Warner Rulebook

### **3) OTHER SOFT GOODS**

Depending on weather, teams may need parkas, capes, or jackets for cold weather. Sizes must be slightly larger than usual to accommodate garments and equipment worn underneath.

#### **PERIPHERALS**

Peripherals include footballs, dummies, sleds, and other items, not all of which are needed. Please be advised of the following:

- Quality relates directly to price.
- The best protective gear is a necessity; quality of peripheral gear is slightly less critical.
- Consider, "Is this really necessary?"

#### **BUYING EQUIPMENT**

The goal is to buy equipment wisely while stretching the "equipment dollar" safely. Comparison shopping and quantity discounts can provide cost savings. Quantity purchasing by several teams together may result in compromises on brands/models and/or colors. Pop Warner partners are more than willing to work with you to meet your equipment needs.

#### **PAYING FOR YOUR EQUIPMENT**

All bills are to be paid promptly and in full. Never mislead your dealer concerning ability to pay agreed amounts on agreed dates. If your ability to pay hinges on a future fundraiser tell the dealer in advance and let him make the decision whether or not to grant credit. Failure to honor your obligations could result in the loss of your league charter or association membership and reflects poorly on your organization as well as all Pop Warner teams nationally, as well as the National Program and may result in legal action against all Pop Warner entities as well as against the individuals responsible. Responsible individuals/organizations may be dismissed and/or suspended from the Pop Warner organization. Each organization is responsible for paying its debts.

#### **EQUIPMENT INVENTORYING & STORAGE**

Many programs do not have an accurate idea of the assets they own because they fail to take regular inventory. A few guidelines to tracking inventory are as follows:

The best time to take an initial inventory is prior to the start of a new season, especially for new Pop Warner programs that are buying equipment for the first time. Before the end of season, make a list of players, cheerleaders, coaches and others who may have equipment in their possession. Inventory on hand plus equipment loaned out should equal pre-season inventory plus any in-season purchases. All equipment should be returned to the equipment manager for the organization prior to the season ending.

Once your organization estimates its program needs for the upcoming season, you are ready to shop for fill-ins and new gear. As each new item is received, mark it with indelible ink; re-mark each old item as necessary. Keep a master list in two places, showing all items and their off-season locations. When gear is stored in several locations, it is not feasible to engage in elaborate tracking. Many clubs use home storage, or a home/field combination. To keep track, the club should keep a list of each person's name and address, where the equipment is being stored, and what items are being stored there. A list of equipment at a field site or warehouse is necessary, signed by two people who agree on the items and count.

When gear is re-issued next season, everyone must sign for their equipment on a standard form, with a blank line to fill in the replacement cost of an item. The wording should commit the player/parent/volunteer to its replacement cost if not returned. Insure all gear (Pop Warner offers Equipment Insurance). To apply for insurance, you must list inventory by class. You cannot insure without an inventory nor can you file a claim for something which was not part of a declared inventory! It requires painstaking effort the first time, and attention to detail and paperwork thereafter.

Whether you have one, two, or more teams, an equipment manager is a must. This is a key volunteer role in the organization.

### PROTECTION

The safety aspect of youth football, cheer and dance is a principal concern to all involved.

#### SAFETY COURSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Many courses are available that will assist in educating your members in basic and advanced safety training. The **National Center for Sports Safety (NCSS) is a partner of Pop Warner and offers such a course.** NCSS's PREPARE course educates coaches to handle a wide range of injuries from blisters and sprains to life-threatening head and neck injuries. The course teaches vital sports safety skills that will give you the knowledge and confidence needed to respond to injuries and emergencies appropriately is available online at a reasonable cost for Pop Warner members at the time this manual was published. Please visit [www.SportsSafety.org](http://www.SportsSafety.org) for further details.

#### COACHES' REQUIREMENT

All coaches should be knowledgeable in first aid techniques and emergency procedures. Coaches should develop an emergency plan for dealing with injuries at practice/games. Participants should be made aware of these procedures. Coaches should remain up-to-date on all new techniques, progressions and safety regulations by attending conferences/clinics and rules meetings. The staff includes the head coach, assistant coaches, coach trainees and a specialized, trained person affiliated with the squad in the medical area (i.e., physician, paramedic, specially trained volunteer/athletic trainer).

#### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Every player or spirit participant must pass a physical before being allowed to participate. Physical Examination requirements are stated in Part II, Article 6 of the *Pop Warner Little Scholars Official Rules*.

#### MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS AT THE TEAM LEVEL

Pop Warner rules state: "The home team has the responsibility to provide medical coverage at each game. In the absence of a physician and/or ambulance on the site, the minimal safety requirement will be the presence of one individual associated with the team who is currently EMT-qualified or holds a current Red Cross First Aid/CPR Certification Card, National Center for Sports Safety P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Course Level I Certification, their equivalent, or higher. Work together with your local EMS to establish an emergency plan that fits your specific area and needs for both home and away games. (Article 17)

#### TEAM TRAINING

Flexibility exercises should precede each practice session, scrimmage, or game. Such drills help reduce injuries.

#### TEAM TRAINER

A trainer is a very valuable asset for any team. This person attends clinics on sports medicine, and the team pays tuition, transportation and lodging. Coaches can also benefit from such clinics as the curriculum may include attitude, desire, etc. Athletic potential depends as much on psychology as it does on raw physical ability. In the absence of a physician, a team trainer is a valuable asset for all teams.

There are organizations that provide programs the opportunity to hire Athletic Trainers for events and competitions. Please check [www.go4ellis.com](http://www.go4ellis.com) for available Athletic Trainers in your area.

#### THE MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

The Official Pop Warner Medical Release Forms is necessary for all participants as juveniles cannot be given first-aid without these releases, and may be removed to an emergency facility, but hospital procedures require such a form. Without a release or a parent on hand to give consent, needed treatment can be delayed with dire consequences. Please check [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com) or contact the National Office for a copy of the form. Regional or league organization forms may be used in order to comply with local or state law.

## **DUTY TO WARN**

Football, Cheerleading and Dance are activities that may cause death or serious bodily injury and parents/guardians and participants must be advised of the dangers of participation. The following excerpt is taken from the National Federation of High School Sports Football Rule Book.

### **Shared Responsibility and Football Helmet Warning Statement**

Athletes who participate in the sport of football accept the risk of injuries. However, athletes also have the right to assume that those who are responsible for the conduct of the sport, i.e., administrators, coaches and athletic trainers, have taken reasonable precautions to minimize the risk of significant injury. Refinements in the playing rules, the development of risk minimization guidelines and the establishment of equipment standards have helped to reduce significant injuries. However, to legislate safety via the rules book and equipment standards is never a complete answer. All who are involved with participation in the sport of football share in the responsibility of minimizing the sport's inherent risks.

The coach is responsible for pre-game verification that in addition to other required equipment, each player has a helmet which met National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) standards when manufactured and each has an exterior warning label. While important, the fact the athletes are wearing certified helmets is only the first step. The athletes involved must be aware of all the basic principles of head and neck injury prevention.

### **Helmet Warning Statement**

Since 1985, the NOCSAE football helmet standard has required a warning label on the outside of the helmet to inform each player of these risks and responsibilities. Each helmet shall have permanently affixed to the exterior of the shell a clearly legible statement which can be easily read without removal of any decal tape, other temporary material or permanent part, which contains language that effectively communicates to the purchaser and user the follow information, using the same or similar language:

#### **WARNING LABEL (found on back of every helmet)**

NO HELMET CAN PREVENT ALL HEAD OR ANY NECK INJURIES A PLAYER MIGHT RECEIVE WHILE PARTICIPATING IN FOOTBALL.

DO NOT USE THIS HELMET TO BUTT, RAM OR SPEAR AN OPPOSING PLAYER. THIS IS IN VIOLATION OF THE FOOTBALL RULES AND SUCH USE CAN RESULT IN SEVERE HEAD OR NECK INJURIES, PARALYSIS OR DEATH TO YOU AND POSSIBLE INJURY TO YOUR OPPONENT.

The NOCSAE seal on a helmet indicates that a manufacturer has complied with the best available engineering standards for head protection. By keeping a proper fit, by not modifying its design and by reporting to the coach or equipment manager any need for its maintenance, the athlete is also complying with the purpose of the NOCSAE standard.

## **FIRST AID KIT**

Every team should have one or more first aid kits. With time, contents become depleted. Medications lose strength. Hot/cold packs get punctured. Inspect regularly and replace contents as necessary. In the proper hands, such kits are helpful. In the wrong hands, they can be dangerous. Therefore, be aware of small children roaming the sidelines--quite often a kit is left open. Please contact the National Office for information on any current Pop Warner first aid kit providers.

## **PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE**

Two primary preventive steps coaches/administrators must take are as follows.

1. Coaches/administrators should walk the field before every use, including end zones and sideline areas. Check for obstacles, holes, nails, broken pylons and exposed underground sprinklers, wires or excessive dips of drains. Limit sideline crowds to improve player visibility and safety.
2. Coaches/administrators must require participants to drink plenty of fluids. Fluids should be readily available and participants encouraged to drink throughout practices and games in order to avoid the following serious medical conditions:

**Heat stroke** is an extreme emergency--delay can be fatal. Generally, a victim collapses with warm and dry skin, indicating failure of the sweating mechanism. The body temperature rises. Treatment: Cool the body in the most expedient way. Undress the athlete; cool the victim of heat stroke. Dial 911 to obtain immediate medical care.

**Heat exhaustion** can occur preliminary to heat stroke, producing weakness and heavy sweating, indicating a state of shock due to loss of salt and water. Treatment: Place the victim in the shade, with the head level to, or lower, than the body. Give the patient plenty of water and/or electrolytes.

## **FIRST AID**

First Aid is immediately and temporary care offered to a stricken athlete until the services of a physician are obtained. It minimizes aggravation of an injury and enhances the athlete's earliest possible return under the format of STOP, LOOK and LISTEN:

**STOP** play or practice immediately at first indication of possible injury or illness.

**LOOK** for obvious deformities or other deviation from the athlete's normal structure or motion.

**LISTEN** to the athlete's description of his/her complaint and how the injury occurred.

## **BONES AND JOINTS**

**FRACTURE:** Never move an athlete if a fracture of the back, neck or skull is suspected. For other fractures, if the athlete can be moved, carefully splint the possible fracture. Non-open fractures should be iced. Transport the injured athlete to ER or physician's care by ambulance.

**DISLOCATION:** Support joint. Apply cold pack/compress to swelling and refer athlete to physician.

**BONE BRUISE:** Apply cold pack/compress and protect from further injury. Refer athlete to a physician.

**BROKEN NOSE:** Apply cold pack/compress and refer athlete to physician.

## **IMPACT BLOWS**

**HEAD:** Any player suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice, game or competition shall be removed until they are evaluated by a qualified medical professional onsite. The medical professional shall have final determination as to whether the participant returns to play, no return to play that day/or needs further medical treatment/evaluation prior to return to play. Please see Concussion Rule Article 17 of the Pop Warner Rulebook.

**TEETH:** Save completely dislodged teeth in a glass of milk. If milk is unavailable, carefully wrap dislodged teeth with sterile gauze and refer athlete immediately to a dentist. Do not disturb loosened teeth; refer athlete to a dentist immediately.

**SOLAR PLEXUS:** Rest athlete on back and moisten face with cool water. Loosen clothing around chest and waist. Obtain medical care if needed.

**TESTICLES:** Rest athlete on back and apply cold. If pain persists or there is blood in athlete's urine, refer him to physician.

**EYES:** Refer athlete to physician if vision is impaired. Apply cold to soft-tissue injury.

## **MUSCLES AND LIGAMENTS**

**BRUISES:** Apply cold and rest muscle. Protect from further aggravation. Refer athlete to physician if bruise is severe.

**CRAMPS:** Contract opposite muscles, using firm pressure on cramped muscle. Give sips of diluted electrolyte in hot weather. Refer athlete with recurring cramps to physician.

**STRAIN/SPRAIN:** Elevate injured part and apply cold. Apply pressure bandage to reduce swelling. Avoid bearing weight. Obtain further medical care.

**CUT/ABRASION:** Briefly hold under cold water, then cleanse with mild soap. Apply sterile pad firmly until bleeding stops; protect with loose bandage. Refer athlete with extensive cuts to physician.

