

Unit 1: Pop Warner Overview

Pop Warner's Significance

Pop Warner is recognized as the largest and oldest youth sports program in the United States, with an unmatched emphasis on education. It proudly hosts the TRUE National Championship, symbolizing high athletic achievement and organizational prestige.

Little Scholars Program

A defining feature is Pop Warner's commitment to academic performance. Participants must meet scholastic standards to remain eligible, reflecting the program's dual focus on brain and brawn. Scholar-athletes receive recognition and awards, including scholarships, for their academic excellence.

Pop Warner History

Founded in 1929 by Joe Tomlin, Pop Warner Little Scholars was created expressly for youth benefit, guided by a philosophy integrating academic achievement and athletic participation from inception.

Philosophy and Mission

The program's philosophy is to develop well-rounded youth by balancing fundamentals in sports with a strong emphasis on education and ensuring a fun experience. This approach nurtures not only physical skills but character development.

Legacy of the Name

The program honors Glen Scobie "Pop" Warner, a celebrated 1920s college coach, who gave permission for his name to be used, symbolizing a legacy of coaching excellence and youth mentorship.

National & International Outreach

Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. operates as a non-profit with headquarters in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, promoting youth football, cheer, and dance programs nationally and globally.

PWLS Goals & Objectives

Pop Warner aims to inspire youth across diverse backgrounds, emphasizing self-discipline, teamwork, concentration, friendship, leadership, and sportsmanship. It mandates maximum safety in all activities, providing structured environments that prioritize participant welfare.

Pop Warner Academic Standards



One of the core requirements in Pop Warner is that every participant must be academically fit as well as physically fit. This requirement ensures that Pop Warner stands apart as an educationally focused athletic program.

The Pop Warner Advantage & National Championships

The National Championships are a marquee event featuring over 500 cheer/dance teams and 88 football teams competing for top honors, fostering high levels of competition and community spirit.

National Rules and Administrative Support

Pop Warner issues free National Rule Books and Administrative Manuals to leagues and associations, which ensure consistent adherence to policies and the smooth operation of local programs.

Safety Enhancements

Significant strides in player safety have been achieved through evidence-based rule changes advised by a medical board, comprehensive coach training initiatives, and innovative programs like Heads Up Football, which have reduced injuries by 87% over three years.

Safety Protocols

Key safety measures include limited contact during practice sessions, elimination of kickoffs for younger players, strict concussion protocols, and specific stances for young athletes, all designed to minimize risks and ensure long-term health.

National Partnerships and Funding

Pop Warner secures essential funding through grants, equipment donations, fundraising programs, tax exemptions, and mandatory insurance policies, enabling sustainable and safe operations at all levels.

Post Season Opportunities

Teams that do not qualify for playoffs still have chances to participate in post-season bowl games, providing broader competition exposure. Cheer and dance squads can join additional competitions with approved event requests, allowing inclusive opportunities for youth.

Training Programs

Pop Warner supports ongoing coach education through partnerships with USA Football's Heads Up Football Program, the Youth Cheer and Dance Association (YCADA), and regional live/recertification training to maintain high coaching standards nationwide.

Pop Warner Organizational Structure

- National Pop Warner
- Regional Pop Warner (e.g., Southeast Region)
- League/Conference (e.g., Greater Miami)
- Independent Associations (e.g., Palmetto Raiders)
- Teams organized by age level (e.g., 10U)

This structure facilitates organized governance and efficient management from national oversight down to local teams.

Governance and Boards

At various levels, executive and association boards include roles such as President, Vice President, Commissioners (Football/Cheer), Compliance Officer, Scholastic Coordinator, Treasurer, Secretary, and optionally, roles for fundraising, equipment management, and communications.

Local associations operate independently but adhere to national and regional guidelines, responsible for field securing, recruiting coaches, managing insurance, enforcing rules, financial record-keeping, and handling grievances.

Team and Cheer Squad Composition

Football teams and cheer squads have designated staff structures, including head coaches, assistant coaches, coach trainees, team parents, and equipment or trainer roles. These roles ensure comprehensive support for athletes both on and off the field.

Authority and Discipline

Team staff have the authority to enforce all national, regional, and local rules. While discipline of participants is part of coaching responsibilities, it is conducted within defined parameters ensuring fairness and safety.

Scholastic Pride & Realities of Progression

Pop Warner emphasizes scholastic pride, encouraging acknowledgment of academic success alongside athletic participation. Statistics illustrate the slim odds of reaching professional football, reinforcing the program's message that education is paramount.

Academic Standards and Recognition

To participate, athletes must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 (or 70%). Those who do not comply must complete eligibility forms monitored throughout the season. Scholastic achievements are recognized locally, regionally, and nationally, with scholarships awarded annually totaling over \$100,000 to deserving senior scholars.

Volunteer Safety and Compliance

All volunteers and administrators undergo mandatory background checks to protect youth participants. Emphasis is placed on discretion and preventative measures, acknowledging that lapses can lead to serious repercussions, illustrated by cautionary incidents.

Protests, Complaints, and Cooling Period

The policy distinguishes between protests regarding participant eligibility and general complaints or grievances, both subject to timely filing protocols. A mandatory 24-hour cooling-off period discourages emotionally driven complaints, fostering a responsible and respectful environment.

