



Coaching Manual

2019 Edition

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Introduction

The Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club firmly believes that the future success of all of our teams lies in the hands of trained, passionate youth football coaches. The coaches more than anybody else affect the experience of the youth football players that we serve. Good coaching includes developing character, and providing guidance for the players as well as the efficient teaching of fundamentals and team play. Coaching youth football provides a great scope of influence on young people and on the community as a whole. The players look to their coach as role model and are watching so always set a good example when in front of the kids.

As a coach you are responsible for having your players develop a love for the game. Coaches should treat the least talented player as you would the star player on your team. It's your job to build team chemistry and retain players. This manual is for all coaches regardless of your experience. **Just because you played High School or College Football is no guarantee you can transfer that knowledge to kids or that everything you know applies to youth football.**

Youth football dynamic is much different than University or High School Football. Coaches have to work at coaching, that means you should be working when you are running drills. Constant correction and encouragement are needed.

Ten Successful Coaching Philosophies

This manual has been assembled to assist coaches in our association to improve their ability to coach. It is our duty as coaches to become as informed as possible about youth football in order to make our players' experiences as positive as possible. Great coaches are not born. It takes training, effort and experience developed over time to become a great coach. This manual is just one tool to help accelerate that learning curve. The following are coaching philosophies that SAMFA believes are typically associated with successful youth coaches:

1. **Prioritize Practice Time:** Good coaches plan practices to the minute. They develop written plans that utilize the time they have efficiently. They discuss the practice plans with assistant coaches prior to the start of each practice and how they want the coaches to carry out their responsibilities. Assistants may be empowered to develop their own plans/drills with their position groups with guidance of the head coach. Practice time is the time to make your players better not for coaches to stand around and discuss with each other the latest NFL game they watched while the kids mess around.
2. **Limit Players Standing Around:** If you keep the players busy during practice, discipline is less likely to be needed. When doing drills have no more than 6 players standing to wait for their turn. Make multiple lines, and get more coaches involved. More reps in drills mean better players.
3. **Football not Calisthenics:** The kids didn't pay to become cross country athletes. Focus more on football fundamentals, techniques and drills that improve the skill they must perform at their given field position. The players do need physical conditioning but coaches that find ways to work conditioning into skills/technique drills have more success. Running players because you don't know what else to do with them is not acceptable. Twenty minutes of pure conditioning is too much. Some coaches get by with 5-10 minutes per practice without game day conditioning issues.

4. **Emphasis on Offensive Line:** Running backs and Quarterbacks are fun to coach but if you don't have good blocking in front of them your chances of success are severely reduced. Many successful youth programs have the head coach also be the offensive line coach. This places emphasis on the offensive line. We like to pick team captains from the ranks of the offensive line. Blocking rules are a must for any decent team. "Block the man in front of you" is not acceptable. Your scheme will typically determine your blocking rules. Learn the techniques for blocking. It is just as important to know who to block as it is how to block in youth football so blocking rules are imperative.
5. **Find a proven Offense and Defensive scheme/system:** The best coaches have never invented a system, or designed a series. They have taken them from someone else. Don't reinvent the wheel. Instead research offensive and defensive schemes that have already been done. Find one system and get good at it. If you want to put your own spin on some things do them sparingly. Good offensive and defensive systems are good for a reason. Understand the responsibility and technique of each position so you can implement the system.
6. **Limit Your Playbook:** Stress getting proficient at a core group of plays. Concentrate on being perfect in execution and blocking assignments with a variety of defensive fronts. Typically 5-8 base plays are enough with a few formation changes. Coaches that have perfected just a couple of plays are much more successful than the coach that has practiced 100 plays once each. "I fear the coach who has practiced 1 play 100 times"
7. **Limit Scrimmaging:** A common theme amongst perennially weak teams is that they scrimmage too much. Keep scrimmaging to a minimum, unless you have enough coaches to really watch players and diagnose, and make corrections quickly. Successful coaches like to rep plays on dummies then have players freeze after each step of the play. This way they can coach up the players on their responsibilities and techniques for each play. If you don't have enough dummies / shields, ask parents to help you perfect your plays. Scrimmaging is a difficult way to teach proper assignments and leads to beaten up and battered teams.
8. **Players in Wrong Positions:** Too many coaches automatically think big kid equals lineman, little guy or skinny guy means backfield. Just because a kid looks like a position doesn't mean he is right for it. Know the requirements of the positions for the scheme/system your running.