**PUNCTURE WOUNDS:** Handle as cuts. Refer athlete to physician.

**NOSEBLEED:** Sit or stand player and cover nose with cold cloths. If bleeding is heavy, pinch nose, refer athlete to physician if bleeding persists.

## OTHER CONDITIONS

**BLISTERS:** Clean with mild soap to protect from further aggravation. If broken, trim ragged edges with sterilized equipment. Refer infections to physician.

**FOREIGN MATTER IN EYES:** Do not rub. Gently touch particle with point of clean, moist cloth and wash with cold water. Refer to physician if unsuccessful.

**LIME BURN:** Wash thoroughly with water. Apply sterile gauze. Refer to physician.

## ADDITIONAL CHEER AND DANCE TEAM SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- All Rostered Cheer and Dance Staff must successfully complete the YCADA (Youth Cheer and Dance Alliance) online Coaches' Education and Testing including but not limited to the Head Coach, Assistant Coaches, Coach Trainee, Student Demonstrator, Coordinators, etc. All Certifications in the Y100 Series are now valid for One Year Only. Once coaches have completed the Y101 & Y102, they will then rotate between the Y103 and Y102 (until such time when other courses are created). This is to ensure all coaches are current on any rule changes/updates that are made each season of certification. All coaches who took the Y101PW2020 course must re-certify and take the Y103PW2022 for the 2022 season. All coaches who took the Y101PW2021 course must take the Y102PW2022 Refresher Course for the 2022 season.
- The Head Coach, Assistant Coach(s) or Association Coordinator must be 21 years or older in order to supervise at all practices, games and functions. (Clarification: at least one rostered coach must be 21 years of age supervising at practices, games and competitions.)
- The coach should be knowledgeable in first aid techniques and emergency procedures. Coaches should develop an emergency plan for dealing with injuries at practice/games. Participants should be made aware of these procedures.
- Coaches should only have participants perform skills that they have mastered through proper progression and practice even though a division and/or category may allow a skill that is more advanced than the capabilities of an individual or group. Coaches must consider the skill level of an individual and/or team prior to skill progression.
- All practice sessions should be held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders/dancers, i.e., use of tumbling mats is highly recommended, away from excessive noise and distractions, free from obstruction, etc. Stunts (mounts, pyramids and tumbling) shall be modified to be appropriate to the performing surface/area. The cheer and dance surface, location, and weather conditions should be taken into consideration before engaging in physical activity.
- **BEFORE LABOR DAY:** No team may schedule more than 10 hours of practice per week before Labor Day. A week is defined as Monday-Sunday. Not more than 2-1/2 hours of practice may be scheduled on any one day Note: Practice is up to 10 hours per week. It is not mandatory for a team to practice the full 10 allotted hours. (8/1 to Labor Day)
- **AFTER LABOR DAY:** Practices after Labor Day weekend are limited to 6 hours per week. A week is defined as Monday-Sunday. Practices after Labor Day weekend are not to exceed 2 hours per day. Note: Practice is up to 6 hours per week. It is not mandatory for a team to practice the full 6 allotted hours. (Labor Day to 7/31.)
- **BREAKS:** Break time is not counted against the ten (10) or six (6) hours per week or 2-1/2 or 2 hours of allowed practice time. Water breaks should be given as needed and when requested by participants.
- **CONDITIONING:** After the first week of practice (10 hours) for conditioning, and after the second week of practice (10 hours) for conditioning, performer readiness evaluation and/or camp/clinic the team may engage in regular practice sessions and/or pre-season games. (The Second Week may include basics in Warm-Ups, Conditioning for Jumps & Tumbling, Arm Motion Drills, Progressions in Stunting, Conditioning, etc.) So as to avoid any misinterpretation, 20 hours of "practice" is required for all Pop Warner Cheer and Dance teams before the team may engage in regular practice sessions and/or pre-season games.
- Warm-up and stretching should precede and conclude all practice sessions, pep rallies, games, competitions, and other physical activities. Reference Practice Rules in the Current PWLS Rule Book.
- All cheer and dance teams should develop a conditioning and strength-building program.
- Accessories, apparel, and hair-style should be conducive to safe practices and performances. Fingernails, including artificial nails, shall be kept at a length appropriate for safe participation.
- No jewelry (except medical/religious – taped down) or chewing gum will be allowed during performances. The use of mini-tramps, spring boards or any apparatus used to propel a participant is prohibited.
- Reference Pop Warner Rule Book for a complete list of sport safety specific rules for cheer and dance teams. YCADA rules may be updated at any point in the season due to prevent imminent safety hazards. YCADA reserves the right to further clarify any of the cheer and dance rules. Any changes and clarifications will not eliminate or change the spirit of the rule.

## **INSURANCE CLAIM TIP**

When following up on insurance claims for an injury, please be advised that the most common reasons for delay in claim payments are as follows:

1. Incomplete data on the Claim Form;
2. Claim Form has not been submitted;
3. Parent failure to fill in “other insurance” line;
4. Check sent, but to a “third party” (usually a parent instead of a doctor), who does not pay the provider.

Check these possibilities before contacting the insurance company.

**THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR POP WARNER PLAYERS, CHEERLEADERS, DANCE PARTICIPANTS, COACHES, AND VOLUNTEERS. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A COMPLETE MEDICAL INSTRUCTION! WHEN IN DOUBT ABOUT ANY INJURY, REAL OR “HIDDEN”, IMMEDIATELY REFER THE PARTICIPANT TO A PHYSICIAN AND/OR EMERGENCY TREATMENT FACILITY. PLEASE BE SURE AND FOLLOW UP TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE ATHLETE WAS SEEN BY A PROPER MEDICAL AUTHORITY.**

**BE CAUTIOUS! IT IS BETTER TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION THAN TO RISK POTENTIALLY PERMANENT MEDICAL/HEALTH PROBLEMS.**

**RULES**

*Special Note: Please be advised that any violations by an Association or League of the rules set forth in this chapter will be subject the offending organization(s) to the same consequences as would a violation of a rule stated in the Official Rule Book of Pop Warner. Leagues and Associations may extract items from this chapter applying to coaches and/or teams and incorporate these items into their local rules.*

**RULES AFFECTING LOCAL POP WARNER PROGRAMS****FOOTBALL RULES**

Three sets of rules govern Pop Warner Football:

1. The National Pop Warner Rulebook (in order of priority)
2. The Pop Warner Administrative Manual
3. National Federation or NCAA Rules, depending on the state in which Pop Warner football is played

**NATIONAL RULEBOOK**

National rules are published every year by Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. They are adopted by a Rules Committee whose members are appointed by the National Office of Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. The Pop Warner Rulebook is the highest authority on rules in Pop Warner. In any case where a conflict exists between the National Rule Book and the Administrative Manual, the current Rule Book shall prevail.

**ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL**

The Administrative Manual imposes requirements on leagues and associations. Some are administrative requirements, such as the obligation of leagues to register annually, and others are rule-based, such as adoption of a Mandatory Play Rule.

**HIGH SCHOOL FEDERATION RULES (the National Federation of State High School Associations)**

The Pop Warner Rulebook is superior to high school football rules, according to the “Federation” or “NCAA” rules. When rules conflict, Pop Warner rules take precedence. When there is no conflict, or the Pop Warner Rulebook is silent on the matter, Federation or NCAA rules apply.

In most states, rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations are the recognized high school football rules. In a handful of states, NCAA college rules are used in high school play. In other states, a portion of the state follows Federation rules while another portion follows those of the NCAA. The association with whom you contract will automatically have you play according to the correct high school rules for your area.

**LOCAL LEAGUE RULES**

The current set of rules stated in the Pop Warner Little Scholars Inc. Official Rule Book is the sole internal set of rules governing Pop Warner football and is located on [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com). Leagues must comply with the National Rules or may risk losing their league charter. Pop Warner Official Rules are published annually.

**CHOOSING A FOOTBALL COACH**

Coaching is the most challenging position in a Pop Warner organization because of the direct contact with the participants. Kids come to have fun, to learn, and to develop their skills. The coach is the one person who teaches them to handle their emotions, and who guides them into decision-making that will affect them now and in the future.

A coach who can discipline himself can certainly do the same for his team. By helping all the members of his/her team, the coach will develop the concept of “team work”, which brings his team rewards beyond wins and losses. A team’s failure and successes depend on this individual. Select the coach with care. Remember that game outcomes are much less important than the participants’ personal development.

All Pop Warner Football Coaches are required to successfully complete the USA Football Youth Tackle Certification annually. Coaches must complete this training prior to August 1<sup>st</sup> in order to be a rostered coach. This can be done in person or online at [www.usafootball.com](http://www.usafootball.com)

## **A POP WARNER COACH IS NOT TENURED!**

Under Pop Warner Rules and Regulations, Article 5, a coach is automatically terminated at the close of the season and/or December 31 whichever comes first.

## **CHOOSING A LEVEL OF PLAY**

It is strongly recommended that every League establish a younger division of play (Rookie, TM, MM, 7U, 8U, 9U) to serve as a training ground for younger participants and expose them to athletic competition. Some Leagues also establish Pop Warner Flag Football and Tiny Mite Leagues for younger players to provide a training ground for tackle football.

Age and weight systems are called “schematics”. It is impossible to have a schematic covering all potential participants.

The original Pop Warner program established the first known system of age and weight matching. Beginning in 2019 Pop Warner added an Age only option with 2 & 3 year spans in various divisions of play. Programs now have the ability to offer age/weight or age-only levels of play.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF THE FOOTBALL PLAYING LEVELS**

### **TINY MITE (TM), 5/6 (6U), 6/7 (7U)**

With the exception of flag football, the youngest Pop Warner age level are the TINY MITE, 6U and ROOKIE TACKLE LEVELS. These levels range between 5 AND 7 years of age. These are players of small physique who are gaining their first experience with tackle football. Blitzing is not permitted, no kickoffs, and all offense and defensive linemen must be in a 2pt. stance. These training levels or, in some areas, a clinical level are completely free of pressure to win, with the emphasis on learning. Scores may be kept, and a local champion may be declared.

### **MITEY MITE (MM), 7/8 (8U), 7/8/9 (9U)**

This level remains one where learning and participation are stressed and the pressure of winning is greatly reduced. The MM Level is permitted to play for a league Championship and Post season Bowl Games are permitted with restrictions.

Coaches may remain on to field, at the option of the League. A maximum of one (1) coach per team is permitted on the field. They shall not be nearer than 5 yards behind the offensive huddle and 5 yards behind the deepest defensive player. No verbal comments or hand signals may be given by a coach after the offensive team is set. No more than six defensive players can be on the line of scrimmage or rush the ball & Offensive and Defensive players on the line must be in a 2 point stance. Kick-offs or Blitzing are not allowed in Rookie Tackle, TM, 5/6 or MM, 7/8 levels. Quarters may not exceed 10 minutes.

### **JUNIOR PEE WEE (JPW) & 8/9/10 (10U)**

JPW Level is the most common entry level. Emphasis remains on fundamentals, and a small amount of competition is allowed. Local playoffs/championships are encouraged as are two (2) post season bowl games. Kick-offs are not permitted. Offensive and Defensive linemen must be in a 2pt. stance. JPs are authorized to participate in the National Playoff system. Coaches should again be selected for patience and teaching ability. With this “entry” division, Leagues may allow JP Coaches on the field in League play only. Quarters may not exceed 10 minutes.

### **PEE WEE (PW) & 9/10/11 (11U)**

PW Level player is typically more serious about football and this Level includes a greater amount of competition. The attention span of players is markedly improved, and absorption ability allows more complicated strategies and skills to be taught. With the right quarterback, the passing game can be introduced. Kick-offs are not permitted. Strength and coordination are improved versus MM and JP players. Offensive and Defensive linemen must be in a 2pt. stance. A maximum 10-minute quarter is authorized (may play shorter). Pee Wees are permitted all types of post-season play.

## **JUNIOR VARSITY (JV) & 10/11/12 (12U), 11/12/13 (13U),**

JV Level is an intermediate Level, since most Pee Wee graduates become Jr. Varsity in multi-division Leagues. Some Leagues find JV convenient for Pee Wee graduates who are not quite ready for Jr.Varsity ball. Very large Leagues find it accommodates players who are too heavy for Pee Wee, but not yet ready for Varsity. At this level, there are still techniques to be mastered. 3pt. stance for offense and defensive linemen is introduced.