Coaches Commitment

Coaches are volunteers entrusted with upholding and promoting Pop Warner's goals and philosophy. Their cooperation with local associations is vital for sustaining the program's reputation as the premier youth sports organization blending athletics and academics.

Summary and Closing

The first unit concludes by reaffirming Pop Warner as the world's leading youth football and cheer/dance organization, uniquely dedicated to scholastic excellence alongside athletic pursuits. Participants are reminded of ongoing responsibilities and the support systems available throughout their coaching journey.

This comprehensive overview of the Southeast Region Pop Warner training content equips coaches with vital knowledge about the organization's history, values, structure, safety priorities, and the critical balance between academic and athletic achievement foundational to Pop Warner's mission.

ODDS OF MAKING IT IN THE NFL

**1.1 Million High School Players
Including 300,000 Seniors**

6.5% HS players to NCAA

70,000 NCAA Players

Including 15,000 Seniors

1.6% NCAA players to NFL

**6,500 players scouted by the NFL
350 players invited to NFL Combine
256 Players Drafted
150 Players reach 4th year in NFL**

**There is a 0.014% change of making it
to the 4th NFL Season**

Unit 2: Risk Management

Definition of Risk Management

Risk management in youth sports coaching refers to directing and controlling the interests and performance of the sports program by teaching, guiding, and inspiring others to ensure a safe and healthy experience for all participants. The primary goal is to minimize risks and prevent harm through proactive strategies and informed leadership.

Increasing Lawsuits in Youth Sports

There has been a noticeable rise in lawsuits involving youth sports, drawing media attention due to the frequency of incidents. Coaches increasingly face legal scrutiny primarily related to negligence, which is defined as the failure to exercise reasonable and prudent care, potentially causing harm. Teaching improper techniques is a common example of negligent behavior.

Coach Liability in Youth Sports

Youth coaches can be held legally liable for injuries to athletes if their actions exhibit reckless disregard for safety. A landmark California Supreme Court case confirmed that coaches who consciously and deliberately ignore safety risks can be held responsible for resulting injuries. This underscores the heavy responsibility coaches bear in maintaining a safe environment.

Protecting Yourself as a Coach

To avoid litigation, coaches must familiarize themselves with the specific rules of their sport, such as the Pop Warner rules and expectations of local governing boards. Adhering closely to the National Rule Book and local regulations minimizes risks and fosters a responsible coaching environment. Continuous education through mandated training programs—namely, Southeast Region Pop Warner trainings and certifications such as “YCADA” for cheerleading or “USA Football Heads Up program” for football—is essential given the ever-evolving nature of youth sports.

Common Causes of Litigation Against Coaches

Legal actions often stem from several key coach behaviors:

- Physical abuse of players.
- Negligence, including improper instruction.
- Inadequate breaks and rest periods.

These issues highlight the importance of fair, respectful, and attentive coaching practices.

Top Responsibilities of a Coach

Coaches have nine fundamental responsibilities to ensure safety and effective program management:

1. Properly plan activities with thorough practice plans that detail timing and planned exercises.
2. Provide appropriate supervision, maintaining constant vigilance and ensuring less experienced assistants are not left in charge of activities they are unprepared for.
3. Ensure a safe physical environment by inspecting fields and facilities before practices or games.
4. Provide adequate and safe equipment, properly fitted, well-maintained, and not modified against regulations.
5. Match athletes according to skill, experience, age, maturity, height, and weight to prevent mismatches that could lead to injury.

6. Warn athletes of inherent risks involved in skills, drills, or gameplay, emphasizing the importance of proper technique.
7. Provide proper instruction using the latest methods and coaching knowledge.
8. Evaluate athletes for injury or incapacity diligently.
9. Initiate medical response protocols promptly in emergencies.

Planning Practices Properly

Coaches are required to prepare detailed practice plans for each session, specifying the duration of each activity and skills to be covered. Documenting injuries or concerns is critical. A written practice plan is a vital component of coach preparedness, serving as a defense against negligence allegations.

Appropriate Supervision

Continuous and focused supervision is mandatory. Coaches should never allow unqualified assistants to oversee drills independently. Younger athletes require closer supervision. Additionally, coaches should avoid situations where a single adult is alone with minors; maintaining at least two adults present protects both athletes and adults from potential allegations or incidents. Examples of lawsuits have arisen from failures to follow this single-adult policy.



Maintaining a Safe Physical Environment

Before allowing athlete participation, coaches must inspect practice and competition venues for hazards, secure restricted areas, and report any unsafe conditions to prevent injuries arising from the environment.

Safe Transportation Practices



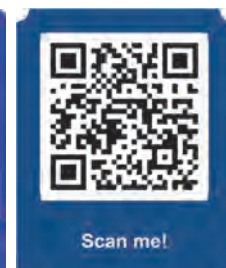
Transportation of athletes must be conducted by licensed adults in vehicles equipped with seat belts and maintained in proper working order. Open pickup trucks or unsafe transport methods are prohibited to protect participants during travel.

Equipment Safety and Standards

Equipment must be properly fitted to each athlete, inspected daily, well-maintained, and never altered improperly. Helmets require current NOCSAE certification, cannot be older than ten years, and must be recertified regularly according to manufacturer standards. Coaches are responsible for ensuring appropriate equipment use and safety compliance.



