

# **West Richmond Gridiron Youth Football League (WRGYFL)**

## **Coaches' Code of Ethics**

The West Richmond Gridiron Youth Football League (WRGYFL) is committed to promoting and upholding the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play in all league activities. It is a league built upon integrity and is made up of four Associations who are familiar and trusted teammates in its formation. All coaches will be required to maintain and enhance not only their relationships with all their players, but among the four Associations as well.

The very success of this league hinges in great part on how the Associations and their coaches interact, both on and off the field. All associated with the league will treat other Association officials, teams, players and coaches with respect and dignity. The league's coaches have been selected based on the expectation that they will successfully deliver not only a competitive team, where most importantly the kids have fun, but also will be an ambassador for the future success of the West Richmond Gridiron Youth Football League. Take your games seriously, but when the final horn sounds to end the game, remember, we are in this effort together and are laying the groundwork for a new era in West End youth football.

The league will expect all its coaches to teach players the best values of athletic competition and to insure the well being of all young athletes. The league will also expect acceptable standards of good citizenship and proper regard for the rights of others as well as the overall upholding of the letter and intent of the league's Code of Ethics. The WRGYFL is committed to the belief that Associations participating in league activities will be held responsible for the conduct of their players, cheerleaders, coaches, staff and fans. Conduct which is detrimental to the educational value of athletic activities, to kids having a great experience or that deviate from the highest standards of sportsmanship, may be cause for league reprimand including probation or suspension.

### **Article One – Responsibilities To Players**

1. The league recognizes that its coaches are its most important asset. It is the coach who has the most influence over the experience that a child will have while playing in the WRGYFL. All coaches should be constantly aware of the tremendous influence that they have over their players and their ability to influence them, positively or negatively. Parents make the ultimate concession when they entrust a coach with their child and this league's coaches will do everything possible to insure that those who play on his team, and other teams within the League, have been positively influenced and have FUN. No Coach should ever place the value of a win above the best interest of any of his players.

The player's safety and welfare are always the priority and should never be sacrificed for personal gain, a win or an attempt to win.

2. Any attempts to bend or break the rules or undermine the expectations set forth in this document or to take unfair advantage of an opponent or to teach deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct will be dealt with promptly and decisively. These infractions have no place in this league, nor has any coach guilty of such conduct. Coaches who conduct themselves according to these principles need have no fear of failure, for at the end of the season the success of this league's coaches will be measured in terms of the overall experience of all their players and the respect they have earned from their team, their players' parents and their peers.
3. The diagnosis and treatment of serious injuries is a medical function that cannot fall within the duties of the coach, but instead under the auspices of trained medical personnel. A coach's responsibility is to see that injured players receive prompt and competent medical attention and that the onsite medical authority's instructions are carried out to the letter.
4. A coach or player's future in the league should not be jeopardized by any circumvention or attempted circumvention of eligibility requirements. Any coach that is found in violation of this rule or plays/attempts to play an individual that is not on their roster or is ineligible for any reason shall be ejected from the league indefinitely. Any player found guilty of this infraction will be removed from the roster and not allowed to participate.
5. A player's academic success takes priority over any coach or team's demands. League coaches are strongly encouraged to support the academic needs of their players and when necessary work with parents to achieve such.
6. The League recognizes that all players have a right to **enjoy** all aspects of the game of football, including participation in games. Each player shall play the equivalent of one quarter in every game and it is the responsibility of the coach to establish a system to ensure that this requirement is met.

## **Article Two – Rules Of The Game**

1. The rules and suggestions, which appear in the Virginia High School Rule Book should be considered an integral part of this Code of Ethics and should be carefully read and observed. Unless specifically stated otherwise in this league's coaches' code of ethics or in the WRGYFL rules and regulations, MetroYouth Football League rules will apply.
2. Every coach should be familiar with the rules of football and sportsmanship. They are responsible for teaching and interpreting them to and for his players.

3. Coaches and players must adhere to both the letter and spirit of the rules and it is the responsibility of the coaches to insure this intent.
4. To gain an advantage by circumvention or disregard for the rules does not follow the intent of the league and the league will reprimand anyone guilty of doing so with a minimum one game suspension up to potential ban for life.
5. Coaches will be held responsible for any flagrant violation or disregard of the highest standards of sportsmanship exhibited by his players including any deceitful tactics that may be used to gain an unfair advantage. Those allowing or encouraging this type of behavior will be subject to discipline by the league.
6. A coach must be mindful that the purpose of football is not to hurt or injure opponents by legal or illegal tactics.
7. Each team's nine and thirteen year olds, if they have any, will officially weigh in immediately prior to the first game of the season. Additionally, nine year olds must have a signed waiver from their parents to participate. For each game, both teams will line up on their respective sidelines by roster order and the coaches will check-in the players of the opposing team. The official check in time for each game will be 10 minutes prior to the game's starting time and no game shall be delayed due to roster check-in. In an effort to avoid disputes, the league shall maintain and furnish, as needed, all team rosters and individual player information inclusive of birth certificates (or proof of age via certified Metro rosters) and individual photographs. Players arriving after check-in must be checked in by the opposing Association's gridiron director or assistant gridiron director prior to joining his team on the sideline.