## **VARSITY (V) & 12/13/14 (14U)**

Varsity Level is, historically, the second most popular level. The players' attention span is longer, and the ability to absorb instruction is greater. Game strategies are close to high school teams. Certain combinations of talent and coaching provide a game approaching the collegiate and professional versions in terms of sets, alignments, assignments, and more frequent and successful passing. Quarters are 10-minute maximum.

This is a very competitive level; the typical player having two or more seasons under his belt. For most, this is their matriculation into school football programs and is usually the last playing experience in which it is still possible to view football as a "fun" pursuit. Player "turn-off" can occur here by excessive demands on players who, though physically able, are not psychologically ready to cope with the expectations of parents and coaches.

## **CHALLENGER**

The Challenger division is for special needs individuals to participate in football. The Challenger program is non-competitive and no score is kept. The games are run like flag football with variations as needed. Please contact the national office for more information on how to organize a Challenger Division within your league. The Challenger Division includes all children ages 5 to 18 who are currently enrolled in school. All participants including Coaching Staff and Helpers must be rostered. Rostered Team Helpers are a minimum of 13 years of age, max of 18 years of age to assist.

## **MANDATORY PLAY RULE**

Every League *is required* to enforce the Mandatory Play Rule, or "MPR". This rule guarantees each player a minimum amount of game action, regardless of ability. The National MPR, stated in the current rulebook (See Part V, Rule 10 of the *Pop Warner Little Scholars Official Rules*), applies to all games: pre-season exhibitions, regular season, local playoff/championship, Regional and National Championships, as well as post-season bowls. MPR is not satisfied by playing an extra quarter, sometimes called a "5th quarter". It must take place in the actual game which counts in a team's record. If the MPR for all players has not been completed within the first three quarters, all players still needing plays must be placed in the game and not removed until their designated plays have been completed. The right to mandatory playing time may be denied a player for disciplinary reasons, provided it is the result of a violation of team or League policy. Such polices must be communicated to all players during the pre-season.

## **OTHER NATIONAL FOOTBALL RULES & REGULATIONS**

In keeping with general Pop Warner philosophy and the ages of the players involved, no team, sponsor association or league may give any award to adults, players or to a team itself, which is based upon a "Points For and Points Against" formula.

## **RECRUITING OF PLAYERS**

Within its area of jurisdiction, a team can recruit players in many different ways. Websites, radio and newspaper ads are common, as are posters and visits to schools. Regardless of the method used, all recruiting messages must specify minimum and maximum ages and weights for the divisions in order to prevent age-stacked or weight-stacked teams.

## **DETERMINATION OF CERTIFICATION WEIGHTS**

Certification weight is official weight as determined by the League. Certified weigh-ins may be conducted on a League-wide basis in location(s) specified by the League on specific date(s). In such cases, the League will designate Weigh Masters for each certification session. Leagues may delegate certified weigh-ins to their individual associations, each weigh-in to be conducted under the supervision of a League Weigh Master.

## **CERTIFIED WEIGHTS ARE ALWAYS TAKEN IN SHORTS.**

Weigh-ins of naked players are forbidden by Pop Warner. A medical balance scale or electronic scale must be used. If not state-certified, scales must have their accuracy proven against “dead” weights of known value immediately prior to a session. Determination of weight by Weigh Masters is final.

## **SCHEDULING NON-POP WARNER TEAMS**

By approval of the Region and National Office, an association may schedule games for one or more of its teams which are not in Pop Warner. Non-PW opponents must conform to the Age/Weight or Age only schematic for the level in which the Pop Warner team is certified. Generally, games with non-PW teams will be permitted to fill open dates. In evaluating requests to play non-PW teams, Leagues will be guided by the following: (1) The scheduling of a game shall not be authorized if another Pop Warner team from the same, or a neighboring League, would thereby be denied a game; (2) September 1 is the deadline to finalize inter-conference scheduling; (3) Thereafter, Leagues may authorize commitments to play non-PW teams meeting PW Age/Weight classifications.

## **DEFINITIONS OF GAMES BY TYPE**

**PRE-SEASON EXHIBITIONS** take place prior to the beginning of regular season scheduled games. They are regulation 4-quarter games played entirely by the rules and regulations of the regular season with officials present and game score kept, except results do not count in the record of the regular season. They must be scheduled during the week before the opening game of the regular season and require League approval. Inter-conference games or the scheduling of non-Pop Warner teams is not encouraged. Once the regular season starts, exhibition games are not permitted.

**REGULAR SEASON** game results, with the exception of the Rookie, TM & 5/6 Divisions, are compiled into team records to determine an order of finish for all teams of the League. Regular Season includes League playoff/championship games. In some cases, a League may cross-schedule with another League to fill in schedules. At the discretion of the League, these games schedule not later than 14 days prior to the opening of the regular season. Teams may not develop independent schedules, but must work with the League scheduler. Failure to comply will result in League disciplinary action.

**POST-SEASON BOWL GAMES** are played between teams belonging to two different Leagues. All bowls are played under regular season rules and regulations, including MPR and weigh-in procedures. However, organization, coordination and responsibilities of parties vary depending on the type of bowl. Teams entering a playoff/championship may not be permitted to play in a bowl except for those scheduled as part of the championship series.

## **CHAMPIONSHIPS & BOWL GAMES**

Post Season games fall into the following categories; all of which require written approval of Regional Directors, unless otherwise stated below.

**REGIONAL/NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES** bestow the title of Pop Warner Champion at levels from “regional” up through “national”. Establishment of such games and conditions for participation in them are solely at the discretion of Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. Particulars are outlined in Rule 34 of the Pop Warner Rule Book. Participation in Regional & National Championships is optional. Teams who wish to enter the post season Championship process must notify their Regional Director and the National Office to verify post season eligibility. Leagues and Associations must be in good standing with the Region and National Office to be approved.

**NATIONAL BOWL GAMES** may be offered at the discretion of the National Office. To be eligible for National Bowl Games, the League must have Regional approval and be in good standing with the Region and National Office.

**REGIONALLY-RECOGNIZED BOWL GAMES** may be hosted by a team, association or League in which one or more host teams play one or more visiting teams from a different League. They are played in the region to which the host belongs and are arranged and approved only in writing by the host Regional Director, with the concurrence of Regional Directors of the out-of-region visitors. The contracting parties for such games are solely responsible for the conduct of the event after regional approval of the site, date, time and participants. Housing will be as agreed between host and visitor. Pop Warner Rules and Regulations shall be strictly applied. Local rules of the host or visiting Leagues have no application. Playoffs and city, state, county or state championships are not included in this category.

**INVITATIONAL BOWL GAMES** are arranged by individual teams, associations or Leagues, subject to the approval of their Region Director. Region officers have no obligation to secure opponents for these games. The contracting parties agree to conduct the event under Pop Warner Rules and Regulations, and may apply the local rules of the host or visitor League as exist by regional approval.

Any post-season game other than a playoff or championship, must be requested in writing by the host and approved in writing by the host Region Director at least seven (7) days prior to the event, and shall be deemed an Invitational Bowl Game. Similarly defined is any bowl in which is not a playoff or championship game, in which neither opponent is a member of the host-sponsor.

Leagues must approve all bowl games before submitting them to the Region Director. Teams with at least a .750 record should be given top consideration. However, invitational games, such as “we host this year, you host next”, can waive the .750 record on the basis of obligation.

## GAME OFFICIALS

- A) The League is responsible for arranging for the presence of a minimum of three (3) officials, two (2) of whom must be certified members of the area’s high school officials’ association (one may hold trainee status).

A certified official is one who is a member in good standing of a local high school officials’ association who is not on probationary status. A supervisor of officials should make assignments to prevent questions of partiality, and to help develop promising young officials. A game may be played in the event only two (2) officials show up.

- B) Should area high school officials be unavailable, independent officials must serve under the direction and training of a certified official hired by the League. Independent officials shall regularly attend officials’ workshops, said workshops being no fewer than three (3) prior to the regular season, and at least monthly during the regular season.
- C) There will be a minimum of three (3) certified officials at all post-season bowl games. Definitions as in A, above, shall apply. Independently officials may not be used at post-season bowl games.
- D) Payment of officials is the responsibility of the home team in the case of inter-League play.
- E) The League shall provide each official with a copy of current Pop Warner Rules to assure each is aware of all pertinent deviations from high school rules.

## PROTESTS

- A. Only protests involving the eligibility of a player shall be considered.
- B. Protests are decided in accordance with the administrative procedures of the League.
- C. Teams, Associations, and Leagues have the responsibility to communicate protests as soon as they are known to exist. Lack of prompt notification may result in denial of the protest.

## CHEER AND DANCE RULES

PWLS has established one set of rules for all cheer and dance participants. In addition to the general regulations, the cheer and dance rules incorporate the current rules of YCADA (Youth Cheer and Dance Alliance) and existing Pop Warner Cheer and Dance rules/limitations.

## FORMATION OF TEAMS

- Tryouts of any kind within Pop Warner Cheer and Dance Teams are not permitted. Tryouts are defined as any means used to ascertain the level whereby a participant is placed on a team, including assessments, evaluations, or any other method used to place a participant in Pop Warner. Not more than 35 participants shall be assigned to a cheer and dance team at the start of pre-conditioning on August 1st or the later starting date of the association, whichever comes first.
- Each football team may have a maximum of three rostered Pop Warner Cheer and Dance teams. For all purposes, the Pop Warner Cheer and Dance season shall be defined as August 1st to July 31st.

## PRIMARY CHEER TEAM

### Cheer Skill/Age Division Options:

1. YCADA Core: Age Divisions: Junior Tiny Mite, Tiny Mite, Mitey Mite, Junior Peewee and Peewee
2. YCADA SHOW CHEER PW 1 Age Divisions: Mitey Mite, Junior Peewee, Peewee, Junior Varsity, Varsity and Bantam. YCADA SHOW CHEER PW 1 LIMITED Age Divisions: Flag, Mascots, Challenger, Junior Tiny Mite, Tiny Mite.
3. YCADA SHOW CHEER PW 2 Age Divisions: Mitey Mite, Junior Peewee, Peewee, Junior Varsity, Varsity and Bantam.

4. YCADA SHOW CHEER PW 3, PW4 Age Divisions: Junior Peewee, Peewee, Junior Varsity, Varsity and Bantam.

**Cheer Size Divisions:** Cheer Size Divisions: Junior Tiny Mite, Tiny Mite, Mitey Mite, Junior Peewee, Peewee, Junior Varsity, Varsity and Bantam: Mascots are not included in the team count.

1. **Cheer Small:** Minimum 5 – Maximum 10 Participants;
2. **Cheer Medium:** 11 – 20 Participants;
3. **Cheer Large:** 21 – 35 Participants;

**Cheer Size Divisions:** Core Cheer, Flag, Challenger: Mascots are not included in the team count.

1. Up to 35 Participants;

#### **PRIMARY DANCE SKILL/AGE TEAM OPTIONS**

A primary team may elect in August to be a Dance team and be rostered as a Dance team, and only dance during games and halftimes. They cannot and will not perform any stunts or any other activity limited to cheer teams with the exception of crowd participation sidelines/chants.

1. YCADA Pom Performance: Flag, Mascots, Challenger, Junior Tiny Mite, Tiny Mite, Mitey Mite, Junior Peewee, Peewee, Junior Varsity, Varsity and Bantam.
2. YCADA Theme Dance: Flag, Mascots, Challenger, Junior Tiny Mite, Tiny Mite, Mitey Mite, Junior Peewee, Peewee, Junior Varsity, Varsity and Bantam.
3. YCADA Hip Hop: Flag, Mascots, Challenger, Junior Tiny Mite, Tiny Mite, Mitey Mite, Junior Peewee, Peewee, Junior Varsity, Varsity and Bantam.

**PRIMARY DANCE Size Divisions:** Mascots are not included in the team count.

- Minimum 5 – Maximum 35 Participants
- Up to 35 Participants, Flag, Challenger:

#### **PRIMARY TEAMS WITHOUT A FOOTBALL TEAM**

Any association cheer and dance teams that cannot be affiliated with a corresponding football team in any particular division during the playing season, and has other cheer and dance teams matched with football teams within the same association, may form a cheer or dance team provided the following requirements:

- The team must be age eligible for that division.
- The cheer/dance team must perform during the association's football games at another level's assigned games.
- Additional Insurance is required per participant.