Riddell Helmet Fitting



Riddell Shoulder pad Fitting

Matching Athletes Appropriately

Athletes should be matched to prevent competitive disadvantage and injury. Considerations include skill, experience, height, weight, age, and maturity. Size alone is an insufficient criterion; experience levels matter significantly for safety.

Warning of Inherent Risks

Coaches must communicate the risks related to any sport skill, drill, or activity clearly. Athletes should be encouraged to perform drills safely, understanding the dangers of improper, unsafe, or unethical techniques.

Proper Instruction Techniques

Using up-to-date coaching methods, proper mechanics, and progressive skill development is essential. Negligence often occurs when coaches teach improper techniques or provide inadequate supervision. Coaches are urged to improve their knowledge through formal training, clinics, and reading. Importantly, coaches should not attempt to teach any skills they do not understand.

Injury Evaluation and Medical Response

Assessing the severity of injuries or illnesses is crucial as untreated injuries may worsen or result in permanent damage. Pop Warner requires at least one first aid and CPR-certified coach at every practice and competition. Practices or games cannot proceed without certified personnel present.

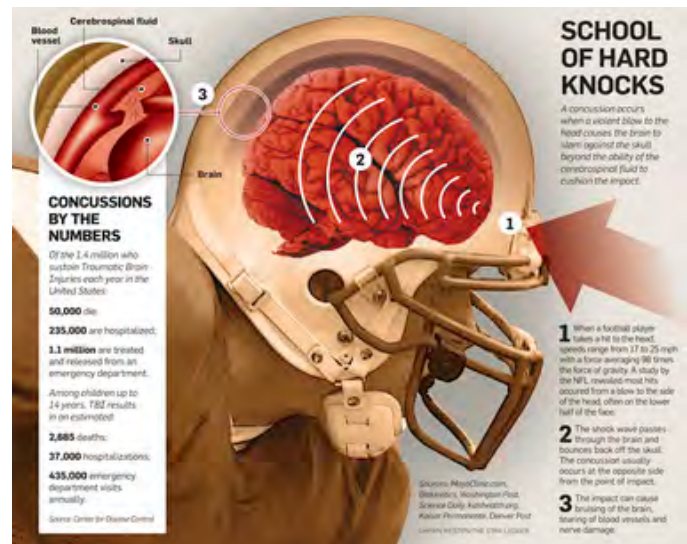
Emergency response includes:

- Ensuring scene safety.
- Protecting the injured athlete from further harm.
- Following universal precautions.
- Activating Emergency Action Plans.
- Supervising non-injured athletes while care is provided.

Return to Play Guidelines

Following injuries, strict protocols govern when athletes may return:

- Athletes removed due to injury cannot re-enter without medical approval.
- The absence of pain does not imply the injury is minor.
- Athletes should never attempt to “walk off” pain, swelling, or redness.
- Movement of athletes with suspected head, neck, or back injuries is prohibited.
- Signs such as deformity, altered consciousness, vomiting, severe bleeding, or breathing difficulty require immediate medical attention.
- A licensed medical professional must authorize return to play.
- Coaches cannot independently decide on return-to-play, even for their own children, the final decision rests with qualified medical staff on site.



Concussion Guidelines

Suspected concussions require immediate removal from play. Athletes must be evaluated by licensed medical professionals trained in concussion management and receive written clearance before resuming participation. Coaches must promptly inform parents or guardians and follow strict return-to-play procedures, prioritizing participant health and safety.

Incident Weather Policies

Coaches are responsible for monitoring weather conditions alongside officials and administrators. Familiarity with league-specific guidelines for weather disruptions, particularly lightning, is mandatory. Lightning is a significant concern in Southeast Pop Warner with high fatality rates, especially in Florida. Coaches should follow established lightning safety protocols to minimize risk.

Heat Safety and Warm Weather Rules

Warm weather conditions are closely monitored, starting from the first practice day until mid-September or when temperatures reach or exceed 90°F. Coaches must recognize early and late stages of heat illness:

- Heat Cramps: Muscle cramps, fatigue, thirst.
- Heat Exhaustion: Headache, dizziness, nausea, dark urine (indicating dehydration).
- Heatstroke: Severe symptoms including fever over 104°F, confusion, dry skin, seizures, and unconsciousness, potentially fatal.

Hydration education and monitoring urine color serve as practical tools to combat heat-related illnesses. Coaches should know and apply these guidelines rigorously.

Technology and Safety Monitoring

Using reliable weather and heat apps (such as Weather Bug, NOAA Radar, and WBGT monitors) is recommended for accurate and timely safety information. Coaches should research and use multiple apps to enhance safety monitoring.

Program Conclusion

Risk management in youth football demands coaches learn the rules, exercise common sense, and uphold their nine core responsibilities vigilantly. By doing the right thing and actively managing risks, coaches provide a safer sports environment and reduce liability.

Unit 3: Coach-Athlete Communication & Why Children Play Youth Sports

Why Do We Coach?

The foundational question addressed in this section is why coaches choose to dedicate time and effort to coaching youth sports. Through active audience participation, various motivations surface, reflecting the diverse goals among coaches. Key reasons include:

- **Achieving Competitive Success:** Some coaches aim to win championships such as conference titles, the Super Bowl in youth leagues, or even reach national championships.
- **Beat Rival Teams:** Coaches are often motivated to outperform specific competitors or established teams.
- **Community Contribution:** Many are driven by a wish to give back to the community and contribute to youth development.
- **Skill Development:** Coaches emphasize teaching specific skills and strategies, focusing on player growth.

