

2025 Baldwinsville Pop Warner Football - Coaches Policy, Procedure, and Guidelines

Head Coach Responsibilities for Practice

Head coaches are responsible for consistent, clear communication with families. You are expected to communicate at least once per week with updates about practices and games. Additional updates must be sent as needed if weather, time, or location changes occur. Families should always know:

- Practice start and end times
- Practice location
- Equipment needed (always include a water bottle)

Practice must end on time. Post-practice team talks must be kept to 60-90 seconds — no long-winded speeches. Keep it sharp, keep it moving.

Conditioning is to **never** be used as punishment (USA Football Youth Coach Certification, Player Health and Safety section). Conditioning is used to build fitness, speed, and endurance. If a player's behavior is not meeting expectations:

1. Have an assistant with a good rapport pull them aside.
2. Let them know if behavior continues, a parent meeting and one-practice suspension is next.
3. If still an issue, issue a two-practice suspension.
4. A third issue is a full week suspension and missing the next game.
5. Continued behavior after that — possible removal from the team.

Assistant coaches must help manage individual player conversations, so practice stays on track. Don't stop practice because of one athlete. Build in behavioral accountability but always stay focused on development.

Practice Planning and Structure

Head coaches must:

- Delegate roles and responsibilities to every coach for both practices and games (Pop Warner Rulebook, Section on Team Administration).
- Create a detailed practice script that outlines time intervals, activities, coaching focus points, and scheduled water breaks.
- Build water breaks into the plan. **Mandatory:** For a 2-hour practice, at least three (3) water breaks, each lasting 3–4 minutes. For a 2.5-hour practice, at least four (4) water breaks, each lasting 3–4 minutes

Heat conditions matter:

- If heat index is 90–96 degrees, full pads are **not** allowed. Helmets and shoulder pads only. Helmets only would be suggested if heat index is near 94
- Practice must be limited to 1 hour 45 minutes with multiple water breaks (USA Football, Heat Preparedness Guidelines).

Contact and Safety

Teaching blocking, tackling, and key fundamentals must be built into the script. Full-contact portions cannot exceed 30 minutes (Pop Warner National Rulebook, Section on Practice Contact Limitations and USA Football Contact Guidelines). Emphasis is always on **technique** over **live reps** or **scheme installs**.

Our philosophy: Alignment, Assignment, Technique.

- Alignment — where they line up
- Assignment — what their job is
- Technique — how they do it

If every player knows those three things, they will improve and play safe. Every kid, every drill, every day.

Family Communication Focus

Communication is non-negotiable. As coaches, we must be teaching kids how to play the game safely, helping them understand football basics, and showing parents that our house is in order. Every coach must have a defined role during practice, and every coach should be building positive relationships with players. When kids feel connected, they have fun and they want to come back.

We are not here to chase scholarships. We are here to teach fundamentals, to build confidence, and to give kids a fun and structured experience that keeps them coming back every year. Our

goal is simple: prepare kids to succeed in Baldwinsville's modified, JV, and varsity programs by building a foundation of strong fundamentals, competitiveness, and toughness.

Game Day Responsibilities – Head Coaches

On game day:

- The head coach is the **only** person allowed to speak to the officials (Pop Warner Game Day Conduct Policy).
- Communication with officials must always be respectful and private — not confrontational or public.
- Assistant coaches must not yell at officials. If an issue arises, they quietly bring it to the head coach's attention.

The sideline must have **one voice** — the head coach.

Offensive and defensive coordinators may call plays, but no other sideline noise is allowed.

Coaches not calling plays are expected to:

- Manage sideline organization
- Monitor player behavior
- Scout opponent tendencies
- Coach and teach players on the sideline

We set the gold standard for sideline demeanor in Baldwinsville Pop Warner Football. Players, parents, and spectators will follow the example that we set. If an opposing team loses their composure, that is on them — we will **never** lose ours.

Spectator Conduct

If you hear or see something inappropriate from a spectator, it must be addressed immediately.

- First, give a polite but firm warning.
- If it continues, that spectator must be removed from the game.
fHead coaches are responsible for monitoring and addressing spectator behavior (Pop Warner Spectator Code of Conduct).