9. **Positive correction techniques:** Praise is more effective than criticism. There is only one type of criticism allowed in coaching and that is constructive. Youth players respond much better to “That was good hand placement on that block and here is how you can do it even better” instead of “That was awful you need to block harder”. Kids in this age group typically lack confidence. Continuous negative correction destroys confidence and limits performance. A good rule is to have at least 5 positive comments for every negative correction. Try to find something positive to say about every player on your team. Early on with weak players it can be difficult to find a specific thing to praise kids about. Even if it’s just lining up right for cal’s, or doing high knees in warm ups well ... find something to praise the kids about.

10. **Build Player Trust and Team Chemistry:** Players do not listen to coaches who don’t care about them as a person or only care about winning. Many coaches still tape the player’s last name on their helmet. Although not required, we suggest that you learn the kid’s first names early and eliminate the old school impersonal taped name on the helmet. During warm ups go to each boy ask his name then use it in a sentence. Everyone likes hearing their name, if you don’t know the boy’s name, he thinks you don’t care about him, and it’s probably true.

Practice Organization

Practice organization is probably the single most important aspect of determining the success or failure of a team playing to its full potential. Never go on the field unless every minute is planned in detail. Many coaches just try to wing it every day with ambiguous directions for their assistant coaches. The difference between equally talented teams is how they utilize their practice time. Most games are won and lost in practice. The daily practice plan must be written down, with the activities planned down to the minute. You should hand them out to every coach before practice starts. The head coach should determine all the drills and the drill length for the entire team. When your assistants become more proficient you can give them more freedom to choose their own drills. Good coaches demand very fast paced practices. Coaches should have a sense of urgency. As a head coach, you should constantly remind your coaches and players to “keep the pace” until this approach becomes 2nd nature to your team. It is much better to condition the players while they are learning to maximize the limited practice time. If you have a player that is really struggling with something and holding the whole group back, get a remedial coach to work one on one with the player away from the group.

After doing your team warm-ups, you should separate the backs and line for individual work then bring them back together later. All drills should be 100% football related; the old school monkey rolls, seat rolls, bag drills, or a bunch of straight sprints really don't teach football skills. Successful youth coaches spend most of their practice time on fundamental technique drills and scheme execution. Many successful teams do not scrimmage excessively and spend most of their time perfecting their base systems with repetitions on air or "fit" and "freeze" reps against a stationary offense or defense. Many coaches are used to putting in the offense first, putting in defense later and special teams in the last. Winning teams typically put their defensive system in first. If your opponent cannot score he cannot win. It's typically a good idea to end the practice by bringing the team together and tell them you are proud of their efforts and do a team cheer. This is also good time to remind them to keep their studies up and the importance of good grades.

The following are components of good practice plans:

1. Warm-Up Period, Calisthenics, dynamic warm ups
2. Individual fundamentals such as safe tackling techniques
3. Water Breaks
4. Individual Offense such as Backs and Offensive Line
5. Individual Defense such as Defensive Backs, Line Backers and Defensive Line
6. Team Offense Sessions
7. Team Defensive Sessions

Player Evaluation

The first day of practice is like opening up that new box of chocolates, we all want to see what we got. Choosing players for positions may be one of the most important jobs for a coach and something even experienced coaches make mistakes with. It is recommended that the first two practices are primarily reserved for player evaluation and fundamentals. There should be minimal contact in the first few practices. We believe it is good to have them wear full pads so that they get used to them and find out whose equipment doesn't fit properly. Evaluations are then based on players with full pads. It is the head coach's responsibility to come up with an evaluation process. You should have a good idea of who your top athletes are and who your weak players are before you start having contact.

Evaluation drills are as follows:

1. Short Races or timed dashes (30 yards) (Speed)
2. Dummy Relay Races (Core Strength Carrying Dummy)
3. Tug of war games ... Towel Game (Strength and Heart)
4. Push-ups / Sit Ups in 30 secs (Strength/ Core Strength)
5. Dummy Tackling (Aggressiveness, Technique)
6. Pushing games such as Sumo Game (Strength and Power)
7. Throwing distance and accuracy (QB tryout)
8. Catching Drills (Catching Ability)
9. Punting & Kicking evaluations (Kicker Tryout)

A famous youth coach, once said: "Build the intangibles. Create the feeling of "all for one, and one for all". Work at keeping down jealousy among the players. Watch out for cliques within the squad. Never let anything or anybody influence you playing a boy other than his value to the team." Learn to access your talent and do what's best for your team not an individual player. Remember it's a team game and the team must always come first. Too often coaches worry about the individual and lose sight that it's about the team. This means **never ask a player where he wants to play**, he plays where the team needs him.