#### **PRIMARY TEAMS “WITHOUT A FOOTBALL PROGRAM” Association or League**

Any League and/or Association that cannot be affiliated with a corresponding football program during the playing season, may initiate a newly formed Cheer or Dance Association or League to provide continued opportunity for Cheer/Dance participants not affiliated with a Football Program.

##### **The Association:**

Association status would apply to those Cheer/Dance Teams that currently participate with a Pop Warner Football Program whereby the football teams are no longer members of our program. This proposal will allow those teams to form a new Cheer/Dance Association within the existing league/boundaries to continue under the name of Pop Warner in the same manner that a PWLS Football Association would exist.

##### **The League:**

League status would apply to those spirit programs that would like to form under the current Pop Warner League guidelines in areas where there is not an existing Pop Warner Football Program. Current Program Cheer/Dance Participants are prevented from moving to a new league from an existing league.

REGION RECEIVERSHIP Teams/Associations Register under Region Receivership. Region Holds Teams/Association in place until Association or League can be determined.

Note for all Choices Listed: If there are no Football Teams available to participate with on Game Day, the Cheer/Dance Program(s) registers as Cheer/Dance without Football. If, at a later date, Football teams form, Region/National to discuss best options to bring two programs together under one Name/Organization or continue with two programs, Cheer/ Dance retaining Cheer/Dance operations

### Organization Set-Up:

Follow all guidelines currently in place under the guidance of the National Cheer and Dance Commissioner.

- A. Follow all guidelines as outlined in the Pop Warner Rulebook. Attend and participate in all planning meetings for League, Region and National Programs under the guidance of the RMT.
- B. Submit rosters and administer participant certification process.
- C. Participate in the Pop Warner Championship Program, League, Region and National. Participate in Pop Warner Scholastic Program under the current guidelines
- D. When possible, teams will cheer at football games per season.
  1. Teams within an association will cheer for their association's games.
  2. Newly formed league's teams may cheer for neighboring leagues when practicable.

### CHALLENGER TEAMS

Pop Warner offers Challenger Division Cheer and Dance Teams. Please contact PWLS for more specifics on guidelines or starting a Challenger Division.

- The Challenger Division includes all children ages 5 to 18 with physical or mental disabilities who are currently enrolled in school.
- All participants including Coaching Staff and Helpers must be rostered.
- Rostered Team Helpers are a minimum of 13 years of age, max of 18 years of age to assist.
- The Challenger Division follows Pop Warner Cheer & Dance Rules following proper progression under direct supervision.
- YCADA routine guidelines recommend that Challenger Cheer Exhibition Performances' be one minute thirty seconds. Performances may include Cheer and Dance.
- Teams are permitted to cheer for one football game per week.

### CHEER AND DANCE AGE DIVISIONS

Age Divisions for Cheer and Dance teams are selected from the PWLS Age Schematic below;

#### PWLS AGE SCHEMATIC

<u>Division Name</u>	<u>Ages</u>
<b>Jr. TINY MITE (Pilot)</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>TINY-MITE</b>	5-6-7
<b>MITEY-MITE</b>	7-8-9
<b>JUNIOR PEEWEE</b>	8-9-10-11
<b>PEEWEE</b>	9-10-11-12
<b>JUNIOR VARSITY</b>	10-11-12-13
<b>VARSDITY</b>	12-13-14-15-16
<b>BANTAM</b>	<b>14,15,16,17</b>
<b>CHALLENGER</b>	5-18

#### FLAG AGE SCHEMATIC

<u>Division Name</u>	<u>Ages</u>
<b>CAT</b>	5 - 6
<b>CUB</b>	5 - 6 - 7
<b>BOBCAT</b>	8 - 9 - 10
<b>WILDCAT</b>	11 - 12 - 13
<b>PANTHER</b>	14 - 15 - 16

- Divisions are determined by Association Registration, Budget, Equipment, etc. reviewed/approved by the League each season.
- The ages of the Cheer & Dance teams should correspond to the playing ages of the football team with which they are associated. With 2019 added football divisions, teams should match as close as possible in age to insure a football sideline schedule. For exceptions and or information on Cheer without Football teams, contact your Region Cheer and Dance Coordinator in writing with your request.
- The participant's age on July 31st of the current year shall be the participant's age for the coming season August 1 to July 31.
  - 2022 Pilot Program offers a Junior Tiny Mite Age Division (ages 3 and 4) under the supervision of the LCDC/RCDC.
  - •Junior Tiny Mite Teams meet/practice one time per week – no more than two hours - following a 4 or 8 week program.
  - •This Division may declare one Primary YCADA PW Cheer Division: Show Cheer 1 Limited, Core Cheer 1 Limited OR one Primary YCADA PW Dance Division: Pom Performance, Theme Dance or Hip Hop.
  - •In Year 1, The JTM Division will offer teams Game Day Appearances upon availability. At the close of the 4 or 8 week program, teams have the opportunity to participate in an exhibition performance at League/ Region Championships/Showcase.

### YCADA SKILL DIVISIONS

JAMZ, as the Pop Warner Little Scholars, Development Partner, is the original developer of the Youth Cheer and Dance Alliance (YCADA). JAMZ is also the first company to test and adopt its skill levels, rules and scoring guidelines. Through participation in YCADA, JAMZ and Pop Warner have helped to grow the Youth Cheer and Dance market and provide structure to youth organizations at the national level. For further details see [www.YCADA.org](http://www.YCADA.org).

Skill Levels have been created to provide safety by limiting performers to ability level appropriate skills. When selecting the level in which their team will compete, coaches must consider the teams overall skill abilities, with particular attention to stunting and tumbling. Coaches must review all cheer level grids, general safety rules, routine guidelines, categories and penalty info.

## DECLARING A SKILL LEVEL

The Head Coach determines the skill level of the team based on the category descriptions listed in the YCADA portion of the Cheer and Dance Section of the Rule Book, ability of the team following proper progression and past championship performances.

The Head Cheerleading Coach is required to submit the Skills Progression Sheet / Declaration Checklist to the Association Cheer and Dance Coordinator. Once approved, the Skills Progression Sheet/Declaration Checklist is a required document in the Team Book. The Association Cheer and Dance Coordinator then completes the Declaration Form for all Association Teams.

- Declarations for Primary Cheer Teams include Core Cheer (for TM, MM, JP, PW), Show Cheer PW 1, PW 2, PW 3, PW 4; Declarations for Primary Dance Teams include Pom Performance, Theme Dance, Hip Hop.
- Once rostered/declared Primary Cheer or Primary Dance, teams are permitted to select a second performance or routine. This applies to Age Divisions: Challenger, Mitey Mite, Junior Peewee, Peewee, Junior Varsity, Varsity and Bantam. Teams participating in two routines, Primary and a Second Routine, will receive two additional practice hours per week from September 1 leading up to the Pop Warner Championships or to the last Pop Warner Championship while participating/advancing in two routines.
- Show Cheer PW 1, 2, 3, 4 Teams can participate in the following Second Routines: Pom Performance, Theme Dance, Hip Hop, Sideline Performance Cheer.
- 
- Core Cheer Teams can participate in the following Second Routines: Pom Performance, Theme Dance, Hip Hop, Sideline Performance Cheer.
- 
- Dance Teams can participate in the following Second Routines: Pom Performance, Theme Dance, Hip Hop, Core Cheer, Sideline Performance Cheer.
- Team Book Check - Document Audit: The procedure where by each participant's mandatory documents are reviewed to ensure that the documents are accurate and comply with the standards established by Pop Warner National Rules, per Article 6 "Registration" in the Official Pop Warner Rules.
- Team Book Document Order
- I.D. Cards/Standard Player Contract (i.e., if Contract is
- Proof of Age
- Physical Fitness & Medical History
- Participant Contract & Parent Consent
- Proof of Scholastic Fitness
- All Rosterd Staff - YCADA Training Certificate
- For Cheerleading Teams Only: Skill Progression Sheet / Head Coach Declaration Checklist

## POP WARNER SPONSORED EVENTS

Pop Warner Cheer and Dance teams have the opportunity to cheer/dance for their rostered Pop Warner Football Team at exhibitions, pre-season football games, regular season games, tournaments, bowl games, etc. during the Pop Warner season. It is highly recommended that football teams competing in League, Region and National Super Bowl be accompanied by their corresponding Cheer and Dance teams at all games, except when the region/national Cheer and Dance Championships are being held at the same time.

## GAME DAY

- Make it fun and appropriate for age divisions.
- Promote spirit by performing sidelines, cheers/chants, dance/pom.
- Incorporate poms, signs, flags and megaphones to get the crowd involved.
- The Coaching staff must teach their team basic rules of football.
  - Understand the Sport
  - Teach the dynamics of football
  - Reinforce what they've learned with a Study Sheet of Referee Signals
  - Make sure they understand the Scoreboard.
  - Teach them to read the game, selecting appropriate chants for each situation. (Show a video of a football game and ask them to call out chants as it plays – make a contest out of it. The challenge will be fun.)
- **Remember:** Primary focus in cheering at football games is "leading the crowd". Sounds simple but in reality many components are needed to fulfill that requirement. Here are a few examples of when to perform:

- Pre-Game
- Warm-Ups and Intros (Applaud both Teams)
- When the football team is in a huddle, coming onto the field or getting into formation.
- Time-outs between quarters
- Recognizing outstanding performances for both teams.
- After a Score
- Injured player leaves the field
- Between Plays and Before Action.
- Half-Time Performance (Confirm sound system capabilities in advance of game)
- Have a Plan for Anthem Stance, Coin Toss, Kick Off
- Good Sportsmanship is a cheer and dance tradition! Teams should congratulate the visiting football, Cheer and Dance teams at the close of the game!
- Educate your fans
  - When you have parent meetings pass out a list of short chants
  - Teach chants at parent meetings (Short one liners easy to remember)
  - Provide a list of chants divided into “Offense”, “Defense”, and “Spirit” on a clip board positioned where it can easily be seen.
  - Power of music (Boom Box) – get them rocking!
  - New Material and Traditional Favorites combine for great crowd motivators!
  - Make signs and distribute them in your stands
  - For the Team: Create Attention Grabbing signs but remember Safe Stunting Practices.
  - Pass out poms, etc. to inspire the crowd to get involved
- The Coaching Staff should supervise the team at an appropriate/safe distance as permitted by field guidelines. Coaches must supervise the team on and off the field.
  - Check the team environment: Learn the dimensions of the playing field as well as terms that may apply to the team and their location on the field. Position the team at a safe distance away from the football team.
  - Head Coach should provide a staff checklist to close the game (i.e., team meeting, store equipment, clean up, exit to parents, tec.)
  - Game Day Skills:
    - Skills should be appropriate to the performing surface and follow the guidelines/skill level set in the current Pop Warner Rule Book.
    - Twisting (mounts/dismounts and transitions) and basket tosses cannot be performed on the field unless a mat is in place.
    - Skills should be visual, clean and include Stunts that have been mastered/approved in practice.
    - Skills should be easy to follow, structured in a way to lead the crowd
    - Skills should utilize as many members of the team as possible
    - Game Day Routines and Skills should be FUN!

## **CHAMPIONSHIPS**

In addition to supporting the football team, our cheer/dance participants are given the opportunity to compete in their respective sport divisions (cheer and dance) as follows:

- A PWLS Championship event sponsored by a Pop Warner organization:
  - A Pop Warner Championship Event is a Pop Warner League, Region and/or National Championship. These events are approved for YCADA Use and follow Pop Warner safety rules/guidelines. A Championship Event or qualifier is an event that is on the path to the Pop Warner National Championships. PW League Championship Events are held in October, PW Region Championship Events are held in November and the PW National Championship Event is held in December.
  - Any other Pop Warner “Competition/Awarded” events (other than the above noted Championship and Qualifying Events) must be first Pop Warner National Approved and then shared with YCADA for proper use of scoring resources. Submitted immediately following annual Region Meeting for approval for the upcoming season.
- A competition or event sponsored by a non-Pop Warner organization if it follows all Pop Warner safety rules, occurs during the accepted Pop Warner season, and if permission to participate is granted in writing, in advance, by the League, the Region, and the National Cheer & Dance Commissioner.
  - A team must participate in the Pop Warner League, Region and National Cheer and Dance Championships, if qualified, in order to be approved for a non-Pop Warner event or competition. Each League, Region will enforce this rule and shall have authority to place sanctions on any League, Association or team that violates this rule up to and including sanction for the next season or longer.