Head Coaching Expectations for Delegating Responsibilities to Assistant Coaches

As a head coach, one of your most important responsibilities is clear and consistent communication with your assistant coaches. Every assistant coach should receive the same

messages, expectations, and updates. The most effective way to do this is by creating a group text or GameChanger thread to share quick notes, updates, and ideas.

Each coach must clearly understand their assigned responsibilities and be expected to follow through—both at practices and during games. We understand that all coaches are volunteers, and there may be times when a coach can't make a practice. That's okay—but it must be communicated in advance. If a coach is unable to attend and was assigned a responsibility that day, advance notice gives the head coach time to adjust the practice plan accordingly.

As the head coach, you are also responsible for having the difficult conversations when needed. If an assistant coach is not fulfilling their responsibilities or is consistently absent from practices but always present on game day, that's a red flag. This behavior often signals that the coach's primary intent is to be on the sideline because their child is on the team. A volunteer assistant should attend a majority of practices—not just games.

Have a face-to-face conversation with each assistant coach before the season starts to lay out expectations. Remind them: this is not high school, college, or professional football. We do not yell at kids for mistakes, and we do not single them out for criticism. We expect mistakes and see them as part of the learning process. If you're going to single out a player, do it to recognize something positive—something they've worked hard on and finally achieved.

If necessary, you may have to ask a volunteer assistant to step away from the team. If they've demonstrated inappropriate behavior or excessive absences, you must explain that you can't allow them to continue on staff. This decision is not personal—it's based on our program's guidelines and expectations. Let them know that they are still part of the team as a parent and are welcome to attend games and practices as a spectator, but not as a coach.

Example conversation if behavior is an issue:

Make sure another assistant coach is nearby as a witness. Calmly say:

"Based on our initial meeting, I was very clear about our expectations. We are committed to creating a safe and positive environment. From what I've observed, you have not upheld that commitment. This isn't a warning—it's a final decision. I know you're a great parent and want to be involved, and I appreciate that, but due to your conduct during practices (or a specific game), I can't keep you on staff. This doesn't mean you can't apply again in the future for tackle football. My hope is that you take time to reflect on our expectations. I've received feedback—either from parents or other coaches—that you were giving negative feedback to players for mistakes we expect them to make, or that you were questioning our coaching methods. We must all be on the same page. This is not a back-and-forth discussion. It's a final decision."

If the issue is attendance-related, and they've shown up to only one practice in two weeks while attending every game without communication, that's unacceptable. If a coach communicates in advance that they can only make one practice a week due to other commitments, and they are honest and consistent, that's acceptable.

To avoid issues, these expectations must be made clear before the season begins. Each assistant coach should read the expectations and sign a document stating they understand the responsibilities and consequences. If removal becomes necessary, there is no petition to return and no back-and-forth discussion. This is a one-sided, final conversation led by the head coach.

Assistant Coaches - Accountability and Conduct

Head coaches must take **extreme ownership** over their assistant coaches.

If an assistant acts inappropriately toward a player — immediate consequences:

First offense:

- Coach leaves practice or the game immediately, suspended for next practice.

Second offense:

- Suspended for remainder of the week's practices and the next game.

Third offense:

- Dismissal from the team.

This is non-negotiable. Applies to both practices and games. If the offense warrants it, the head coach may also request immediate removal and dismissal from the team without warning.

Every assistant coach will be given a conduct handout — they must read it, sign it, and return it before the first day of practice. No signature, no coaching. This ensures every coach knows the expectations up front — no excuses, no confusion.

Absences and Accountability

Absences can erode team trust. If a player misses two out of three practices without an excusable reason, or goes on a week-long vacation without prior communication, we will expect that family to work the chains and book that week's game.

The athlete will still receive the mandatory minimum number of plays (Pop Warner National Playing Rule for Minimum Plays), but their missed commitment will have natural consequences. Clear communication is key — families must know that attendance matters.

Baldwinsville Pop Warner - 2025 Field & Practice Guide

Family Communication

- Update families weekly minimum — time, location, gear needed.
- End practices on time, keep talks under 90 seconds.
- No conditioning as punishment — behavior handled through warnings and suspensions.