Managing Parents

Coaches must manage parents effectively as part of their coaching duties. Parents can be your greatest ally or greatest pain. If you communicate properly, most parents can be an ally. Many parents show up to the first couple of practices to make sure little Johnny is in good hands. Some continue to observe practices and usually the younger the players, the more parents observe your practices. No matter how good of a coach you are, you are likely to have some parent issues. The typical issues that arise are as follows:

1. They are upset that their boy is not playing in the position that they think he should.
2. They undermine your coaching by teaching him different techniques.
3. They undermine your coaching by complaining behind your back to other parents and to their own boy.
4. They are out of control at games and yell at referees and other teams. Most issues can be mitigated by good communication and emphasis on team play. Here are some recommendations that help minimize parent issues:
 - a) Conduct a pre-season team meeting. You need to let them know that this is a competitive league and your team is going to try to win but that you will without a doubt make sure that all players play and have fun. Let them know that you are going to place players where they provide the greatest team benefit.

- b) Compose a parent letter that discusses team rules of how you are going to handle discipline; field positions/playing time, and other items such as your coaching philosophy.
- c) End practices on time. Parents have schedules and more kids to chase. You just took 2 hours of their kid's time, you don't need more.
- d) At the end of practice, bring boys together and remind them to thank their parents for allowing them to play football.
- e) Make a rule that you will not discuss problems with parents immediately after games. Emotions are high after games and this is the worst time to address parents.
- f) Make time for parents and make sure you communicate often with them.
- g) Group texts are acceptable but it is good to talk face to face at least once early in the season with players' parents.

Team Meeting

The pre-season team meeting is essential in establishing communication, setting expectations and letting parents feel confident that their son is going to be in good hands. We recommend conducting the team meeting at the 1st practice. If you want to meet just with the parents, then have a plan for supervision of the kids. Some have the meeting at practice and assistant coach keeps the kids busy running a drill. The following is a sample outline of the team meeting:

1. Introduction: Let them know your experience with coaching youth. If you don't have a lot of experiences then tell them about the research that you have done and tell them coaching is a passion for you. I like to tell them my hobby is coaching youth football. Just don't be long winded, be short and to the point.
2. Philosophy: Tell them about your approach to coaching and that player safety is your number #1 priority. (Concussion Awareness). The following are some examples.
 - a. Have Fun!
 - b. Sportsmanship
 - c. Football Fundamentals and Skill Development
 - d. Stress Teamwork
3. Communication: Discuss how you are going to communicate with the team such as if you need to let everybody know about a practice time change. Text messages seem to work the best. Some have the Team Manager assist in disseminating information. E-mail can work also but usually only as a secondary means of communication. It is always difficult to call everybody on the team so some means of mass communication is necessary. Do not leave team meeting without 100% of cell phone numbers.

4. Team Rules/Expectations: Discuss team rules such as unexcused practices, no profanity, respect teammates, respect referees and opponents. This is a good time to tell parents to remain under control during games. Discuss about missed practices or games and to let you know when they are going to miss ahead of time. Remember to treat star players the same so you might not start a star player for the first 4 plays of the game for an unexcused absence.
5. Consequences: Discuss punishment for breaking rules such as running or pushups.
6. Discuss equipment. What is issued by the association and what they are expected to have such as mouth guards, water bottles and practice jersey. Put names on water bottles! Discuss the importance of mouth guards. Kids will be held out of contact drills that don't have mouth guards.
7. Practices: Discuss what a typical practice will look like.
8. Games: Tell them when you expect them to arrive before a game.
9. Positions and playing time: This is optional but some coaches tell them about their evaluation process and that you are going to place players where they provide the greatest team benefit.
10. You can discuss if you are going to have some two way players or not. This is strictly based on team numbers.

Player Safety

Safety is the number one priority in our league. It is the coach's duty to maintain a safe environment for the players. All coaches should be issued a small medical kit with bandages, antiseptic, tape and cold packs. Do not allow any player to practice or play if they have any type of serious illness or condition that could jeopardize their safety. It's recommended that at least one coach on the team has Basic First Aid, Concussion Recognition and Heat/Hydration training.

Concussions: Be on the alert for concussion symptoms. The warning signs could include nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, headaches, ringing ears, loss of balance, leg weakness and confusion. If you see a player acting in a way that is inconsistent with their past behavior, see any symptoms or see them take a big hit or see their helmet hit the ground talk to the player. Ask him what day it is, what position he plays, ask him how he feels or if he saw flashes of light on his hit. If you feel there is any chance he may have a concussion take him out of the game or practice. Tell the parents to take him to a doctor and don't allow him to practice or play until you have a doctor's note that indicates it is ok for him to play. Don't rush players that have been diagnosed with a concussion back into action.

