

HINSDALE FALCON FOOTBALL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – 2021 SEASON

GENERAL

- **What is Hinsdale Falcon Football?** We are a not-for-profit, community-based youth travel tackle football and cheerleading program for 2nd through 8th graders. We have been operating in and serving Hinsdale, Clarendon Hills, Burr Ridge, Westmont, Willowbrook, Oak Brook and surrounding communities for decades – since 2001 as a proud member franchise of the Bill George Youth Football League (BGYFL). Our focus is on football/cheerleading fundamentals, safety/health, teamwork, sportsmanship, respect, and fun.
- **What is the BGYFL?** The BGYFL is a youth football and cheerleading league. The BGYFL has been around for more than 50 years and is currently comprised of 22 western/southwestern Chicago suburban towns as member franchises. More information about the BGYFL can be found at www.bgyfl.org.
- **Who are your coaches and what are their qualifications?** Our adult coaches are all unpaid volunteers, generally parents of current or former Falcons, who make a significant commitment to the program and to the development and safety of young football players and cheerleaders. All coaches are required to acknowledge a Code of Conduct and to submit a third-party background check. All Falcons football coaches also are required to be initially certified and annually re-certified prior to the start of each season through USA Football (see “Safety” below). We may offer small stipends for our teen junior coaches, who are qualified Hinsdale Central High School football players or cheerleaders selected by us to assist our adult coaching volunteers.
- **Does my child need previous football experience?** No.
- **Where can I find specific information about Cheer?** See the section on our website under the “Cheerleading” tab.
- **How can I contact you for additional questions/information?** You can always contact us via email at admin@hinsdalefalcons.com and we will endeavor to promptly get back to you.

SAFETY

- **What are the elements of your commitment to safety?** As with all competitive contact sports, there is risk of injury, specifically including concussions, as well as a risk of transmission of communicable disease, specifically including COVID. However, the health and safety of our Falcon football and cheerleading participants is our #1 priority. As part of our commitment to safety, among other things:
 - We will monitor, adopt, implement, and observe relevant COVID protocols based on the most recently available guidelines applicable to youth football in the State of Illinois. Among other resources for parents, USA Football provides an informative summary of recommended guidelines and measures as we and our fellow BGYFL towns, as well as leagues around the state, prepare for the return of youth football (<https://usafootball.com/resources-tools/return-to-youth-football/for-parents/>).
 - We partner each season with a professional athletic training vendor which is contracted to provide a qualified athletic trainer at all home Falcon football games. Nearly every member franchise of the BGYFL also does so, so substantially all away games are covered by training staff as well.
 - We have adopted a Concussion Protocol. Prior to each season, we review our Concussion Protocol and request the review of our professional athletic training vendor. A copy of our Concussion Protocol is posted to our website prior to the start of each season.
 - We have adopted an Emergency Action Plan (EAP). As part of our EAP, among other elements, an automated external defibrillator (AED) device is available at Brook Park and Hinsdale Central High School, the site of the majority of our home games each season, either on-site or brought to the site by our professional athletic training vendor.

- We are a participating member organization of USA Football, as is each member franchise of the BGYFL. Our participation requires each of our football coaches to take and pass a comprehensive certification course. The key health and safety components of USA Football’s youth platform are (1) concussion recognition and response, (2) heat preparedness and hydration, (3) sudden cardiac arrest, (4) equipment fitting, (5) contact limitations, and (6) tackling/blocking techniques. Our participation also provides us and our coaches access to a great deal of news, information and data on the sport of football and safety. Additional information about USA Football and its youth football platform can be found at www.usafootball.com.
- We issue Riddell helmets, a premier manufacturer of football helmets and equipment. All of our helmets are returned to Riddell at the end of each season for inspection, cleaning, repair, and reconditioning. As a result, helmets returned to us for issuance for the upcoming season have all been re-certified by Riddell. Our shoulder pads generally are also sent to a vendor after each season for cleaning and repair.
- We issue a padded helmet cover to each Falcon football player for mandatory use in practice. The helmet covers are one-size-fits-all, are washable, and are easily attached/removed (for games). The covers are manufactured by Guardian Caps and are intended to mitigate risks of head injuries in practice. Additional information about Guardian Caps can be found at www.guardiancaps.com.
- We require mandatory baseline testing to be completed by each Falcon football player, at the program’s expense, prior to the start of contact each season.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

- **How do I register?** Football registration is completed online at www.hinsdalefalcons.com.
- **When am I able to register?** Registration for the 2021 season will open in March 2021.
- **What information is required when I register?** When registering, you will be required to provide your player’s name, basic contact information, guardian information, the grade your player will be entering that season, medical information, and other relevant information. You will also be required to upload a copy of your player’s birth certificate and to read, acknowledge and agree to the terms of (1) our Code of Conduct, (2) an Assumption of Risk disclosure, (3) a Liability Waiver and Release, (4) a Medical Waiver and Consent to Treatment, (5) a Waiver/Release for Communicable Diseases Including COVID-19, and (5) a Consent to Use of Name/Likeness. You are strongly encouraged to carefully review each of the foregoing disclosures, waivers and releases as they impact your and your player’s rights.
- **What are your fees?** For the 2021 season, the fee schedule is as follows:

<i>Registration Date</i>	<i>Registration Status</i>	<i>Registration Fee</i>
Through July 16, 2021	Regular Registration	\$ 575.00
July 17 – August 6, 2021	Late Registration	\$ 700.00
August 7, 2021	Deadline for Withdrawal/Refund Requests	

For your registration to become effective, you MUST pay the registration fee online. Your registration date for fee purposes is determined based on the date you complete your registration, including payment.

- **What are the fees used for?** We believe we offer a tremendously affordable value compared to other youth travel sports programs. Operating our non-profit program, however, incurs significant costs. We rely primarily on registration fees to fund our operations each year, supplemented only by charitable donations to our program, our other fundraising efforts, corporate/community sponsorships, and Spirit Wear sales. Your registration fees are used to pay for, among other things: league dues (including referee fees), costs of new/replacement equipment (including helmets and helmet covers), professional athletic training services fees, annual equipment reconditioning expenses, costs of new/replacement game uniforms, field/facility usage fees, practice field lighting rental charges, Spirit Wear inventory costs, expenses incurred with fundraising events/initiatives/activities, and advertising/promotional expenses, as well as administrative expenses, professional fees (tax and legal), and annual insurance premiums. We seek to actively manage and contain our costs to maintain our registration fees at a reasonable level.

- **What is your refund policy?** Our withdrawal/refund policy for the 2021 season is as follows: (1) those that withdraw **prior to** our annual Equipment Handout (see below) will be subject to a \$50 non-refundable charge, and (2) those that do so **after** Equipment Handout but prior to the deadline date for withdrawal/refund requests of August 7, 2021 will be subject to a \$100 non-refundable charge.
- **Is a discount available for multiple children in the program?** Yes, we offer discounts for three children or more (across football and cheer). Please email us at admin@hinsdalefalcons.com.
- **Are full or partial scholarships available?** For special hardship/need-based circumstances we have granted a full or partial scholarship. Please email us at admin@hinsdalefalcons.com if you believe you may qualify.

EQUIPMENT

- **What equipment does the program provide?** We currently provide the majority of the necessary football equipment: helmet, padded helmet cap (see “Safety” above), chin strap, shoulder pads, knee pads, practice and game pants, and practice and game jerseys. You are also free to purchase your own helmet, chin strap, shoulder pads, knee pads, and practice pants (which can include integrated hip, thigh, knee and other padding).
- **What equipment must I provide?** You must provide other required equipment that we do NOT provide, including mouthguard, athletic protector/cup, cleats, integrated padded girdle (with thigh, hip and tailbone pads), and integrated padded compression shirt (with rib and shoulder protection). DICK’S Sporting Goods sponsorship of our program includes valuable coupons and special discounted shopping days for Falcon families which help to defray the cost of the equipment you will need to provide. You will receive information and details on those benefits prior to the start of the season.
- **When and how do I get the equipment you provide?** On a weekend in late June or July, we hold our Equipment Handout at Brook Park, Hinsdale where players are fitted with and issued the football equipment that we provide. You will have plenty of notice of the weekend that we will hold our Equipment Handout. While we strongly prefer that you attend our Equipment Handout if at all possible, we will endeavor to accommodate special arrangements. Equipment provided by us must be returned to us after the season. We require an equipment rental/return agreement form to be completed and a credit card to be furnished at Equipment Handout which is only charged if equipment is not returned or is damaged when returned. You are always free to purchase your own equipment and we can assist in putting you in touch with our vendors.

SEASON AND GAME SCHEDULE

- **When does the 2021 season officially start?** The 2021 season officially starts on Monday, August 2, 2020 when teams are eligible to begin pre-season summer practice (see “Practice Schedule and Locations” below). Although the 2021 schedule has not been released, if history is any guide, we expect that opening game weekend (Week #1) will be the weekend of Saturday/Sunday, August 28-29, 2021.
- **How many games are in the season?** We expect there to be either 8 or 9 regular season games for 2021. That means the final regular season game weekend will either be the weekend of Saturday/Sunday, October 16-17, 2021 (Week #8, if an 8-game regular season) or the weekend of Saturday/Sunday, October 23-24, 2021 (Week #9, if a 9-game regular season).
- **When does the season end?** The end of each team’s 2021 season will depend on whether the team qualifies for the playoffs and how far it advances in the playoffs. There are two rounds of playoffs immediately following the end of the regular season on consecutive weekends, which are then followed by the BGYFL’s championship weekend. The BGYFL’s championship weekend will take place over the course of Friday-Sunday in early-to-mid November and has generally been hosted by Benedictine University in Lisle. All 9U through Senior/Varsity level teams are eligible for the playoffs within their division (depending on regular season record/seeding, typically limited to the top 8 seeded teams in each division).