Why Do Children Play Youth Sports?

Understanding children's motivations for participation is crucial for effective coaching and program development. This section uses engagement methods to explore the youths' driving forces for involvement in sports like cheerleading, dance, and football.



Top Reasons Children Play Sports: Survey Results

1. **To Have Fun:** The primary motivation is enjoyment. Children want sports to be an enjoyable activity rather than a chore.
2. **Being Part of a Team and Socializing:** Youth value the camaraderie of being on a team and spending time with friends.
3. **Learning New Skills:** Developing new abilities keeps young athletes engaged and provides a sense of accomplishment.
4. **The Excitement of Competition:** The thrill of competing adds an important element to participation, driving motivation.
5. **Physical Fitness:** Children also see sports to get in shape and maintain health.

By highlighting these factors, this section stresses the importance of creating a fun, social, developmental, and competitive environment to sustain youth interest.

Why Do We Coach for the Kids?

This section reflects deeply on the coaching responsibility, specifically which children are coaches are there for. The query explores whether attention is solely directed at one's own children, team members, local neighborhood youth, or broadly to all children including those on opposing teams.

The implication is that coaches should extend care beyond their immediate players to embrace all youth athletes, fostering a culture of respect and inclusiveness. This broad perspective is essential to positively impact the community and the sport.

Why Kids Stop Playing Sports

This section lists the top 5 reasons youth drop out of sports:

1. **Lost Interest (Boredom):** Activities that fail to engage children lead to attrition.
2. **Lack of Fun:** If sports are not enjoyable, children tend to quit.
3. **Time Commitment:** Youth may feel sports take excessive time away from other activities or obligations.
4. **Poor Coaching:** Negative experiences with coaches who are ineffective teachers or overly critical discourage continued participation.
5. **Excessive Pressure:** Stress from worrying about disappointing a coach or meeting high expectations causes youth to quit.

Understanding these causes guides coaches to prioritize fun, engagement, respectful communication, and reasonable demands.

How Do You Want to Be Remembered as a Coach?

This reflective question encourages coaches to consider their legacy. It prompts thinking about the impact they wish to have on young athletes – not just in terms of wins and losses, but also in shaping character, building relationships, and fostering a positive sports culture.

How to Keep Young Athletes Involved in Football & Cheerleading

Strategies to sustain participation focus on:

- **Emphasizing Skill Learning and Improvement:** Encouraging progression keeps athletes motivated.
- **Having Fun:** Maintaining enjoyment is essential.
- **Safe Environment:** Physical and emotional safety ensures comfort and willingness to stay.
- **Creative Physical Challenges:** Varied, innovative exercises sustain interest.
- **Sense of Team Belonging:** A strong, supportive team culture fosters connection and loyalty.

This section aligns directly with kids' motivations, affirming that coaches must nurture these areas.

Benefits of Keeping Youth Involved in Team Sports

The benefits extend beyond the field, influencing multiple aspects of youth development:

- **Improved Concentration:** Sports promote focus.

- **Reduced Stress & Depression:** Physical activity and social connection help mental health.
- **Boosted Self-Confidence:** Success and participation raise self-esteem.
- **Enhanced Social Skills:** Team sports develop communication and interpersonal abilities.
- **Leadership Traits:** Team roles foster leadership.
- **Academic Success:** Positive routines and discipline aid academics.
- **Reduced Risk of Drug Abuse:** Engagement in sports provides structure and support that lower risky behaviors.

These benefits reinforce why retention in youth sports is crucial both for individuals and communities.

Effective Communication in Coaching

Critical aspects of communication include:

- **Knowing Your Participants:** Understanding each athlete's personality and needs builds trust.
- **Showing You Care:** Genuine concern reinforces relationships.
- **Making Athletes Feel Valued:** Affirming the individual's worth enhances motivation.
- **Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication:** Coaches must manage both spoken words and body language to convey respect and encouragement effectively.

“ATHLETES DON'T CARE WHAT YOU KNOW, UNTIL THEY KNOW THAT YOU CARE!”

Steps to Teaching a New Skill

Effective skill instruction involves these four steps:

1. **Explain:** Clearly describe the skill and its importance.
2. **Demonstrate:** Show the skill in action.
3. **Practice:** Allow athletes to try the skill themselves.
4. **Provide Feedback:** Offer immediate, specific, and constructive comments to refine performance.

Ensuring Participant Attention

Coaches must maintain focus by:

- Positioning athletes to see demonstrations clearly.
- Minimizing environmental distractions.
- Speaking loudly and clearly.
- Maintaining eye contact to foster engagement.

Attention is prerequisite to learning and safety.

Giving Effective Feedback

- **Catch Athletes Doing Things Right:** Positive feedback encourages repetition of good behavior.
- **Be Specific and Concise:** Clear guidance is more meaningful.
- **Focus on Strengths Over Weaknesses:** Emphasizing positives motivates.
- **Give Feedback Immediately:** Prompt responses reinforce learning.
- **Be Sincere:** Authenticity builds trust.
- **Reward Improvement and Effort, Not Just Perfection:** This encourages a growth mindset.
- **Avoid Insults and Negativity:** Negative feedback harms morale and motivation.