Heat: The most common problem and possible serious situation is heat stroke or heat exhaustion. During hot weather allow players to take off helmets and do as many drills as possible without helmets including calisthenics and warm-ups. Do as much as you can in the shade on hot days. Make sure you give players plenty of water breaks, as often as every 15 minutes if needed and make water available to those that have none. If needed, shorten or cancel practice if it is too hot. Heat illness can be fatal and is very serious. Common signs of heat illness are excessive sweating, not sweating at all, vomiting, nausea, dizziness, light-headedness, fainting, and disorientation. If you believe a player is having a problem, immediately get them to the shade, douse with cool water, get them to drink as much water as they can, call their parents and call 911, to get them to a doctor immediately. Error on the side of caution when it comes to heat problems. Typically, in our climate this is not an issue. However, the coaches of the summer teams should be aware of this situation as we typically play in June, July and August when the temperatures are the highest.

Safe Tackling & Contact

The Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club has adopted Safe Contact principals. Safe Contact teaches safe tackling and blocking techniques along with safety education and awareness. Every football player needs to be able to perform the football fundamentals taught in Safe Contact, regardless of what position they play on the field. Because of the risk of spinal and head injuries we cannot teach "Bite the Ball" type tackling any longer. We require teaching the Safe Contact method. Coaches cannot allow their players to put their heads down or bend at the waist when tackling or blocking. We must do this to protect our kids and the game.

The players just learning football are typically afraid of contact. New players will react differently to contact but most really don't like contact. We've even seen players that were not afraid of contact receive a big hit and all of a sudden become gun shy. Most youth coaches realize that kids must become very confident in their tackling technique before really unleashing and becoming a solid hitter. Work the kids into contact slowly and separate the low kids that don't like contact from the players that are craving contact in tackling drills. Use many repetitions shown in the Safe Contact video on air and on dummies.

Player Discipline

Never say anything that you won't do. Threatening a team isn't coaching them, and all you have as a coach is your word. Therefore, choose those words wisely. If you tell them if they miss a practice they can't play; then stick to it. Regardless of the reason, always be consistent. Kids react differently to discipline. Many kids act up because they are in need of more attention. Many of the players have less than perfect home situations. Some have attention deficit disorder or some other condition that causes unruly behavior. As a coach you must consider this and never lose your cool. Deal with unruly kids with a matter of fact attitude and have appropriate consequences. When a player makes a simple mistake, start off with just telling them how to do the task correctly. Sometimes the best method is to start off with something positive like "Johnny, you lined up perfectly, real nice stance but how are you going to block on that linebacker in this play"? Can you show me how you are going to do it next time?

When it comes to poor listening, insubordination, or poor sportsmanship, immediately go to the consequence. Have a set consequence such as running around the goal post. If a player continues to make a simple mental error, have him work on it with a coach or have him watch a player doing the task correctly. If the problem is just a lack of effort or concentration on the player's part, have him sit the drill or activity out. **Never punish players for physical errors like dropping a pass or fumbling the ball.**

Assistant Coaches

Recruit, then train / guide your assistant coaches in the techniques and schemes you want to implement. Empower them to develop / research drills that will help the players become better at their responsibilities for your schemes. Assign responsibilities to your coaches. It is likely assistants will have multiple responsibilities on offense and defense. Some head coaches may be offensive coordinator (OC), Offensive Backfield Coach and Defensive Backfield Coach. It becomes very difficult for one coach to properly coach both offense and defense on game day. We recommend the following position coaches as a minimum:

- a) Offensive Coordinator (Calls Plays)
- b) Defensive Coordinator (Calls Plays / aligns defense)
- c) Offensive Line / Defensive Line Coach
- d) Special Teams Coach
- e) Team Manager (Coordinates Team Activities)
- f) Junior Coaches – Assist with holding bags, setting up cones etc.

Game Day

Most coaches have the kids arrive about one hour before the game. This is fine but anything more than this is a waste of time. Having kids arrive more than an hour before the game is a waste of emotional energy and most parents don't like to sit around for an hour. Some coaches believe 45 minutes is about right because many times you can't get on the field until just prior to the start of the game. The coaches should be there an hour early with a warm-up and pre-game plan. A typical pre-game plan would be to spend about 5-10 minutes in warm ups then align the kids for special teams, defense and offense. Go over substitutions and maybe run a few plays on air. Emotional pre-game speeches are usually worthless in youth football. Tell your kids to focus on their jobs, play hard and have a good time. It is a good idea to have a plan for substitutions going into the game. You might have some rotations at certain positions to make sure you are getting your players in the game. If you get ahead by 3-4 touchdowns, don't run up the score. Make sure you have a play call system and try not to run your quarterback to the sideline between every play to get the call. This wears out your quarterback and slows down the game.