- **When are games played?** Games are played on Saturday or Sunday, with the only exceptions generally being games that are postponed and rescheduled due to weather which would then generally occur on a weeknight. Game start times are generally from 8:30 AM through 4:00 PM. Games last approximately 1.5 hours. Players are required to arrive at games no later than 1 hour before the scheduled game time for weigh-ins and team warm-ups. The 2021 game schedule is expected to be available in mid-August.
- **Where are the games played?** Our home field is Brook Park, located at the far east end of Third Avenue in Hinsdale. Subject to availability, teams may also play certain home games at Hinsdale Central High School. Away games are played at various locations around the BGYFL. Most away games are no more than a 15-40 minute drive.
- **Are there pre-season scrimmages?** There are a number of pre-season bowls, jamborees, and scrimmages held on weekends in August that Falcons teams can participate in in order to enhance practice and preparedness for the regular season. Participation is up to your team's coaching staff.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE AND LOCATIONS

- **What is the practice schedule?** As noted under "Season and Game Schedule" above, the 2021 season officially starts on Monday, August 2, 2021 when teams are eligible to begin pre-season summer practice. Depending on level/team, pre-season summer practice generally is 4-5 days per week until the start of the school year. After the start of the school year (generally in mid-late August), practice is limited to 3 days per week (generally Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday), and for no more than a total of 6 hours per week. During the season, some levels/teams will also hold film sessions and/or walk-throughs.
- **How long are practices?** Practices usually start between 5:30 PM and 7:30 PM, and run between 90 minutes and 2 hours long. Your team's actual practice schedule may vary slightly depending on level and coaching staff.
- **Where are practices?** Each team's 2021 practice field assignment will be determined before the start of practice. For our younger levels, we have utilized practice fields at Oak School, Clarendon Hills Middle School, Veeck Park, Peirce Park, and Burns Field, among others. Our Senior/Varsity (8th grade) and JV/12U (7th grade) levels have generally practiced at Hinsdale Central High School, which we hope will be made available to us for the 2021 season. In the event of inclement weather, some of our teams may practice indoors at a local indoor sports facility.
- **Does a parent need to be present at practice?** No, a parent is not required to attend practice. However, parents must be readily accessible via phone in the event of an emergency or a change in weather or field conditions where practice will need to end early. We also expect parents to promptly drop off and pick up their child (or make arrangements to do so) at the allotted start/end times for all practices.

LEVELS AND TEAMS

- **What are the various levels and how will my player be placed on a level?** Your player will be assigned to a level by age. There are 6 sequential levels in the BGYFL:
 - 8U (introductory level, generally 2nd/3rd graders, must not have turned 9 years old by August 1)
 - 9U (generally 4th graders, must not have turned 10 years old by August 1)
 - 10U (generally 5th graders, must not have turned 11 years old by August 1)
 - 11U (generally 6th graders, must not have turned 12 years old by August 1)
 - JV/12U (generally 7th graders, must not have turned 13 years old by August 1)
 - Senior/Varsity (generally 8th graders, must not be enrolled in high school)

We prefer to field at least one team at each level, but registration numbers ultimately will dictate the available levels/teams for any given season, including whether we field a team at a given level at all.

If you register and we end up not fielding a team at your level, you can receive a full refund of your registration fee, or we can discuss whether it makes sense for your Falcon to play at the next higher level.

- **How will my player be placed on a level?** Each player will be rostered at a level solely based on age (noting the August 1 birthday cut-off). League rules generally prevent older players to play down at a level lower than their age would require. However, younger players may qualify to play at a level higher than their age/grade would warrant, if deemed appropriate by us in consultation with the player's coaches and parents.
- **Are there weight rules and restrictions?** The BGYFL incorporates the concept of "stripers" at each level, meaning that heavier players for their age/level will be required to play exclusively on the offensive and/or defensive line. Stripers are identified by a colored stripe on the top of their helmet. The 2021 BGYFL Weight Chart specifies the striper weight threshold for each level and will be posted to our website when available from the league.
- **What are the divisions and how will my player be placed on a team within a level?** The BGYFL divides each level into a Gold and Silver division. League rules require each franchise, including Falcons, to field a Gold team at each level at which the program intends to participate and, if numbers permit, a Silver team. Both Gold and Silver divisions are highly competitive, but the Gold division is intended for more experienced players/competition while the Silver division is intended to be more developmental and for most first-year players.

If there are multiple Falcons teams within a level, your player will be placed on a team by the coaching staff at the applicable level. Age, weight and experience, among other things, are all considerations in team assignments. Team sizes can range from 13 players up to 26 players (the league maximum, although waivable with league approval).