### **Article Three – Officials**

1. No competitive contest can be played satisfactorily without impartial, competent officials. Officials must have the respect and support of the coaches, players and fans. On, or off the record criticism of officials to players or the public is considered unethical and unacceptable.
2. Officials are to be treated in a courteous manner at all times. Questions or comments about officiating should be made directly to your Association's WRGYFL director. For a coach to address or permit anyone on his sideline to make uncomplimentary or derogatory remarks to any official during or after the game, or to indulge in conduct which might incite players or spectators against officials is a violation of the league rules and will be dealt with promptly and decisively.
3. The league and its coaches will assume that all calls are made with the official's best judgment, experience and knowledge and not made in a manner to unfairly

give a team an advantage. As a result, all decisions of the officials will be final and no game shall be stopped in order to dispute the call of an official.

4. Coaches should contact their GYFL director if, and only if, there is an issue that warrants play stopping and or to call attention to a concern that they may have and want to express during the course of a game. At the discretion of your director, he will confer with the other league directors and together, they shall rule on the noted issue. The directors alone have the authority to stop a game and may elect to do so to resolve any conflict and dispute. Decisions on any issues or otherwise will be made by the WRGYFL directors and shall be final without exception. Issues will be resolved on the spot and immediately and will not be revisited at any later time or date.

#### **Article Four – Other Responsibilities**

1. A coach's conduct and behavior should at all times bring credit to himself, his team, the West Richmond Gridiron Youth Football League and the game of football. If a coach is penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct, he will be immediately placed on probation and will be suspended for the next scheduled game (byes not included). If he receives a second penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct at any times during the remaining season, he shall be ejected from the game and barred from participation, in any manner, with the league for the rest of the season. If he so chooses, he may formally apply for re-instatement the following year and the league directors shall determine whether or not he shall be allowed to participate. There will be **NO** exceptions to this policy and once a decision is rendered by the directors, it is final and cannot be appealed.
2. Before and after a game, all coaches and players shall meet and exchange friendly greetings and congratulations at midfield. Coaches shall shake hands and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the highest degree of sportsmanship and refusal to do so may result in potential action being taken by the league inclusive of probation, suspension or ejection. We are all friends, our kids are all friends and there should be no reason to conduct ourselves differently on the football field. It is just a game. Ongoing conflicts that result in inappropriate behavior between league coaches will not be tolerated.
3. No coach or anyone in an official team capacity shall make uncomplimentary remarks to an opponent's players before, during or after a game. Failure to follow this policy to the letter will result in prompt disciplinary action.
4. Demeaning awards or intents such as "bounties", which glorify or reward play outside the spirit of the rules, are not in the best interest of the game and will not be tolerated.

5. If at any point in the game, a team is ahead of its opponent by 18 points or more, the leading team will, at the least, remove its top five players from their starting positions (on both sides of the ball, respectively) until the lead is less than 18 points. Additionally, if an individual player or group of players (up to five) are noticeably dominating play even though playing in positions other than where they started, the coach should voluntarily remove this or these player(s) from the field until the lead is less than 18 points. Any coach not following the intent of this rule is subject to strong disciplinary action. Getting crushed beyond recognition is not fun for the losing team and, frankly, should not be fun for the winning team either. This rule will be followed and any coach on the losing end of this situation that believes the opposing staff is not following the intent of this policy should contact his director immediately so that the situation can be reviewed. Do the right thing here. If the directors have to get together and address this situation in any game because one of our coaches is not doing the right thing, then the league is failing in one of its primary objectives and the directors will deal with the cause of that failure.

### **Summary**

If you have been asked and are required to abide by the preceding, congratulations, you have been selected by the West End Gridiron Youth Football Association to serve as a coach in the league. The WEGYFA recognizes that coaches are the most important factor in the success of a youth athletic organization and are the key to its players having a positive experience. You have been identified as possessing the qualities that the WEGYFA believes its coaches need to uphold the mission of providing a quality experience on the football field for area youth who have chosen to play in the Gridiron League.

With this honor come two important and unconditional tasks. The first is to do everything possible to assure that the kids on each team have fun, are treated fairly, learn the game of football, see playing time in every game and that all of the preceding are accomplished with utmost regard for every child's safety. Secondly, if you are the head coach, you are required to assemble a coaching staff that will assist and support you in accomplishing all of the responsibilities listed above. The head coach will be responsible for the staff and should any problems arise with a member of their staff they are expected to address it promptly and without hesitation.

While there is no mention of winning in the prior paragraphs, the league does believe that coaches should give their team every opportunity to win, just not at the expense of any of the players. The WEGYFA established a tradition in its first year as a place where kids learn the game but do so while having fun. Perhaps more importantly it is recognized as a league where all the kids are treated fairly regardless of ability. Winning and fairness can exist together.

Once again, congratulations. The league is confident that you will handle the tremendous responsibility you have been given with class and in a manner that will enhance the Gridiron League's strong reputation as an organization that never loses sight of what's important, kids learning the game of football in a fun, safe and positive atmosphere.

---

Gridiron Director

---

Head Coach