No team shall engage in more than one (1) competition per week; said competition shall count as one practice or as the game for that week.

**Pop Warner Championships:** The Head Coach for each advancing team from League Championship to Region/National Championships will be asked to submit a Statement of Acceptance. The Statement of Acceptance will include basic team information, media form and a routine music upload. By completing the Statement of Acceptance, a team commits to participate in the Region Championship and advance to the National Championships if placement in Region Championships is First or Second (includes Primary and/or Second Routines).

**Proper Championship coaching attire** shall consist of Business, Business Casual or Game Day Attire in the form of a dress, suit, Khaki or dress pants and a polo (with Pop Warner Logo and/or Team/Association/League name and/or logo), or Team Sweat Suit/Athletic Sneakers with Pop Warner Team logo, etc.). The following items are not acceptable: Jeans, shorts, flip flops and/or tank tops. Coaching staff consists of rostered staff to include Coordinator, Coaches, Coach Trainee, Student Demonstrators, etc.

**HEARINGS**

All organizations are called upon from time to time to (1) resolve disputes between member organizations and individuals; (2) take action to enforce rules and regulations; and (3) discipline adult or juvenile members.

This section is a guide to **due process**. Following it will save time, money, aggravation, and may keep you out of court. Courts are reluctant to involve themselves in internal Pop Warner program matters, as the clubs and Leagues are essentially “private organizations”. However, courts will intervene if there is evidence that organizations did not handle their problems in a fair and reasonable manner. National Pop Warner will intervene only as outlined later herein.

**BASIC TERMINOLOGY**

**COMPLAINT:** A complaint alleges that a violation of a rule, regulation, or policy has taken place, naming the organization or person(s) said to have done so.

**CROSS-EXAMINATION:** The questioning of a witness by the party who did not call the witness (the other side).

**DECISION:** The written decision consists of: (1) a statement of charges; (2) a procedural history which details the hearing at which interested parties appeared and testimony was taken; (3) a statement of issues; (4) findings of fact based on all evidence; (5) the decision; (6) the reasons for the decision based upon applicable national and local rules and regulations and any mitigating circumstances; and (7) a conclusion stating the penalty, sanction, relief or denial thereof, together with a statement of the action to be taken to carry out the decision.

**DUE PROCESS:** Giving a person due process means carrying out, in every respect, the basic premise that one is innocent until proven guilty. The essential elements of due process are: (1) notice, and (2) opportunity to be heard and defended before an authority which will render a decision.

**PARTY OF INTEREST:** A party of interest is one who might benefit by the results of a hearing. For example, if a team is charged with cheating, and conviction would involve forfeiting certain games, members of organizations which would benefit from a change in the standings are parties of interest and may not serve on the Hearing Authority. Service on the Hearing Authority is also denied to members of charging parties and members of charged parties.

**PETITION:** A petition is a request that a hearing be held to decide a matter. It states the problem, such as a dispute between two parties, and requests an inquiry into it. Petitions must be delivered in writing to the Hearing Authority.

**PUBLISHED FORM:** Published form means written and delivered.

**REDIRECT:** Redirect means re-questioning a witness by the party who called the witness. It takes place after the “other side” has cross-examined.

**STATUS:** Status refers to a person or organization who/which has a legitimate interest in a matter. Only a person/organization with status may file a complaint or petition. At the team level, the following have status: players, cheerleaders, coaches and all other adult volunteers. At the League level, all League officers and members of the League Board of Directors have status, as do game officials, and all others previously mentioned at the team level. At National level, senior staff members and Counsel of Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. have status.

**SUMMARY AUTHORITY:** This is authority exercised immediately, without formality, only on such occasions when the nature of a violation is so severe that it cannot be allowed to continue between the time of observation and the time a formal hearing would take place. It is similar to an arrest based on a reasonable belief a crime is or has been committed.

**WRITTEN WAIVER OF NOTICE:** A written agreement by a charged person/organization to hold a hearing in less than seven (7) days constitutes a waiver of notice.

## THE HEARING AUTHORITY: WHO HOLDS HEARINGS AND WHY?

Hearings may be held at the Association, League or National level.

**ASSOCIATIONS** have authority over all adults and juveniles in the following capacities: players, spirit participants, coaches and all other adults, provided the connection is official (as opposed to fans). At this level, hearings are held by a Hearing Officer, who may be the President or any other association officer, or a member of the Board of Directors.

Most offenses by players or spirit participants are minor infractions of team rules, such as skipping practice, clowning at practice, etc. Such cases do not require hearings and discipline is left to the discretion of the coach or spirit advisor. Serious offenses (stealing team property, fighting, etc.) which could lead to a penalty of severance require a hearing before an association authority, upon request.

**LEAGUES** have authority over member teams, associations, and subsidiary groups, and all adults and juveniles officially connected with them. Leagues may intervene in the affairs of associations in place of an association authority when, in the Leagues sole opinion, an association is not discharging its responsibility. Leagues also have authority to settle disputes between member organizations. The President, Commissioner, any other League officer, or a member of its Board of Directors, may serve as League Hearing Officers.

**REGIONS** In cases initiated by the Region, the Region Director or their designee shall act as Hearing Officer. At its sole discretion, National/Regional Pop Warner reserves the right to intervene in the affairs, disciplinary or otherwise, of any local team, association, or League. In any case involving misuse or integrity of the Pop Warner name, National/Regional reserves the right to intervene without regard to the quality or speed of local association or League action.

**NATIONAL POP WARNER:** In cases initiated by National, the National Football Commissioner/National Cheer and Dance Commissioner or their designee shall act as Hearing Officer. At its sole discretion, National Pop Warner reserves the right to intervene in the affairs, disciplinary or otherwise, of any local team, association, or League. In any case involving misuse or integrity of the Pop Warner name, National reserves the right to intervene without regard to the quality or speed of local Association or League action.

National involvement may lead to binding decisions from which there is no appeal. If a matter involves the possible loss of a charter, recommendations of the investigating body shall go before the Charter Committee for final action when it is in session. If the Charter Committee is not in session and the matter is so severe as to constitute an emergency, recommendations of the investigating body shall go before the Executive Committee of Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc.

### *Special Note regarding Regional and National Championships:*

Beginning in 2004, Pop Warner implemented an arbitration process administered by a Disciplinary Review Board to swiftly address and resolve any behavioral occurrences or disputes taking place during the post-season, in order to preserve the integrity of the program and to enable every participant a fair chance to compete and enjoy the experience. The Disciplinary Review Board has jurisdiction over matters involving violation(s) of the Coaches Code of Conduct, Football Rules' Violations, and/or behavior that resulted in harm or may result in probable harm to participants, volunteers, parents, spectators or other individuals. Hearings may NOT be requested to challenge an outcome of game/competition and/or for officials' decisions during games/competitions.

- As a condition of a team's participation in the Pop Warner Super Bowl & National Championship Week, all participants, coaches, administrators and supporters agree to display good sportsmanship throughout the Super Bowl/Championship Week and related events or the entire teams' eligibility and presence on site may be revoked without refund. Every Head Coach is required to read and sign the Pop Warner Code of Conduct at the Coaches meeting to ensure an understanding of what is acceptable conduct for all team and supporters. Head Coaches are responsible for not only their own proper behavior, but also for the behavior of each member of their staff, their team and all of the team's supporters.
- The Head Coach and the Association President will be held accountable for proper conduct of coaches, parents and any other persons affiliated with the team. Head Coaches and Association Presidents must read and review the "Personal Responsibility at PWLS Events and Sportsmanship" memos contained in the Championship packet with your entire team and organization.
- Players, coaches, administrators and parents or other supporters that violate these articles, rules and regulations and/or any Pop Warner rules while in attendance will be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to removal from Disney property without refund, disqualification from the event, removal from the Pop Warner program and any applicable legal/criminal penalties.

## **HOW A HEARING COMES ABOUT**

A hearing is held as a result of one of the following: (1) a complaint is received from someone with status; (2) a petition is received from someone with status; or (3) an officer of the League has exercised Summary Authority.

## **USE OF SUMMARY AUTHORITY**

Summary Authority is to be applied in all cases where quick action is needed to stop, alter, change, or otherwise modify a condition which cannot be allowed to continue until a hearing is held. This may involve a threat to the safety and well-being of juveniles (e.g., a team holding contact without helmets), an obvious violation of League or National rules (e.g., use of “ringers”), or something which adversely affects the image and good name of the League and/or Pop Warner in the community (e.g., two associations fund-raising in the same area.).

Summary Authority may be exercised only by officers of the League/Region/National Office. When all officers are present, the Commissioner shall exercise it. In his absence, summary authority may only be exercised by the highest ranking officer present in the following order: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer or Board Members.

The Powers of Summary Authority include ordering a game or practice stopped, as well as to suspend, on the spot, any adult or juvenile judged to be the cause of a problem. Summary Authority is to be used with the utmost caution. In no case does it substitute for final action. The League must schedule a hearing to arrive at a final disposition of the case.

## **IMPORTANCE OF “PUBLISHED FORM”**

No complaint will be heard against any individual or organization which is based on a violation of a local rule, regulation, or policy which is not in published form. A charging party may not claim “common knowledge” of rules, regulations, or polices which do not appear in a circulated document.

The appearance of a rule, regulation, or policy in the written minutes of a League, coupled with delivery of one copy to the person who regularly represents the association at League meetings, is proof of publication and delivery to all personnel of that association. When a new season begins and approved local rules, regulations and/or polices are carried over, the League must notify all members as follows: (1) redistribute an updated bulletin in the above manner containing all approved local rules, regulations and/or polices, or (2) distribute a copy of an approved handbook covering the same matters.

A League may not distribute a “handout” on new material only and assume everyone will automatically recall pre-existing rules or that prior officers/coaches have passed on their copies from the previous season. Material mailed to member organizations must be sent first class, preferably certified, return receipt requested.

At the association level, team representatives to the League must read all League reports to the members. Attendance at such meetings will be presumed for enforcement purposes. Special team rules require holding a mass meeting at which all team rules are reviewed, with obligatory attendance. It is recommended that printed sheets which summarize all team rules, regulations and polices be handed out.

## **PRE-HEARING SUGGESTIONS**

- Do not over-charge. If multiple violations occur, limit the charges to those which are overwhelmingly provable. In addition to saving time and reducing the risk of sidetracking a hearing, a narrow charge or list of charges which result in a “guilty” finding solves the problem.
- Do not over-name defendants. A coach may be carrying out team policy regarding a particular item. Charges should therefore be filed against the team organization and its association president. If this comes out during a hearing, charges against the coach can be dropped and new ones drawn against the team and the president for the reasons cited.
- Obtain evidence on the basis of a specific request. A team may compel delivery of specified evidence from any person or sub-group officially connected with it. A League may compel evidence from any organization(s) under it, as well as from any person affiliated with said organization(s), and from its own personnel. National has similar authority in all cases in which it becomes involved.

## **THE FORMAL HEARING**

A formal hearing begins with the basics of due process which are as follows:

**NOTICE:** Written notice of the hearing must be delivered to each charged party in advance of the hearing. The notice must include the date, place and time of hearing and a list of specific charges. It must also advise the parties of their right to be represented at the hearing by a person of their choice. If the term “counsel” is used, it does not mean the representative must be an attorney. Counsel is permitted to attend hearings to advise their clients but may not participate actively in the hearing.

**TIME TO PREPARE:** At least seven (7) days must pass between the date the charged parties receive written notice and the hearing itself. The only exception is a written waiver of notice from the charged parties. (See Basic Terminology above).

**RIGHTS:** Charged parties may introduce witnesses and/or bring documents to support a defense, cross-examine witness(es), and inspect any item introduced as evidence at the time it is presented within reason. A maximum number of witnesses or limit on time for examinations may be appropriate.

**AFTER THE HEARING:** A written statement and decision, including penalties imposed, must be delivered to each party within a reasonable amount of time after the hearing, typically not to exceed thirty (30) days. Please remember to keep a detailed record of all written and verbal correspondence, including phone calls and emails, as it pertains to due process, and it is best to mail any items via certified mail or express carrier so you have receipt of.