At the end of the game if you win, discuss with the team that the reason they won was teamwork and hard work they had put in at practice. If you lose, don't place blame on the kids, rather try to build them up and find things that they did right that you can build upon. Cursing at them and threatening them does not go far with kids this age. It's better to focus on techniques, details and things you need to adjust and get better at to win the next game. Be willing to accept blame for your team not winning. Here is a truth I learned in my first year coaching. Players win games, coaches lose them. There are way too many easy excuses, instead be a man and shoulder the responsibility. It will make you a better coach in the long run. Remember it is just a game, if your team isn't having fun and enjoying it then something is wrong. Yes, losing sucks, but kids tend to follow your lead so don't show disappointment.

Coaching Requirements

The coaching requirements at the moment are:

- a) Vulnerable Sector Criminal Check and
- b) "Making Headway in Football"
- c) Safe Contact Training

1. Coaches do not make the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club policies, rather they carry it out. However, on the playing or practice fields, the coaching staff is in complete charge and shall not be interfered with except in cases of rules violations and other conduct deemed by the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club to be detrimental to welfare of youth.

2. A Head Coach must be at least 18 years of age.

3. The Head Coach must attend and conduct 90% of the practices.

- a. If the Head Coach cannot attend a practice, he is responsible for having a capable assistant conduct practice that is at least 18 years of age.

4. Assistant coaches must be at least 18 years of age. A team may have a maximum of 15 staff (including Team Manager, Trainers, etc. Junior Coaches are the only exception).

5. The head coach shall determine the assignments of the assistant coaches and is responsible for the assistant coaches and helpers at all practices and games.

6. Once approved for coaching, a coach is automatically terminated at the close of the season. Coaches can re-apply each season and are selected each year based upon their credentials and previous year's performance.

7. The head coach is in charge of supporting teamwork environment at all times. All other members are accountable to the head coach to ensure a positive experience for the players.

8. Sideline Coaching: The head coach is in charge to ensure a proper sideline demeanor is kept. Excessive screaming, yelling and other antics are not acceptable behavior.

The Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club expects the head coach and their assistants to act in a professional manner. Coaches are to remain in designated coaching areas; going out on the field of play is not acceptable.

9. The head coach has the final responsibility for his actions, those of his assistant coaches, players and additional staff.

Coaches Code of Ethics

With the understanding that youth sports are for the education, fun and the enjoyment of the kids, and that I, along with the other coaches, am responsible for the safety and well being of the kids on the team and do hereby agree to the following:

- I am a volunteer for the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club as a whole. I understand that this is not “MY” team. Any suggestions and decisions by the appointed Executives will be enacted without challenge.
- I will abide by the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club Rules, Policies and Procedures (RPP’s) for fair play rules.
- I will place the emotional and physical well being of the players ahead of my personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for children in the same age group.
- I will provide a positive, encouraging and safe playing environment for all the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club players.
- I will NOT use foul, derogatory or abusive language when coaching or attending youth sports events.
- I will provide a sports environment for the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club teams that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol at all youth sports events, including practices and games.
- I will be knowledgeable in and abide by the rules of the youth football and the league in which we play and teach those rules to the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club players.
- I will use coaching techniques appropriate for all the skills I teach.
- I will always remember that I am a youth sports coach and that the game is for the kids not the adults.
- I will always show respect for and abide by the decisions, calls and judgments of the officials at any game.

- I will not criticize a fellow coach, board member, child or family member in front of the players, fans or families. I will only discuss any disagreements, differences of opinion or conflicts I may have with the person to whom I have the disagreement and at an appropriate time and place.
- I will not use the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club logo without permission from the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club Executives.

The Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club Yearly Timeline

Although it is always subject to change based on working inside CDMFA's framework, a typical year could look something like this:

January – Board Monthly/Planning Meeting

February – Board Monthly/Planning Meeting

March – Board Monthly/Planning Meeting

April – Board Monthly/Planning Meeting

May - Board Monthly Meeting, Spring Camp

June – Board Monthly Meeting, Spring Camp

July – Off month as mandated by Football Alberta

August - Board Monthly Meeting & Practices/Jamborees for Peewee/Bantam

September - Board Monthly Meeting & Practices/Games for Peewee/Bantam

October - Board Monthly Meeting & Practices/Games for Peewee/Bantam. City Playoffs at the end of the month.

November – Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club AGM (Board Election for upcoming year & Practices/Games for Peewee/Bantam if part of Provincials in Tier 1 and 2.

December - Board Monthly/Planning Meetings

CDMFA – Football Alberta Roles

CDMFA stands for Capital District Minor Football Association. CDMFA is a Registered Society (Alberta) whose members operate a league in order to provide the opportunity for minor football teams in the City of Edmonton and its surrounding communities to play each other in the spirit of friendly competition. CDMFA does this by governing league play, supporting member organizations and promoting teamwork, leadership, and good sportsmanship with a focus on the development of participants and the enjoyment of everyone.

Football Alberta is the Provincial Sport Governing non-profit Association for all amateur football in Alberta.

- Has a membership of all amateur football programs including Atom, Pee-Wee, Bantam, Midget, High School (Jr. & Sr.), Junior, University, Sr. Men, Flag, Touch and Officials.
- They provide programs and services to over 400 teams and 12,000 players, coaches, officials and volunteers.
- In addition to all of the programs; they provide newsletters, directories, policies, rule books, resource handbooks, manuals and an active website.

Tiering currently used by CDMFA - Provincials

The tiering system currently enforced by CDMFA to seed all teams at each level uses jamboree style games where each teams will meet a set number of opponents over several dates to measure where each team fits based on results from those mini-games. This will determine which tier each team will fall under and based on each team within Tier 1-2 or Tier 3-4, who you will play against for the remainder of the season and playoffs.

Please be aware that in order to qualify for Provincial play, your team will need to fall under the Tier 1 or Tier 2 level. Tier 3 & 4 do not qualify for Provincial play.

Registration Dates – Late Fees

Registration for the fall football season opens on April 1st of each year. It will remain open until a date has been set by CDMFA to end registration for all. Midget Registration starts in January to accommodate the timing of the Midget Season, which is a spring league.

Late fees will apply if a registration occurs after the Evaluation Camp at the beginning of June.

Team Manager – Stick Crews – Timekeepers – Team Trainers

Team Manager

Being a Team Manager can be a very rewarding experience. The following are the duties of the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club Team Managers:

- Assists Coaching Staff in administrative duties such as booking buses, communicating with parents about practice schedules and games;
- Manages the Team's website (training is provided; a degree in computer science is not required!!); and
- Promotes effective communication with parents and players.

Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club Team Managers may also be asked to coordinate their Team's participation in other Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club's activities, such as annual fund raising and Minor Football Night at Eskimo games.

Game Day Volunteers

Score Keeper and Score clock Operator Duties:

All teams participating in the CDMFA are required to complete the game sheet and enter the score on the CDMFA website. Scorekeeping duties include printing off required game sheets, filling out the score at the game and obtaining coach signatures. Score clock operators are only required for home field games and will be offered training on the Riel Field scoreboard.

Chains and Yard Sticks Duties:

The CDMFA requires that each home team provide 3 volunteers to work the yard markers and chains for each home game. Each SAMFA team must provide 3 volunteers per home game. It's just a few hours of your time and no experience is necessary. Each team usually averages 4 home games and you'll have the best seats in the house! It's an easy job and there will always be an experienced person there to help you out.

Team Trainer

Every team must have no less than one qualified training volunteer at every Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club practice and game. First Aid supplies are provided by the Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club. First Aid or sports training background is required.

24 Hours Rule for Communications

Parents should refrain from talking/emailing any coaches or member of the team Staff before 24 hours have passed after a practice/game if they are unhappy or have concerns about playing time and/or other issues. This is known as a cooling down period and avoids emotional conflicts and takes away the emotional state that many of us find ourselves in after something we are unhappy with has occurred. It allows all to think clearly, state in a non-emotional manner what the issues are and how they would like to see those resolved. It also allows the staff of the team to decompress from game play and hear/see more clearly what the issue is, hear the concerns and formulate a plan that will be satisfactory to all involved.

Attachment "A" --- Parent Meeting Agenda .. Notes

Sample Parent Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome - Coach XXXXXXXXXX

- a. My Experience, 8 years coaching Youth Football.
- b. My Hobby Passionate about Football.
- c. Introduce Assistant Coaches this point.