Overall Summary

Coaches are urged to focus not just on winning but on holistic youth development by fostering enjoyable, respectful, and supportive experiences. Effective communication, careful teaching, positive feedback, and an inclusive attitude distinguish successful coaches who leave lasting positive impressions beyond the game.



Unit 4: Code of Conduct

Expected Behavior from Coaches, Parents, and Adult Volunteers or Spectators

This section establishes the foundation for appropriate behavior expected from all adults involved in youth sports, specifically within Pop Warner. Coaches, parents, and any adult volunteers or spectators must uphold a standard of conduct that fosters a respectful, positive, and supportive environment for young athletes. The emphasis is on being role models who contribute to the developmental aspects of youth sports, promoting respect for players, officials, and the spirit of the game. Adult behavior significantly influences the atmosphere surrounding the sport, directly impacting players' experiences and attitudes.

Recent Trends and Media Coverage

Youth sports have become a battleground of misconduct involving coaches and parents, as illustrated by numerous media reports. Examples include headlines highlighting abusive parental behavior, aggression toward referees, the rise of profanity, and unsportsmanlike conduct. These developments are damaging the youth sports experience and undermining the positive potential of organized athletics. The media coverage underscores a growing national concern about how adults' negative actions distort the environment and detract from children's enjoyment and learning.

Sharing Experiences of Poor Coach and Parent Conduct

Do you have any real-life examples of poor coaching and or parent misconduct you would like to share?

Common Misconduct Observed Weekly

This section notes that beyond extreme cases, more common but still significant misbehaviors occur frequently. These regular incidents create persistent challenges for maintaining a positive environment. Recognizing the frequency and types of common misconduct is essential for developing effective interventions and educational efforts.

The Role of Coaches in Shaping Team Culture

Coaches are identified as the primary architects of their team's culture and dynamics. It is their responsibility to set high behavioral expectations for parents and spectators. The "angry parents and coaches" videos illustrate that adult behaviors intertwine and set the tone for overall team atmosphere. Coaches must proactively cultivate a culture that values respect, sportsmanship, and positivity to prevent misconduct.

Pop Warner's Responsibility to Change the Trend

Pop Warner emphasizes that all involved—especially coaches—have a crucial role in reversing negative trends. Since players emulate coaches' behavior and energy, the adults' actions either contribute to or detract from a positive environment. Coaches must harness their influence to promote respectful conduct and harness energy constructively.

Controlling Behavior and Setting Expectations

Coaches are tasked with controlling their behavior and that of their staff, as well as communicating clear expectations to parents. This includes establishing and enforcing an Adult Code of Conduct. Open communication and setting clear, firm boundaries are essential to ensure adults understand their role in promoting respect and good behavior.

The unit also encourages audience participation to share strategies, highlighting that teams and leagues have mechanisms and support for addressing behavioral problems and enforcing consequences.

Handling Bad Behavior and Conflict De-escalation

Coaches must take active responsibility in de-escalating tense situations involving parents or other adults. Techniques to calm conflicts and manage the aftermath of disruptive behavior are emphasized. Recognizing when and how to intervene tactfully is crucial to maintaining a controlled and respectful environment during games and practices.



Managing Disputes with Officials

When coaches disagree with officials, including concerns about player safety or perceived unfair calls, there is guidance on how to address these situations professionally. This section promotes composure and respect rather than confrontational responses, encouraging constructive dialogue within appropriate channels rather than public disputation.

Young Athletes Observe and Learn from Coaches

Checkpoint questions reinforce the understanding that young athletes are keen observers of how coaches behave towards officials, other coaches, and opposing teams. Players model these behaviors, making it imperative for coaches to demonstrate respect and good sportsmanship consistently.

Strategies to manage adults who display verbal abuse, intimidation, rudeness, or uncontrolled behavior are vital. Collaboration between volunteers, associations, and leagues helps provide support systems and collective enforcement to minimize such misconduct. Accountability frameworks and community support aid in maintaining standards.

Procedures for Removing Offenders from Pop Warner

This section clarifies protocols for removal of problematic adults:

- Volunteers may receive hearings unless removed immediately by a league officer via "Summary Authority."

- Parents typically receive written warnings for minor offenses but can face removal after repeated or severe violations.
- The process involves clear consequences and communication to deter repeat offenses.

Sharing experiences about the effectiveness and challenges of these procedures helps improve overall conduct management.

Zero Tolerance Policy and Accountability

Pop Warner mandates a zero tolerance stance on aggressive, disruptive, or disrespectful adult behavior. Accountability is indispensable in ensuring compliance with the code of conduct. Emphasizing that officials are human, the program stresses respect towards referees to promote fairness and sportsmanship.

Official Pop Warner Code of Conduct

Pop Warner's official commitment includes creating a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment at all levels—regional and national. This commitment applies broadly to student-athletes, parents, coaches, administrators, and spectators. Cultivating good sportsmanship is a key organizational goal.

Importance of Knowing the Rules

Members are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the rules found in the official Pop Warner rulebook. Understanding behavioral expectations and regulations helps prevent misconduct and supports consistent enforcement.

Member Code of Conduct Implementation

Beyond the general code, members must adhere to a specific Member Code of Conduct. Teams are encouraged to choose between versions and implement these standards actively within their culture. Sharing implementation strategies among team members promotes collective responsibility.

Constructive Player Criticism

Constructive feedback should be provided privately, focused on improvement, and motivational rather than punitive. The intention is to support player development through respectful coaching practices.