### **SAMPLE ONE: NOTICE OF HEARING EXAMPLE**

- **TO:** [full, legal name], [current residence/street address, state, zip]
- **SUBJECT:** You have been charged with the following acts, which are detrimental to the objectives, programs, or ideals of the Association.
  - Aggressive behavior during competition at [event title], including:
    - Use of Profanity at the Player, Referee and Coach during Association Event
    - Striking another person during Association Event
    - [List all examples]
- **PETITIONER:** This complaint of request was made by [individual and/or Association Board Member].
- **REPLY:** You are hereby requested to file a written reply to these charges with the chairperson of the Review Committee within ten (10) days prior to the scheduled date of the hearing. The hearing will proceed with or without this reply.
- **HEARING DATE, TIME AND PLACE:** The hearing on these charges will be held:
  - Date
  - Time
  - Place
  - Full Address
- **PENALTIES UNDER CONSIDERATION:** If you are found guilty of the offense charged, the Review Committee has the power to censure, suspend without terms of probation (for a definite or indefinite period of time), or expel you from membership in the Association.
- **APPEAL:** Either the complainant or the respondent may appeal the decision of the Review Committee within two weeks from the date the written notice of decision is received.
- **GENERAL INFORMATION:** You are entitled to be represented by legal counsel, or by such other representative as you may choose, to have witnesses testify in your behalf, and to submit any and all evidence in your defense, including hearsay and documentary evidence, provided that it is relevant to the issue(s) under consideration.
- **SIGNATOR INCLUDES:**
  - Date
  - Signature
  - Chairman, Review Committee [full name, typed below signature]
  - Street Address
  - City, State, Zip
  - Telephone
  - Fax

## **SAMPLE TWO: WRITTEN DECISION EXAMPLE**

Date

CONFIDENTIAL

*[FEDERAL EXPRESS OVERNIGHT LETTER]*

Respondent Name

Respondent Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

As a direct result of your misconduct during competition at the [Event Name] on [Date], the Review Committee of the Association has invoked a one year suspension from all of its events. The suspension period commences on [date] and terminates on [date].

In keeping with Pop Warner guidelines, the Review Committee, on behalf of the Association Board has issued this suspension. You should be aware that a second offense, of any kind, would result in permanent suspension.

If you wish to appeal these findings, you must notify the League offices within two weeks of receipt of this letter, at which time the League will be notified of your appeal.

Sincerely,

Review Committee Chairperson

Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone

Fax

## **CONDUCTING A HEARING**

- A hearing panel shall consist of not less than three persons, and may consist of more, provided it shall always be an odd number to prevent tie votes. The panel is called a Tribunal. One person shall act as Chairman. At the League level, the President should be the Chairman of the Hearing Tribunal. The Tribunal should make best efforts to be impartial and members with conflicts of interest should not serve on the tribunal.
- Hearings are private and, therefore, not open to the general public or the media.
- The hearing room should, to the greatest extent possible, exclude outside noises and/or disturbances.
- Witnesses must be kept outside of the hearing room until the time of their testimony. This is called “sequestering witnesses”.
- The hearing must be recorded (cassette recorder) for the official record. Set-up of the recording device should take into account microphone placement, background noise, recording level, and location of individuals giving testimony. Take accurate minutes of the hearing for your records.
- Breaks are required on a periodic basis --10 minutes per hour of proceedings unless waived.
- If there is an offer by professional legal volunteers, the Tribunal may benefit from their expertise. However, services of attorneys and certified court reporters are not required.

## **PROCEDURAL ORDER OF HEARINGS**

- 1) The charging party (plaintiff) is heard first. His/its witnesses and documents are presented. Then cross-examination of each witness may be conducted by the opposing side (defendant). Redirect examination by the plaintiff follows immediately after cross, if desired. If the defendant then wishes to cross-examine (after redirect), questions must be limited to testimony covered on redirect.
- 2) The defendant is heard second. Procedures of cross-examination, redirect, etc., apply as in “A”, above.
- 3) Once all parties have been heard, the plaintiff gives a summation, followed by the summation of the defendant.

- 4) Copies of documents (as opposed to originals) may be introduced as evidence at the discretion of the Hearing Tribunal. However, certain cases may require introduction of an original document. The Tribunal's decision on such matters is final.
- 5) Members of the Tribunal have the right to ask questions of witnesses and inspect evidence at any time, and may temporarily excuse, but later call back, any witness.

A Tribunal may allow limited hearsay testimony. If attorneys represent one or more parties, the Tribunal may note objections, but is not obligated to do so. As long as the Tribunal follows the "due process" procedures outlined in this point, there is no need to become entangled in legal rules of evidence or in courtroom maneuvers.

At the conclusion of a hearing, the Tribunal may deliberate and reach a decision if it is prepared to do so. Deliberations must take place privately. Although formal written notice must follow, a Tribunal's decision takes effect upon verbal notice.

### **WHEN TO DEFER TO CIVIL AUTHORITY**

If an association or League becomes aware of any information or activities for which criminal charges could result, upon learning of the incident, the organization representative(s) must contact the appropriate authorities and turn over any evidence it may hold. Full cooperation with the appropriate civil authority is mandatory.

Any person subject to *criminal proceedings* MUST be temporarily suspended from all Pop Warner activities pending a resolution of the matter as soon as the local Pop Warner organization receives information of the pending or current proceedings. The person cannot be reinstated as a Pop Warner volunteer until (1) he/she submits written evidence of a dismissal/clearing of charges to his/her local Pop Warner organization, (2) the local, Regional or National Pop Warner organization concludes that the person did not violate the Pop Warner rules or underlying philosophy and (3) the Team/Squad, Association, League, Region and/or National Office does not have any pending charges against the individual.

If an applicant or someone already serving in any Pop Warner capacity is discovered to have been or is convicted of a *felony involving moral turpitude* according to state or local law (generally defined as any act in the commission of a crime that shows disregard for established community standards of right and wrong), the local Pop Warner League or association may bar that person from all Pop Warner activities, and that person will not be entitled to a reconsideration or reinstatement hearing.

### **APPEAL TO HIGHER AUTHORITY**

Results of association hearings may be appealed to the League. However, Leagues are not obligated to hear all appeals.

There is no appeal from League Tribunal decisions. However, an aggrieved party may take "exception" to a decision and request, in writing, reconsideration of the decision. The League Tribunal shall reconvene in private to consider the exception. It may reopen the hearing, and for good and sufficient cause, take the case on appeal and rule upon same, or dismiss the exception, with the original decision standing.

### **BASIS OF APPEAL**

An automatic basis for filing an exception to a decision of a League Tribunal shall be one or more of the following: (1) lack of due process; (2) one or more members of the Tribunal were parties of interest; (3) violation charged was of a matter not in "published form", and (4) new, relevant evidence, not formerly available, has developed. If any other condition applies, the Tribunal may accept or reject the exception at its discretion.

### **HOW TO FILE LOCAL APPEAL/RESULTS**

All appeals must be filed in writing, with all appropriate documents attached, not later than 2 weeks after the initial hearing results are received by the applicant. A successful appeal results in: (1) revocation or modification of the original hearing result(s), with no rehearing, or (2) an order that a rehearing take place to correct one or more flaws in the original procedure. Until a rehearing is completed, the result of the original hearing stands. Under no circumstances shall any greater penalty be imposed upon rehearing than the original penalty.

There is no automatic appeal to National. National shall intervene only in cases of compelling National interest, without prior definition. Acceptance of an appeal by National is at its sole discretion.

## MINIMUM MANDATED PENALTIES

Tribunals shall enjoy wide latitude in setting penalties for most offenses. The sole requirement is that for identical offenses, the same penalties be assessed against all transgressors within the same League. In cases of late season violations; a Tribunal may impose penalties which cover part or all of the next season. Minimum mandated penalties for certain offenses are required to insure that punishment for the most serious infractions occurs on a uniform, national basis. Minimum mandated penalties are specified in the National Rule book. A lesser penalty for a specified offense may not be issued.

### ADULT OFFENSES

**RUN-UP SCORE (INTENTIONAL):** A finding of “guilty” shall result in Probation at a minimum; Suspension if the conduct is found to have been intentional; and Dismissal in the case of a repetitive pattern (malice).

**EJECTION FROM GAME:** Automatic one week suspension from practice, including the following game.

**ENDANGERMENT OF JUVENILES:** Defined as any practice placing the health, welfare and safety of a juvenile in jeopardy, including “sweating down”. Sweating down applies in the broadest sense of inducing weight loss by any artificial means, including, but not limited to, use of steam rooms or cabinets, rubber sweat suits, weight reducing or appetite-killing drugs, and/or diuretics (water pills).

Minimum Penalty: Suspension for 1 year, to permanent suspension upon repeated offenses.

**TEACHING PROHIBITED OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES:** Teaching such techniques to players and/or encouraging or teaching players to physically hurt opponents.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension for 1 year, to permanent suspension upon repeated offense.

**FIGHTING:** Fighting among same team or opponent team adults or fans.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension for 1 year, to permanent suspension upon repeated offense.

**CHEATING:** Cheating of any type, including, but not limited to, forging of birth certificates, falsification of roster data, etc.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension for 1 year, to permanent suspension upon second offense.

**THREATS:** Threats of a physical nature or otherwise, against team/association or League authorities.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension for 1 year, to permanent suspension upon second offense.

**GAMBLING ON GAME OUTCOME:** Self-descriptive.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension for 1 year.

**LACK OF COOPERATION/OBSTRUCTION:** Lack of cooperation with team/association or League authorities and/or obstruction of an official team or League investigation into and hearing of cases of a disciplinary or dispute/conflict nature.

Minimum Penalty: Suspension until compliance is achieved.

**FALSIFICATION OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION:** Suspension for 1 year. This would include, but not be limited to: parental consent, medical examination, proof of age, proof of scholastic eligibility, and/or background screening forms.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** For any of the above offenses, the minimum mandated penalty may be suspended and the accused placed upon probation instead. However, suspension of the minimum mandated penalty is not recommended unless there are substantial mitigating circumstances and malice was not evidenced.

## VIOLATIONS OF MANDATORY PLAY RULE

**1st Violation:** SUSPENSION (may be reduced to probation).

**2nd Violation:** PROBATION REVOKED and original suspension reinstated.  
Dismissal if original suspension still in effect.

Upon suspension of any penalty provided herein, an accused shall be placed on probation, among the general conditions of which shall be:

1. That the accused be and remain of good behavior and that he strictly enforce all rules and regulations of Pop Warner.
2. That the accused prepare and submit to his League his written plan to supervise implementation of the Mandatory Play Rule (MPR).
- 3.

A suspension shall last seven (7) days for the first violation of a season, and shall continue for the remainder of the season for a second violation in the same season.

A coach found guilty of an MPR violation during a playoff, championship or bowl game shall first be required to obtain concurrence of the League Board of Directors before his reappointment as coach in a subsequent season by his association.

In addition, a player denied his required number of plays will start the next game and receive double the number of mandatory plays in that game. The failure of a convicted coach to comply with this provision will be deemed a second violation.

## **JUVENILE OFFENSES**

**FIGHTING:** Any act of fighting, or while down during the course of a play, or after a play, the act of hitting, kicking, striking, or otherwise abusing opponents.

Minimum Penalty: Removal from game for first offense; one week suspension from team for second offense; and suspension from team for the balance of the season for third offense.

**INTIMIDATION:** Verbal or physical intimidation of opponents outside of the normal talk across the line (of a non-profane nature).

Minimum Penalty: Removal from game for first offense; one week suspension from team for second offense; and suspension from team for the balance of the season for third offense.

**DISRESPECT FOR AUTHORITY:** Any act of disrespect for team/association/league authorities, or game officials.

Minimum Penalty: Removal from game for first offense; one week suspension from team for second offense; and suspension from team for the balance of the season for third offense.

## **TEAM & ASSOCIATION OFFENSES**

**FAILURE TO KEEP FAITH WITH JUVENILES & PARENTS:** This charge covers any deliberate practice of a team or association which places the health, welfare and safety of juveniles in jeopardy, or exploits or treats them in such a manner that the juvenile becomes a "tool" of the team.

To file this charge, the violation must result from team or association policy, and not be an aberration of one individual. This implies that the practice is carried out by order of, with the knowledge of, the officership, and no steps are taken to end it.

The charge can also cover failure to supervise implementation of the Mandatory Play Rule and the intentional running-up of scores.

Minimum Penalty: Probation of the organization coupled with permanent suspension of its president all others who participated in the practice. Upon a second offense, suspension of the organization until all officers are removed.