Practice Setup

- Assign every coach a job at practice and games.
- Use a detailed practice script with time blocks, water breaks, and teaching points.
- Minimum of (3) water breaks for 2-hour practices. Minimum of (4) water breaks for 2.5-hour practices.
- If heat index is 90°–96°, helmets and shoulder pads only, max 1 hr 45 mins.

Contact & Safety

- Teach blocking and tackling techniques first, live reps second.
- Full-contact sessions capped at 30 minutes.
- Alignment, Assignment, Technique — every player, every drill.

Game Day Standards

- Only head coach speaks to officials — respectful, never confrontational.
- One voice on sideline — coordinators call plays, all others manage players and equipment.
- Model top behavior — no yelling at refs, no complaining.

Spectator Management

- First warning — polite but firm.
- Second violation — remove spectator.

- Head coach enforces this.

Assistant Coach Conduct

- 1st offense: leave immediately, miss next practice.
- 2nd offense: miss rest of week + next game.
- 3rd offense: dismissed from team.
- All assistants must sign the expectations form before first practice. Head Coach also may also seek immediate dismissal of an assistant coach if offence warrants it.

Absences

- Miss 2 of 3 practices unexcused = parents work chains/booth that week.
 - Player still gets minimum number of plays per Pop Warner rules.
-

Non-Negotiables

- Safety always comes first.
 - Kids come first, winning comes second.
 - Respect the game, the players, the officials, and each other.
-

Baldwinsville Pop Warner - Practice Script (Sample)

Practice Date: 8/1/2025

Start Time: 5:00 PM **End Time:** 7:00 PM

Location: Lysander Lower Field

5:15 PM – 5:30 PM (Coaches and Players Arrive)

- Field set-up (cones, sleds, dummies, balls)
 - Player check-in (equipment, mouthguards, water bottles ready)
-

Official Practice Timeline

5:30 PM – 5:40 PM | Warm-Up & Dynamic Stretch

- Dynamic stretches (high knees, butt kicks, lunges, arm circles)

5:40 PM – 5:50 PM | Quick Individual Fundamentals

(5 mins per station, groups rotate)

- OL/DL: Stance and start drills
- QB/RB: Snap exchange, handoffs
- WR/DB: Ball drills and quick feet

5:50 PM – 6:05 PM | Group Install - Offensive Focus

- Walkthrough pace first
- Run basic plays against air (no defense)

6:05 PM – 6:10 PM | Water Break #1

6:10 PM – 6:25PM | Defensive Individual Fundamentals

- Linebackers: Reads and drops
- D-Line: Get-off drills
- DBs: Backpedal and break drills

6:25 PM – 6:40 PM | Group Install - Defensive Focus

- Alignments vs basic offensive formations
- Assignment walkthroughs

6:40 PM – 6:45 PM | Water Break #2

6:45 PM – 7:00 PM | Team Period - Controlled Contact

- First group offense vs scout defense (run plays only)
- Second group defense vs scout offense (no blitzing)
(Contact limited to 30 mins max today)

7:00 PM – 7:05 PM | Water Break #3

7:05 PM – 7:25 PM | Live Competition Period (Half-Speed Scrimmage)

- Down and distance setup
- First and second groups rotate
- Focus: Correct alignment and assignment

7:25 PM – 7:30 PM | Closing / Special Teams Punt or Angle Pursuit

- Punt team substitutions walkthrough Or work on Angle Pursuit. Great Conditioning Drill

7:30 PM | Practice Ends On Time

- Helmets off, quick team meeting (1 minute max)

Praise effort, give tomorrow's reminder

Coaching Point Reminders

- Always coach effort, attitude, and fundamentals
 - Handle player issues quietly, keep practice moving
 - Water breaks are **mandatory** and should be enforced
 - Full pads practices require full supervision and limited contact time (USA Football Guidelines)
-

Acknowledgment of Receipt

I hereby acknowledge that I have received the following document(s):

Document Title(s):

Football Coaches Code of Conduct

Date Received:

By signing below, I confirm that I have received the document(s) listed above. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and, if required, comply with the contents of the document(s).

Recipient Information

Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____