Building a Positive Team Culture

Discussion centers on concrete ways to embed the code of conduct and positive behavior into the team's culture. This includes setting expectations, modeling behaviors, and reinforcing respectful attitudes consistently among players and adults.

Athlete Eligibility and Respect for Rules

Athlete eligibility rules are key to maintaining fair competition. Respecting facilities, team members, and Pop Warner rules is mandatory. Violations may lead to significant consequences.

Consequences for Violations

Failure to comply with behavioral expectations may result in removal from competition. Pop Warner reserves the right to eject individuals or entire teams depending on severity. Sanctions include one-year bans for first offenses and possible permanent bans for repeat violations, all enforced without refunds.

Handling Adult Offenses and Suspension Procedures

If suspended, individuals must remain in good standing and submit written plans to ensure future compliance. Failure to adhere to these plans signals repeat violations, which lead to further penalties. The system ensures actions are taken to improve conduct while holding individuals accountable.

Respect for Officials and Leadership by Example

Coaches are reminded to demonstrate respect for officials, association officers, and Pop Warner staff. Calm, focused leadership encourages similar behavior among parents and players. Coaching staff who publicly disrespect officials risk negative repercussions among players and within the community.

Responsibility for Informing Parents about the Code of Conduct

It is the coach's responsibility—alongside association officers—to inform parents about the code of conduct. Proper communication ensures all adults understand expected behaviors and consequences.

Summary

Through clear behavioral expectations, active conflict management, and firm enforcement of conduct codes, coaches and parents can create a nurturing environment that prioritizes respect, safety, and sportsmanship. Accountability mechanisms, and community support structures work together to mitigate misconduct and promote positive culture. Ultimately, adults serve as role models whose actions significantly influence young athletes' developmental journeys in sports.

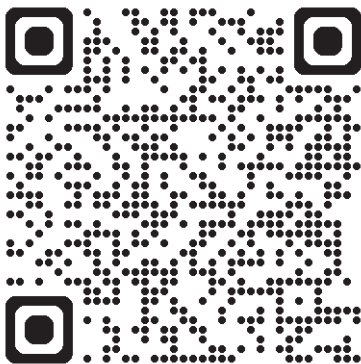


Figure 1 Members Code of Conduct

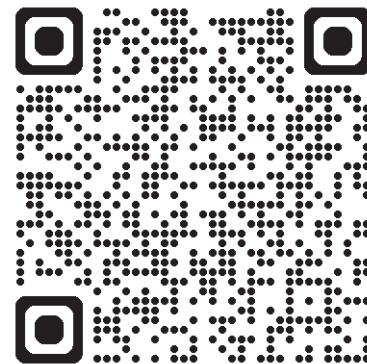


Figure 2 General Code of Conduct

Unit 5: Team Management

Team Management Overview

The unit introduces key facets of team management, emphasizing the foundation for running an effective practice, adhering to Pop Warner practice rules, understanding coaching responsibilities, and observing proper coaching behaviors. This framework is essential for fostering a safe, organized, and productive environment that prioritizes player development and safety.

Running an Effective Practice

Successful practice management requires careful planning and execution. Coaches must ensure all practices follow Pop Warner guidelines, maintaining high standards for safety and skill instruction. Effective practice involves a balance of conditioning, skill drills, and fun activities to engage young athletes while preparing them physically and mentally for games.

Pop Warner Practice Rules

Pop Warner mandates specific practice regulations to protect players and standardize training across teams:

- **Coaching Staff Requirements:** At least two coaches must be present at all practices. One coach must hold current CPR and First Aid certification.
- **Practice Duration Limits:**
 - Before Labor Day, teams can practice up to 10 hours per week, with no more than 2.5 hours per day.
 - After Labor Day, this reduces to 6 hours per week.
 - Break times do not count toward practice duration.
- **Conditioning and Equipment Use:**
 - The first 10 hours of practice must be without pads; helmets and mouthpieces are allowed.
 - The following 10 hours must use full pads.
 - All 20 hours (10 without pads + 10 with pads) are required before any scrimmage or game.
- No cross-level practices, scrimmages, or games are allowed.
- Hydration breaks are mandatory: 10 minutes every hour, with an additional 15-minute break during warmer weather.

These rules prioritize player safety and incremental skill development.

Practice Calendar & Scheduling

Coaches must provide early and clear communication on practice schedules by distributing practice calendars to parents at the season's start. This proactive approach aids in logistics, ensuring parents and players plan accordingly and maintain consistent attendance.

Creating an Effective Practice Plan

Key considerations while planning a practice session include:

- **Supervision:** Ensure sufficient coaching presence to monitor all athletes.
- **Player Capability:** Tailor drills to match what players can safely perform.
- **Pop Warner Guidelines Compliance:** Follow mandated rules and procedures strictly.

- **Emergency Preparedness:** Have a clear emergency plan and maintain a fully stocked team emergency bag.

By focusing on these elements, coaches foster a safer and more productive practice.

Components of a Proper Practice

Effective practices should:

- Start and end on time to maximize efficiency and respect participant schedules.
- Include varied activities to maintain interest and improve multiple skills.
- Be fun, particularly during conditioning and warm-up periods, to encourage athlete engagement.