**FIGHTING/RIOTING/INCITEMENT TO RIOT:** At games or scrimmages between different teams, any fight or riot between team members, as opposed to one-on-one altercations, will be deemed a team offense rather than an individual offense. An incitement to riot is defined as team heckling or "egging-on" of an opponent in a manner which may result in a fight or riot.

Minimum Penalties:

- 1) Game-related: Forfeiture of the game for first offense; forfeiture of the season for second offense within the same season.
- 2) Scrimmage-related: At the discretion of League.

**INELIGIBLE PLAYERS:** Forfeiture of all games in which the ineligible player was a member of the team (whether or not he played in a particular game) shall be the standard penalty applied to the offending team.

Participation in bowl games may be prohibited upon recommendation of the League to the Region Director. Please see Rule 22 in PW Rule Book for most up to date information on handling ineligible players.

## SCHOLASTICS

Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. (PWLS) is the only national youth sports organization in America that requires its participants to perform adequately in the classroom before permitting them to participate. We believe that the standards we have set give these children a sense of responsibility and an appreciation for academics and athletics that will help them develop later on in life.

Each year, the most academically accomplished Pop Warner kids compete for Academic All-American status. This process begins at the association level and up through each of the eight Pop Warner regions to the national level. In 2018, approximately 325,000 kids participated in Pop Warner. Incredibly, more than 5,500 achieved regional pre-qualifying status for national recognition. As our numbers once again reached record levels, First Team & Second Team members were named PWLS Academic All-Americans at the National Level in 2018.

The PWLS All-American Program requires a minimum 96.00% grade point average to apply for All-American status. Only 70 (plus ties) applicants per grade are chosen as PWLS First Team All-Americans.

Scholarships are awarded and we recognize those that have contributed and served as exemplary ambassadors for Pop Warner. Nationally, we select First and Second Team All-Americans and award scholarships for higher education to the most deserving students. Scholarships are generally awarded to our Senior Scholars, which are First Team All-Americans in grades 8 and above. Since 1993, over \$1.5 Million in scholarship dollars have been awarded through the Pop Warner Awards Program.

### WHAT IS PROOF OF SCHOLASTIC FITNESS?

Proof of satisfactory progress in school is required. A 2.0/70% or the equivalent shall be the minimum grade point average acceptable to participate. In cases of doubt or conflict of opinion, a written statement by the school administration shall be deemed final. NOTE: This rule as it relates to scholastic grades may not be made more stringent by any team, association, league or Region, as other rules may be. No local team/squad may be eligible to participate in league championships and/or bowl games if it has not met the nationally published scholastic requirements.

### WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A 2.0/70% GRADE POINT AVERAGE?

We understand that not all student-athletes are able to meet our scholastic requirements. If a child does not meet the requirements of scholastic fitness, he/she may:

- 1) Fill out and submit a Scholastic Eligibility Form which is to be signed by a school administrator stating that the child will benefit from participating in the Pop Warner Program. This form allows the progress of the child to be monitored so they maintain a minimum standard and understand the value of academics in conjunction with athletics.
  - Scholastic Eligibility Forms must be affixed with a school stamp/seal and submitted prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in October to be considered valid. In cases where no school stamp/seal is available, the school administrator who is signing the form may simply place his/her initials in the appropriate box, therefore, notifying Pop Warner officials that there is no school stamp/seal available. Scholastic Eligibility forms will be deemed invalid if any required information is incomplete.
  - Scholastic Eligibility Forms are required for those students who are lacking a valid report card to submit for proof of Scholastic Fitness as defined in Part III, Article 6, S4 of the Pop Warner Rule Book.
  - Candidates may substitute final summer school grades in individual classes with final grades from the previous year to gain Scholastic Eligibility status.
- 2) If applicable in your Region, a student may participate in the Progress Report System implemented by Pop Warner in 2003. Within this system, a bi-weekly progress report will be required for eight (8) weeks, beginning on the first Friday in September. During the eight-week period, four (4) progress reports must be submitted (bi-weekly) from the child's learning institution. An original signed form must be provided to the head coach. No copies will be accepted. The child will be unable to participate in any games unless his/her weekly progress report shows satisfactory progress for that week. At the end of the (8) week period (4 bi-weekly reports), if the child has maintained at least three (3) weeks of satisfactory progress, he/she will become certified for the remainder of the playing season. If unsatisfactory progress is

reflected on any one of these reports or the child does not receive a progress report for a week, he/she will be ineligible to participate in that week's game. If the child does not have satisfactory progress for at least three (3) weeks during this period, he/she will be removed from the National Roster and will not be eligible to participate in any remaining games.

### **WHAT IF A PARENT REFUSES TO SUBMIT REPORT CARD?**

Sometimes, a parent may not want to produce proof of scholastic fitness the child participating in Pop Warner and refusal may be based upon a perceived infringement of privacy. In these matters, please stress to your parents that information released to Pop Warner officials will be held in strict confidence, and used only in accordance with the specified scholastic programs that are in place to benefit the youth participants. A signed letter from the child's teacher, school counselor or principal stating the child is making satisfactory scholastic progress in accordance with Pop Warner requirements may also serve as proof of scholastic fitness. Also, this case could also be resolved with a signed Scholastic Eligibility Form or by agreeing to Progress Report System for said student.

### **WHAT IF NO PROOF IS GIVEN AT ALL?**

When a parent signs his son or daughter up for Pop Warner, he waives his child's right to privacy regarding school records. If the parent wants to retain the right to privacy, he waives the child's privilege of playing Pop Warner Football. If no report card (or letter) is given, the parent may sign a release giving the Pop Warner official(s) authority to contact the school administration about the child's progress throughout the upcoming season. Rather than turning him away for failing grades from the year before, we give the child a chance to improve with constant encouragement and monitoring from the Pop Warner volunteer(s).

### **HOME-SCHOOL POLICY:**

Proof of satisfactory progress is required to participate for candidates who are home-schooled. A formal report of grades or report card is to be provided by the governing body responsible for the participant's class work. A child who is home-schooled is deemed eligible for participation if actual grades are provided by a governing body that meets the national requirement of a 2.0/70% or equivalent grade point average.

If no governing body is reported to, a written statement from an authorized person or legal parent/guardian of the home school shall be deemed acceptable if the following information is included within the letter verifying scholastic eligibility:

- Participant's name
- The school year
- Participant's final grade for each subject
- Final grade point average (If no grading scale is provided, use national Pop Warner Grading Conversions that most closely reflect the grading used by the home school.

### **WHO ENFORCES THIS SCHOLASTIC FITNESS RULE?**

You, on behalf of your organization, a chartered member of PWLS, Inc., have already agreed to abide by this rule. You and the other officials in your league are the administrators and enforcers of this rule. National requires paperwork on scholastic fitness be submitted before a team or cheer squad is considered for Regional and National Championships. This ensures that those hungry for victory are also hungry for knowledge.

### **WHAT MORE CAN WE DO TO ENCOURAGE GOOD GRADES?**

Besides enforcing the basic rule, there are additional steps you can take to promote academics in your community. In the words of one local scholastic chairman, "By recognizing the academic achievers you encourage them to continue and others to do better. These very same young people will be the ones filling our prescriptions, teaching our grandchildren and leading our nation. They are the volunteers, scientists, home builders and engineers that will follow in our footsteps. What our children are to be, they are NOW becoming." We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

It makes a difference. The following are some suggestions your association could take:

- Have one person be the Scholastic Program Coordinator. Put that person in charge of all aspects, from scholastic fitness forms for registration, Regional/National Championship fitness forms (if applicable), local Scholar programs, and nominations to National for All-American Scholars.
- Use the report cards brought to you to incorporate a team/squad ranking system. This encourages the support of all team members rather than specific individuals.

- Use the report cards submitted to award you own All-(your town) Scholars. This is a good base for nomination to the Conference, Regional, or National level. It eliminates the biased nomination of the “coach’s son” instead of the achiever who may be shy.
- Give proper recognition to the Scholars. Awarding certificates and plaques is the traditional way of honoring achievement. Some newer and more imaginative award ideas are:
  - a) Take an ad in the local paper to list your scholars. This can be done for All-Americans in the National program as well.
  - b) Place names of Scholars on one plaque and present it to your local Mayor for display at town hall or local library.
  - c) Build an annual awards banquet around your Scholars.
  - d) Have a special presentation during a home game.
  - e) Raise money to take your Scholars on an annual trip.
  - f) Have your Mayor and committee write up a proclamation of your Scholars.
  - g) Use bumper stickers, t-shirts, pins, pens instead of the usual certificate. Use your imagination and take advantage of what the kids like and use.
- Start a tutor program for the children that are having trouble with their grades. Many local high schools and colleges would be willing to help the youngsters.

These are just a few ways you can incorporate the Pop Warner philosophy into your own association. Whatever you do... Do It! Keeping academics an active part of your program helps in Public Relations and Corporate Fund-raising as well. Take advantage. Be a part of the nationwide scholastic program that is both good for the kids and attractive to parents, sponsors, and the community

## THE POP WARNER ALL-AMERICAN PROGRAM

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Participants are eligible to apply for the Pop Warner All-American program only if he/she meets the following criteria:

- 1) Candidates must be registered as a Pop Warner spirit or football participant; Coach Trainees and Student Demos are not eligible for the All American Program.
- 2) Enrolled in Grade 5 or above during the current Pop Warner season
- 3) Have a complete year’s report card from the previous school year
- 4) Achieve a 96.00% grade point average from the previous school year
- 5) Complete addendum

### THE ALL-AMERICAN PROCESS

- Step 1:** All PWLS Scholastic Forms are posted on the website at [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com) by the end of April for all Association and League contacts. Forms are then copied and distributed to PWLS members, usually during registration.
- Step 2:** All-American Forms are monitored and collected by the Association Directors and passed along to the Conference/League Directors. It is the responsibility of the Association Directors to collect applications from all possible candidates for his/her association.
- Step 3:** Conference/League Directors collect all applications from his/her associations and pass them along to the Regional Scholastic Coordinator.
- Step 4:** Regional Scholastic Directors will separate applications by grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> and above, for both Football and Spirit.
- Step 5:** Regions will submit the top candidates that they feel best qualify as First-Team All-Americans in 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade and above.\*

Regions will send their choices of the top 35 Football Players and 35 Spirit Leaders to be considered for First Team All-American status. These candidates will have no lower than a 98.5 percent grade average and fully completed addendum. \*\*

\* Because a Region submits candidates for First-Team, this does automatically guarantee a First-Team spot. However, First-Team candidates submitted by the Regional Staff to the National Office that do not meet First-Team standards will automatically be Second Team All-Americans (providing that all paperwork is completed and a full year's report card is attached).

\*\*If a Region cannot reach the maximum requirement of 35 Football Players and 35 Spirit Leaders for First-Team nomination, they are encouraged to submit as many names that meet the PWLS National Requirement of 98.5 percent. No more than 35 Football Players and 35 Spirit leaders can be submitted by a Region for First Team.

**Step 6:** All-American applications will be submitted to the National Office by grade level and separated by Football and Spirit. By doing this, the National Office can ensure that all eight Regions will receive equal consideration for First-Team All-American and that their All-American information will be delivered in a timely fashion.

### THINGS TO CONSIDER:

1. It is recommended that you set up a committee in charge of screening, grading, and sorting all applications from your region. The amount of people who serve on this committee is based on the number of applications and time required, and should be under the discretion of the RMT and the Regional Scholastics Coordinator.
2. All applications must be postmarked by the third Friday in January to be sent to the PWLS national office. No exceptions to this rule will be made. It is recommended that deadlines be established for submission of applications to the Association Scholastic Coordinator, the Conference/League Coordinator and the Regional Scholastics Coordinator.

### WHO IS SELECTED AND HOW?

- A final score is calculated for each student that consists of up to 100 points (85%) for the student's grades for the prior school year, along with up to 18 points (15%) awarded for the attached Addendum sheet of activities and achievements.
- Once the scores have been calculated, First Team All-Americans are selected. The top 35 football players and 35 cheer & dance participants per grade (plus ties) are selected as National First Team All-Americans.
- Second Team All-Americans are then determined by Pop Warner based upon the number of applications that were submitted for that year.