2. Philosophy

- a. Have Fun!
- b. Safety -Concussions, Heat.
- c. Teamwork - Teams that are selfless always perform better.
- d. Sportsmanship - Don't Tolerate Poor Sports, ... Set Example
- e. Football Skills – Blocking/Tackling

3. Communication is KEY

- 1. Text, Email, Difficult for me to call 23 people.
- 2. Schedule
- 3. Website

4. Team Rules

- a. Unexcused missed practice may result in loss of plays during games
- b. No Back Talking or profanity will be allowed.
- c. Respect your teammates.
- d. Respect the Referees and your opponents.
- e. Fans must be under Control (No yelling at the Referees). Set Example Crazy Hot head Loud-mouth Cousin ... Don't invite to the Game
- f. Discipline

5. Practices / Coaching Philosophy

- a. Practices are organized and planned out to the minute.
- b. Limit Standing around.
- c. Not training for cross country.
- d. Normal Practices:
- e. Please Call Me if you are going to miss a practice.
- f. Pick up kids after practice / we can't leave until all kids are picked up.

Attachment "B" --- SAMPLE PARENT LETTER

SAMFA XXXXXX Division - XXXX

We are happy to welcome all players and parents to the team. We are hopeful that this will be the most exciting and rewarding football season you've ever experienced. Our goal is to develop young players not only in the fundamentals of football, but also the importance of teamwork, in an atmosphere conducive to developing character while having a good time along the way. We, as coaches, will do our best to ensure that each player is utilized to his utmost potential and his talents are used for the team's best advantage. The team's needs and sportsmanship will be emphasized over individual wants.

Important Information:

Practices will be held at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Wear all your equipment to the first practice.

TEAM RULES

- Must attend practices and be on time
- Must respect Referees and your opponents (No taunting)
- What coach says goes, no back talking
- Must show up on time for pre-game
- Respect fellow players
- Respect and take care of your equipment.
- If you are going to miss practice let the coach know ahead of time. Many of our drills are based on who is at practice. If you miss 2 practices or more during the week, you may lose plays during the game. If you do not let the coaches know you will be gone, this is considered an unexcused absence.
- If the coach gives you a playbook, take some time and study. It is important for each player to learn his responsibilities early and well. This can only be accomplished by studying the playbook outside of practice. The better we know our plays the quicker we will be able to run them in a game.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

If we see a player not listening, or not hustling, we may ask him to refrain from doing so, or we may just send him running. It is important that everyone understands our boundaries and understands them early. We need players to understand how important it is to listen and to provide effort, both of which require no physical excellence; both are choices the player controls. Discipline is what we do for a player to help him become a better player and a better

teammate. Our practices are relatively easy, but we have no time to waste, therefore we do not have time to go into long conferences with players. If they are not paying attention, or not hustling, they will run or sit out. It is very rare to have anyone do any running after the first couple of weeks.

FIELD POSITIONS / PLAYING TIME

We determine positions based on your sons ability, the team needs, and lastly the players preference. The coaches have developed a thorough evaluation process which will help determine positions. The process includes games and drills that test for agility, strength and aggressiveness. After the 2nd practice, the coaches will decide tentative positions for each player. Positions will be determined based upon greatest "TEAM" benefit. Positions will be continuously re-evaluated during the season based upon performance. All players will likely need to play and fully understand 2 positions. Depending upon the skill level a few players may play both on offense and defense during the games. A key thing to remember is the importance of the offensive line. Without a strong, motivated, and disciplined offensive line our offense will go backwards more often than forwards. Without dominating linemen to block for them our backs cannot run for touchdowns. Therefore, it is important to understand that lineman is a coveted position on this team. Although you cannot carry the ball, you, more than any other person, are responsible for the success of this team. To be an offensive lineman on this team is to be one of the elite. Playing Time: The head coach makes all playing time decisions after consultation with his coaching staff.

PLAYERS EQUIPMENT

Each player is required to supply the following equipment in order to play football:

- a. Water bottle containing only water with the players name labeled on it.
- b. Football cleats or sneakers.
- c. Football Gloves are recommended especially for cold weather.

All other equipment is supplied by SAMFA.

PARENTS

Parents are as important to the success of the team as the players. Coaches and parents must work together. Please keep the coaches informed about problems that may be going on with your child. If the child has been sick, taking medication, or going through some emotional trauma please make sure the coaches are made aware of the problem as soon as possible. Parents and coaches must communicate with mutual respect. Parents and coaches reserve the right to postpone conversations that are getting out of hand. Heated discussions have no place in front of the players. **Parents are required to show good sportsmanship during games because it reflects poorly upon our team. Do not verbally abuse the referees, coaches or players.** Please support the coaches teaching of the players. It is counterproductive to coach

your boy one technique when the coaches are telling him another. If you have suggestions or ideas, please do not hesitate to present them to the head coach after any practice.