Warm-Up Procedures

Warm-ups should include:

- Walking, jogging, and structured stretching targeting full-body flexibility, endurance, and muscle strengthening.
- Stretching must be organized, covering all major muscle groups after a light general warm-up to reduce injury risk.

Consistent warm-ups prepare athletes physically and mentally for practice intensity.

Sample Practice Plans & Scripts

Scripts and planned depth charts for scrimmages and special teams enable coaches to:

- Organize plays and player roles efficiently.
- Manage transition smoothly during scrimmages.
- Develop tactical understanding and teamwork.

These tools enhance practice effectiveness and player readiness.

Vision Statement & Team Goals

Effective team management begins with a vision statement that guides coaching philosophy and team goals. Examples of supportive goals include:

- Promoting academic excellence.
- Fostering good citizenship.
- Making a positive lifelong impact on players.
- Providing daily support and guidance.
- Assisting players with award and recognition applications.

A clear vision aligns all activities and expectations, building a cohesive team culture.

Coaching Responsibilities

Coaches fulfill multiple roles beyond teaching football:

- **Administrative duties,** including compliance with governing bodies at every level (Pop Warner National, Regional, League, Association).
- **Understanding, accepting, and following all rules and philosophies strictly.**
- **Managing player eligibility,** which involves verifying and keeping up-to-date necessary documentation such as permission forms, report cards, birth certificates, medical clearance, and residency requirements.

UNIT 5

SOUTHEAST REGION POP WARNER

TEAM MANAGEMENT

- Recruiting volunteers for game day operations like ticketing, concessions, cleanup, and recording official game stats.
- Being punctual and organized on game days, ensuring all forms, including the Mandatory Play Rule (MPR) forms, are prepared and that the team is ready on time.
- Leading sportsmanship efforts, encouraging players to shake hands, summarize game lessons, and behave respectfully regardless of the outcome.
- Managing post-game interactions, including applying the "24-hour rule" with upset parents, assisting with stadium operations, and monitoring player eligibility, especially regarding injuries and academics.
- Aiding in end-of-season tasks such as equipment return, organizing year-end events, and filing player records.

Coaches play a critical role in operational, developmental, and community aspects of youth sports.

Coach On-Field Responsibilities

On-field coaches, especially for younger age groups (6U, 7U, 8U), must:

- Stay behind the team during plays.
- Be ready to move out of the way of active play to ensure personal and player safety.
- Comply with additional restrictions at higher levels (e.g., 8U coaches cannot be on the field at Regional Championships).

This maintains safety and model behavior for young athletes.

Sportsmanship and Team Conduct

Coaches must model positive sportsmanship and cultivate this behavior in players:

- Encourage post-game handshakes and respectful communication.
- Use game discussions as learning opportunities.
- Maintain coach demeanor during wins or losses.
- Take responsibility for team conduct and bench area management, including prompt equipment removal for timely game starts.

Strong sportsmanship is crucial in youth sports development.

Coaching Do's and Don'ts

Do's:

- Involve athletes in decision-making to foster ownership and motivation.
- Provide unconditional praise to all players, irrespective of ability or position.
- Make each player feel valued.
- Clarify player roles and expectations.
- Praise efforts publicly, recognizing unsung heroes alongside starters.
- Promote positive peer reinforcement.
- End all activities on a positive note.
- Criticize performance (not the player) privately.

Don'ts:

- Avoid sarcasm or harsh criticism.

- Do not overwhelm athletes with too many instructions simultaneously.
- Prevent player arguments or criticism of teammates.
- Maintain emotional control; avoid personalizing evaluations negatively.

These behaviors promote respectful, constructive coaching environments that support athlete development.

Summary

This unit provides a comprehensive guide to efficiently managing youth football teams within Pop Warner. It stresses safety, organization, and adherence to rules, while promoting positive coaching practices, strong leadership, and community engagement. The unit balances technical practice components with broader responsibilities, including sportsmanship, communication, and administrative duties, preparing coaches to foster competitive and safe environments that support player growth on and off the field.

Unit 6: Pop Warner Rules & Regulations

Head Coach

- Age Requirement: Must be at least 21 years old.
- Authority & Responsibility: The Head Coach has full authority over their team while on the field and can only be rostered as Head Coach on one roster.
- Delegation: Responsible for delegating authority to assistant coaches and other team personnel.
- Scope of Responsibility: Ensures proper supervision and management of assistant coaches, players, parents, equipment managers, coach trainees, and team parents.

Assistant Coach

- Age Requirement: Must be at least 18 years old.
- Role: Follows direction from the Head Coach and carries out responsibilities assigned by the Head Coach.

Additional Team Personnel

- Team Managers: Assist with administrative tasks such as paperwork and Mandatory Play Reporting (MPR).
- Team Parents: Support logistical and social aspects (organizing rides, snacks, fundraising, distributing flyers) but are not allowed coaching duties.
- Coach Trainees: Must be supervised by a Head Coach aged 21 or older. Refer to the Pop Warner Little Scholars (PWLS) Rulebook for detailed guidelines.

Rules for Contact/Hitting

- Prohibited Contact: No full-speed head-on blocking or tackling drills where players line up more than 3 yards apart, no direct straight head-to-head contact, and no intentional head-to-head contact.
- Permissible Contact: Two linemen in stances directly across the line of scrimmage is allowed (specific to younger age groups); full-speed drills where players approach at an angle are permitted.