### NOTIFICATION OF ALL-AMERICAN SCHOLARS

Once the PWLS National All-Americans have been chosen, notification is sent to the Regional Management Team along with each League, with a complete list of scholars from their respective region and/or League. It is the responsibility of the RMT to distribute this information accordingly to their respective scholastic coordinators throughout the region. However, if you wish to have a soft copy or a personalized list of scholars for certain teams, associations or leagues, simply email or call the National Scholastics Director with this request.

A complete list of All-Americans will also be immediately posted on the PWLS website at [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com), upon completion of the selection process, by April 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Each scholar will receive an informational packet in April that includes:

- Congratulatory letter from Pop Warner indicating their scholastic accomplishment.
- Certificate of achievement for National All-American Scholars.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED SCHOLASTIC QUESTIONS:

### What is the difference between First Team, Second Team, and Honorable Mention All-American?

- A First Team All-American is one of the top 35 football players or top 35 cheerleaders for his/her grade nationwide. A Second Team All-American consists of the next sixty-five percent of participants in each category. We feel that everyone who meets the criteria for All-American consideration should be rewarded for his/her academic success so anyone that does not qualify for first or second team is awarded honorable mention.
- **If my son/daughter makes First Team for his/her region, are they automatically a National First Team All-American?**  
No. Regional awards and National awards are graded on a scale completely independent from one another.. You must understand that while a scholar may make First Team at the Region Level, he/she is competing against the entire nation at the National Level.
- **What is an All-American Senior Scholar and are they the only ones eligible for scholarships?**  
An All-American Senior Scholar is a First Team recipient in grades 8 and above, who is enrolled as a participant in our football or spirit programs, and is not classified as a Student Demonstrator or Coach Trainee. Generally, they are first in line for scholarships but scholarships are not exclusively awarded to this group.
- **How big of an accomplishment is it to be named as a Pop Warner All-American Scholar?**  
A tremendous accomplishment! If your son/daughter is recognized as a Pop Warner All-American Scholar, then he/she is amongst the top 2% of all Pop Warner participants. They are also eligible to attend our Awards Recognition Program held annually which commemorates their achievements on the field, in the classroom and in the community.

## OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

- All-American applications must be postmarked and mailed to the National Office through the Region by the third Friday in January. No exceptions. Applications postmarked after this date will not be considered. Submissions by Leagues, Associations, or individuals to the National Office will also not be accepted.
- Regional Scholastic Directors or Vice-Region Directors will separate applications by grades 5 through 8 and above, for both Football and Spirit.
- All nominees that have a 96.00% percent or above grade average will be approved for Second Team or Honorable Mention consideration, providing that all paperwork is filled out completely and a full-year's report card and addendum is attached.
- Notifications of All-American status are sent out to all First and Second Team All-Americans by April 1st each year.
- Individual applications received at the National Office for Scholastic All-American eligibility will not be reviewed. Forms must go through the process (Association, League, Region) and submitted to the National Office by the Region in order to be reviewed. No Exceptions.

## IMPORTANT SCHOLASTIC DATES

<b>April:</b>	Scholastic Packets are posted online for all Association & League Contacts
<b>August 1:</b>	First day of practice, Scholastic Eligibility Forms due
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in January:</b>	Deadline for receipt of All-American Scholar Applications at PWLS, Inc.
<b>April 1:</b>	Announcement of Pop Warner All-American Scholars on <a href="http://www.popwarner.com">www.popwarner.com</a> All-American packets are mailed out to leagues and scholars.
<b>May:</b>	Pop Warner Scholastic All-American Recognition

## IMPORTANT SCHOLASTIC FORMS:

- Scholastic Eligibility Form (or)
- Progress Report System Form
- Home School Form
- Scholastic All-American Application & All American Addendum (1 Excel File)

## REGIONAL/LOCAL SCHOLASTIC RECOGNITION

Every region, league, and association is encouraged to organize and hold an annual scholastic recognition program for its scholar-athletes. While there are many ways to run a scholastic banquet, it is recommended that you consult and work with the National Scholastics Director to help guide you through the process, and provide you with examples of previous scholastic banquets at the various levels.

It is the responsibility of the Scholastics Directors to plan, organize and run these events, with the help of appointed volunteers. As mentioned, there are many different ways to run a scholastics banquet, so the planning must be done on case-by-case basis.

However, here are a few suggestions to consider when planning a scholastics banquet:

- Create a team of people to conduct the planning, organizing and executing: One person can't do everything.
- Start planning the event *at least* 6 months in advance. (It might take you this long to book a facility in which to hold the event).
- Plan the event for a weekend, Saturdays and Sundays around holiday weekends have proven to be good days, to give access to as many people as you can.
- Give plenty of warning: let people know far ahead of time about the event so they can save the date.
- Who is eligible to attend? Create a set of criteria to use: do they have to be National All-Americans? Do you want to develop your own criteria? Etc.
- Do you want to give away scholarships? You can use the proceeds from the event, hold a fundraiser, golf tournament, company donations, etc.
- Consider having a raffle of prizes, people love to win free things!
- Event should be 2 hours MAXIMUM. in length!
- Hold the event at a place that is accessible to as many people as possible.
- Work with the facility to get the best possible deals: meals, lighting, fees, etc.
- Can you get sponsors to advertise (signs, banners) to help out with the costs?
- Try to get a guest speaker for the event, use your connections!
- Promote your event to the media to attract as much public interest as possible (see chapter 7 for more information on public relations)

These events (at all levels) take a lot of work and a serious commitment, physically, mentally and financially, but the results make all of your hard work worthwhile!

**PW EVENTS****POP WARNER FOOTBALL & CHEER CAMPS**

Pop Warner does not currently offer camps nationally. Camps are permitted prior to July 15<sup>th</sup> as long as the following are adhered to: Camps must be open to all ages and all participants in a given league. No association only camps can be conducted. No active Pop Warner coaches may conduct camps. No team units may participate together in a camp. All camps must be approved through the Event Request Process. Failure to adhere to these rules shall be considered as a violation of Pop Warner practice rules. Please contact your Regional Director or the National Office for further details.

Please take special note for camps that offer “live contact.” Most such camps have kids hitting on the first day. Pop Warner Rules require a player to have at least 5 days of conditioning before contact is held. Live contact camps do not usually offer this conditioning. Parents must decide individually about such camps. Football coaches may NOT take their teams to a camp before the August 1st practice date as it is a violation of PW rules.

**CHEER AND DANCE CAMPS/CLINICS**

JAMZ Cheer and Dance is the endorsed camp provider for Pop Warner.

- A. Camps Must Be Open To All Ages And All Participants In A Given League/Association. All Camps Must Be Approved Through The Event Request Process with appropriate camp insurance.
- B. No Pop Warner Organization Or Personnel Associated Within, Shall Require Or Mandate That A Pop Warner Football Or Spirit Team, In Part Or In Whole, With Or Without Coach(s) To Attend A Spirit Camp. There Shall Be No Exceptions. However, A Pop Warner Spirit Team, In Part Or In Whole MAY Attend A Camp If They So Choose To, Providing The Following Conditions Are Met:
- a. Coach Or Other Team Affiliated Personnel Does Not Make It MANDATORY.
  - b. Camp Provides As Part Of Its Services An Accident Insurance Plan For Camp Participants.
  - c. Any Camp, Whether It Be For Players Or Spirit Participants, Shall Not Be Endorsed Or Sponsored By Any League, Association, Or Team, Which Does Not Provide As Part Of Its Services, An Accident Insurance Plan For The Camp Participants.
- Clinics are generally a 1 Day Event and Camps are generally 3 to 4 day Event (Consecutive Days)
    - Pre-Season Clinic Camp permitted in June or July.
    - In-Season Clinic Camp permitted, counted towards practice time.
  - Competition Choreography Clinics/Camps are Not Permitted.
  - Recruiting events are permitted with no skills or demonstrations, meet and greet only (i.e., classroom/PPT Presentation style) with event request approval.
  - A Recruiting Camp/Clinic is permitted with event request approval and appropriate camp insurance. Recruiting Camp/Clinic events are permitted on behalf of an Association. Clinics are generally a 1 Day Event and Camps are generally 3 to 4 day Event (Consecutive Days)

**Pop Warner Certification Book Instructions**

- 1) **Pop Warner Roster:** Placed in the first page of the certification book. Front one side, back the other. (Roster must be in alphabetical order Older Lighters First).
- 2) I.D. Cards
- 3.) Proof of Age – Copy of Birth Certificate, or any other authorized document per Article 6 S3 of PW Rule Book
- 4.) Physical Fitness & Medical Examination – Dated after January 1 of the current year
- 5.) Participant Contract & Parental Consent

6.) Scholastic Fitness - Report card showing a 2.0 or 70% or, HSEF or, SEF properly checked & approved by the Region with a stamp, crimp or sticker. Must show final grade or all semester grades.

7.) All Coaches USA Heads Up Football Training Certificate or Cheer & Dance YCADA Training Certificate

## **RULEBOOKS**

The Official Pop Warner Rulebook is updated annually and electronic copies are provided free of charge. The Official Rule Book is also available to Pop Warner members at [www.popwarner.com](http://www.popwarner.com).

## **ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL**

This manual will be updated as necessary and available electronically via [popwarner.com](http://popwarner.com) for Regions, Leagues and Associations.

## **PLANNING THE YEAR**

The playing season for Pop Warner usually lasts from August 1 to December 31st, but typically a successful operation requires full attention for twelve months of the year. Below please find a suggested planning guide.

### **JANUARY**

Find venues and set dates for meetings that will occur throughout the year.

Set plans and goals for the year.

Begin searching for venues to host your league championships, scholastic banquet and other events.

### **FEBRUARY**

File Online League Election Forms and Association Registration Forms with National Office.

Check your League boundaries and review applications for new associations or teams.

Check with National Headquarters to make sure scholastics are in order if you are participating in the All-American program.

Order new equipment and determine the condition of current equipment. Recondition if necessary. Make sure inventory is tallied.

Pop Warner National Planning Meeting occurs.

YCADA Global Games

### **MARCH**

Update your By-Laws.

Record any changes and send to National Headquarters for your permanent record.

Start planning team recruitment. Select new coaches and/or "re-hire" old coaches.

Cheer/Dance Final Add/Drop – Jan.1 to March 31.

Pop Warner Spring Championship

### **APRIL**

Begin working on field schedules and local high school or recreation department.

Contact team sponsors and potential sponsors.

### **MAY**

Begin circulation of recruiting materials in schools and stores.

Start pre-registration of players and cheerleaders.

Pop Warner National Scholastic Recognition

### **JUNE**

Begin searching for spirit judges and football officials.

Continue registration and search for other financial resources.

Plan fund-raising activities.

Clinics and Camps may be held this month.

YCADA (Y101PW) Required Course Available

### **JULY**

Coaches should meet with their assistants and plan the practice schedule for August.

Clinics and camps are primarily held during this month.

Continue registration and recruiting of players and cheerleaders.

Make sure all medical and liability insurance forms are filled and coverage is ready by August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Form committees, e.g., concessions, equipment, etc.  
League distributes rulebooks and other materials from Headquarters to associations or teams.  
Cheer/Dance season ends July 31.  
YCADA Coaches' Competitive Edge (Y201) Available  
YCADA Judges' Training (Y301) Course Available

## **AUGUST**

Begin practice anytime this month.  
Review practice rules.  
Coaches and administrators meet with parents and review the season's practice and game schedules.  
Preliminary certification takes place to make sure all players and cheerleaders are eligible.  
Send Registration Forms to National Headquarters.

## **SEPTEMBER**

Check final certification and patch requirement for all players, cheerleaders and dancers.  
Begin regular season.  
Send final Registration Forms to headquarters.

## **OCTOBER**

Send final roster information to Headquarters.  
Send team and insurance adjustments to Headquarters.  
Regular season play continues. League Cheer & Dance Championships take place.  
Plan post-season activity.  
Leagues entering National Championships should contact their respective regional representatives for details.

## **NOVEMBER**

Regular season ends and League championships take place.  
Begin post-season play for bowl games and Regional playoffs.  
Regional Championships take place.  
Leagues and associations begin selection of their All-American Scholars for submission to Headquarters.  
Begin searching for summer camp venues.

## **DECEMBER**

Pop Warner Super Bowl and National Cheer and Dance Championships take place.  
League meets to review season.  
President picks nominating committee for new officers. Elect league and association officers.  
Coaches and equipment managers collect equipment from players for storage and inventory.  
Pop Warner Football season ends December 31<sup>st</sup>.