PRACTICES

Every week practices are different. New skills are learned, problem areas are corrected, and new plays are taught. Your child will be at a disadvantage by not making practice on time and regularly.

Practices will be approximately 1-1/2 to 2 hours long typically from 6:00PM to 8:00 PM at XXXXXXXXX.

Prior to the week of the first game there could be more than 3 practices per week. The week of the 1st game and thereafter we will have 3 football days a week or 2 based on your level. Practice will shorten as daylight hours reduce toward the end of the season.

REWARDS

Rewards can come in two forms: verbal and material. Many of the rewards a player receives are positive reinforcement from coaches and parents. The best reward is always a smile and a pat on the back by a parent.

WINNING

Nothing in life, including football, is worthwhile unless you enjoy it and gain something from the experience. Sure, we're trying to win football games and we are going to set our goals high, but it shouldn't ruin our lives if we lose. Our football team should not believe that a football loss is a tragedy. All you can ask of our kids is to do their best. If we win, Great! If we lose, it's not the end of the world. There will be another game along in a few days. Coaches that think only of winning don't belong in football. Try this: Ask your child if he had a good time instead of whether he won or lost. By the same token, we feel that we owe it to the players to do everything we can to make them winners. We plan to win every game, because if you don't, then you need to ask yourself which game you plan to lose, and if you're planning to lose, why show up, or practice the week before?

TEAMWORK

1. Football is a “WE” sport. It is not an “I” sport. Nobody can have success without the help of the others on the team. For example, if Jack is the running back and he scores touchdown, he could have only done this with the help of the following:

- a. Center hiked the ball perfectly to the quarterback.
- b. The quarterback made a perfect handoff.
- c. The right guard blocked the linebacker.
- d. All the linemen blocked and kept their man from touching Jack.
- e. If one guy misses his block Jack doesn’t score. That is a team effort.

2. Put the team first over your own individual needs.

- a. If you want to play quarterback but Jack makes the team better when he plays quarterback then Jack will play quarterback.
- b. Everyone will have a role and we will try to put each person where they can best serve the team.
- c. Football is about a group of young men working together to meet a common goal.

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

1. Prioritize Practice Time (Practices Planned out to the minute).
2. Limit standing around, keep player busy during practice.
3. Focus on techniques, fundamental blocking and tackling (not calisthenics)
4. Progression Teaching: Techniques broken into small steps. Isolate steps and use “Freeze” method.
5. Positive Correction: “That was good, here is how you could do it even better”
6. Visual teaching: Limit talking - demonstration is best.
7. Perfect execution, limit scrimmaging and focus on knowing assignments and proper techniques.
8. Work players into contact slow as possible, limit the amount of full contact and high impact type drills.

ATTACHMENT "C" --- SAMPLE PRACTICE PLAN – Sherwood Park Northstars Football Club

Practice Plan - minimum 4 coaches

6:00 (5 mins): Introduction & Today's Goals

6:05 (10 mins): Warm-up

1. Jumping Jacks to "TEAM" 2 times
2. High Knees back and forth
3. Butt Kickers back and forth
4. Stance and Cadence drill
5. Quick Sprints

6:15 (15- 20 mins): Safe Contact Tackling & Blocking / Hawk Tackling

Refer to Safe Contact and Hawk Tackling videos on You Tube.

6:35 Water Break (5 mins): 6:40 (20 mins):

Offensive Individual Drills Includes RB's/WR's and QB

Defensive Individual Drills Includes LB's & DB's

Lineman Drills Offense/Defense

7:00 (10 mins) Offense Installation

Install play #5, Quickly Review (18 Sweep, 45 Reverse, 22 ISO), Install 16 Pass Blue.

Defense Installation Review defense base formation, gap responsibilities, blitz packages install

7:10 Water Break (5 mins):

7:15 (20 mins) Offense VS Defense Scrimmage

(THUD level only – rep plays and limit coaching at this time)

7:35 (10 mins) Special Teams – Kick-Off/Kick Receiving or Field Goals

7:45 (10 mins) Cool-down (stretching – hold for 30 seconds)

Arm Pulls, Toe Touch, Lying Side Quad Stretch, Downward Dog, Child's Pose, Kneeling Calf Stretch, Cobra Stretch, Torso Stretch, Full Body Stretch

7:55 (5 mins) Team Talk Post Practice review, modify, and plan for next practice with coaches.