Contact Rule Revisions

- Contact Limits Before Labor Day: Maximum 30 minutes per day and 120 minutes total per week.
- Contact Limits After Labor Day: Maximum 22 minutes per day and 65 minutes total per week.

Levels/Ages

- Pop Warner football is divided into age-based levels:
 - 6U (5-6 years), 7U (6-7 years), 8U (7-8 years), 9U (7-9 years), 10U (8-10 years), 11U (9-11 years), 12U (10-12 years), 13U (11-13 years), and 14U (12-14 years).

Regional/National Advancements

- Certain age and division levels qualify for regional playoffs, including all D1 and D2 divisions from 8U through 14U.
- Nationals allow advancement from most divisions, with 14U slated as one level only.

Stance Rule Revisions

- Required: Only 2-point stance allowed
- This mirrors practices in professional football, where NFL players frequently use a 2-point stance on both



2023 Rule Revision on Dual Enrollment

- Players may participate in both Pop Warner and Middle School Football simultaneously.
- Participation in another competitive football league while playing Pop Warner is strictly prohibited.

Other Prohibited Techniques

- Banned Drills: Leg lifts with straight legs, neck bridges (neck rolls), and "Bull in the Ring" drills are banned during practices and pre-game warm-ups.
- Allowed Variation: Leg lifts with knees bent are acceptable.

Game Balls

- Official Ball: Wilson is the official football for Pop Warner, especially at Regional and National Championships.
- Specifications: All footballs used must meet specific quality criteria and size specifications outlined, although equivalent footballs that meet these criteria may be used.

No Kickoffs in Younger Levels

- For the youngest divisions (6U-9U), games begin on the 35-yard line instead of kickoffs.
- After scores and at the start of each half, the ball is placed at the 35-yard line.



Team Size Requirements

- A minimum of 16 players is required per team, with 15 players needed to complete a game.
- The maximum roster size is 35 players.
- Recommended team size per level is at least 20 players to manage substitutions and ensure sufficient participation.

Mandatory Play Rule (MPR)

- Minimum Plays Required: Varies by the number of players on the team and age group.
- Ages 10U-14U: Between 6 to 10 mandatory plays depending on roster size.
- Ages 6U-9U: Between 8 to 12 mandatory plays depending on roster size.
- Play Criteria:
 - Must be active plays from the line of scrimmage.
 - Free kicks on point after touchdown do not count in 6U-9U.
 - Plays such as spiking or taking a knee do not count.
 - Plays negated by penalties requiring replay do not count.

Enforcement of the Mandatory Play Rule

- All players must receive their mandated plays by the end of the third quarter, or they must enter the game at the start of the fourth quarter until the requirement is met.
- Violations lead to forfeiture and further penalties; players denied plays in one game must start the next game with double the required plays.

Mandatory Play Rule Responsibilities

- Coaches must prepare copies of MPR rosters before games.
- Volunteers should be appointed as “spotters” and “recorders” to track plays for both teams during the game, ensuring compliance.

6U/7U Training Levels

- These levels focus on player development, with minimal pressure and emphasis on individual improvement.
- Scores may be kept, and tie breakers are permitted only in championships or bowl games.
- Two coaches from each team are allowed on the field but must maintain a 10-yard distance from the line of scrimmage once the game is in progress.
- Age groups must be distributed equally if the association has multiple teams and no age stacking permitted for single teams.

6U/7U Specific Rules

- No kickoffs or punting; games start on the 35-yard line.
- On 4th down, teams can either run/pass from scrimmage or start at the opponent’s 35-yard line.
- Quarter length is 8 minutes, four quarters total with a 10-minute halftime.
- Two timeouts per half allowed per team.
- Fumbled balls behind the line of scrimmage are dead; beyond the line, fumbles remain live.

6U/7U Playing Time and Positions

- Each player must play at least 8 plays per game.
- Teams are encouraged to implement platoon systems to teach offense and defense.
- Each team must designate three captains per game, ensuring all players can serve throughout the season.

Offense and Defense Rules for 6U/7U

- Offense: Backs must be lined up behind the offensive line, with one allowable back split up to five yards outside the tight end.
- Offensive linemen must use the 2-point stance.
- Defense: No player allowed directly over the center; must line up three yards off center.
- Defensive line set one yard from offensive line in 2-point stance.

- Defensive alignment must be 6-4-1 (six linemen, four linebackers, one safety).
- Only six defensive players may rush, and blitzing is prohibited.

Check-In Area Restrictions and Protocols

- Only designated personnel may be present: Check-In Master, League Rep, Conference Rep, or Association President.
- Only players and one coach per team allowed in the check-in area: no parents or extra coaches.
- Check-In Master controls the process and has authority to remove non-cooperative individuals.
- Late arrivals after scheduled check-ins cannot participate in weigh-ins or games and no re-check-ins can be requested.
- Mandatory play forms are submitted at check-in; player presence, injuries, or disciplinary absences are recorded formally.

The Team Book

Must be present at all team events.

Conclusion

This unit comprehensively outlines the roles and responsibilities of Pop Warner football personnel, age-appropriate rules for play and safety, guidelines for contact in practice, equipment regulations, and the administration of mandatory play requirements. It emphasizes player safety, fair play, and structured development at all age levels. Consistent application and adherence to these rules safeguard the experience and ensure the growth of young athletes within the Pop Warner program.