

#### Flag Football Equipment & Clothing:

You will need to provide: Cleats, athletic clothing, and water bottle

The Poland Parks & Recreation Dept. will supply jerseys and flags.

#### TACKLE FOOTBALL PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT

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

Athletic supporter with protective cup

Socks of calf or knee length

Custom mouth guards, if preferred, (Made by dentists) must attach to helmet face guard

Water jug containing only water or a sport drink such as Gatorade

Shoes, must not have metal or detachable cleats.

Players will be issued the following equipment:

Mouth piece (basic)

Helmet with face mask and chin straps

Shoulder pads

Hip pads

Thigh pads

Knee pads

Jersey and pants

This equipment must be returned to the Knights Tri Town Youth Football Program at the season's end or parents will be billed for replacement equipment.

Players are allowed to keep game jerseys at the end of the season!

We are happy to welcome all players and parents to our Knights Youth Tri-Town Football program. We are hopeful that this will be the most exciting and rewarding football season you've ever experienced. Our goal is to develop well-rounded individuals who learn not only the fundamentals of football, but also the importance of education and teamwork, in an atmosphere conducive to developing sound mind, body and character and having a good time along the way. We practice the ideals of sportsmanship, scholarship and physical fitness. Our program stresses learning lessons of value far beyond the playing days, such as self-discipline, teamwork, concentration, friendship, leadership, and, good sportsmanship. We, as coaches, will do our very best to ensure that each player is utilized to his or her utmost potential and their talents are used for the team's best advantage. The team comes before individuals. Safety is our top concern. Many of the exercises, drills, and team rules are there to ensure your child is physically and mentally fit for football. Each child is unique and will develop at his or her own pace.

#### PLAYING TIME:

Central Maine Football League Requirement: All teams- All players who are not injured or withheld for disciplinary reasons must enter the game for at least one play.

We do our best to get all players as much playing time as possible given their skill level. We let parents and players know that each player will play a number of plays per week if they attend practice, listen and hustle at practice. But we also stress as in life, reward comes to those whom are paying better attention, playing harder, and excelling more than those who do not. (Fair doesn't always mean Equal). This will be determined by coaches based on a player demonstrating the ability to safely and correctly play the position's assigned during practices as well as how they match up physically with opponents. Safety is our main priority and we do not believe setting someone up to fail is the correct way to run our program. We also stress playing time will vary based on the game. We feel in being up front with players and parent's is important.

#### TRAITS OF A GOOD FOOTBALL PLAYER

**DESIRE:** Desire is the determination to overcome an opponent, whether by delivering a solid block or by shaking off the block attempt of an opponent and going on to make the tackle. Desire is a state of mind, an abandonment of self, a form of courage, the joy of mixing it up. It is doing one's best, calling up whatever reserve power is available and never quitting. It is playing both for oneself and for the team's interest. It is the exercise of a determined will. It flows from your competitive spirit and drives you to achieve your goal. Desire is available to all kids, not just to a gifted few. We, as coaches, firmly believe that the size of the heart is more important than the size of the body. Desire is 100% effort, 100% of the time.

**CONFIDENCE:** The belief that he or she can do what has been asked to do. Football is a sport that builds it. The coaches will be assertive and bark a lot, kind of like the military, but the idea is not to humiliate or hurt the players, it's to get the kids to wake up, to realize that they are part of a team, and their actions affect their teammates. Most kids will get yelled at and be upset by it. Parents will be worried by it and begin to feel protective. The coach is just trying to motivate the player, to toughen him up, to prepare him or her and to get them excited enough to put forth the effort needed to play football. Sometimes the coaches will need to bark at a player who is not paying attention. We don't do it because we like to yell, and

we certainly don't do it to make the player feel bad. We do it because all team sports, football especially, require team effort. A player who is doing his or her own thing, talking, or not paying attention while the coaches are teaching is risking possible injury to themselves or a teammate, and is setting themselves up for failure. Remember, as the great Woody Hayes once said, "Discipline is something you do for someone, not to them."

**THE LOVE OF THE GAME:** This is an important part of any football player. A good football player enjoys the competition of a depth chart, and is willing to work his way up the ladder to starter. They have the willingness to play any position, and be responsible to their teammates.

#### TEAM RULES

You will be reminded to keep up on your school work.

If you don't practice, you don't play. All excused absences must be coordinated with the coaches. However, if you don't make an effort to attend practices, we as coaches may limit your playing time. Generally a missed practice may result in a missed quarter of that week's game unless the absence is excused.

What the coaches say goes. Back talking, profanity, or any form of disrespect will result in disciplinary actions. With the high quality of kids we have in our program, this is not expected to be a problem.

Respect other players. Remember your teammates are working with you, not against you. Any unnecessary aggression or violence towards another player will result in disciplinary actions. This also goes for our opponents. Without them, there would be no football game, so treat them with respect.

Take care of your equipment. Let the coaches know if your equipment needs repair. This is the key to safety.

Wear your mouthpiece when required and keep a spare. On game day, if a player draws a safety penalty for not having a mouthpiece in, he will sit out the remainder of that quarter.

Come to practice prepared to work and play.

Learn the rules of the game. Remember especially the safety rules. Players who draw flags for unsportsmanlike conduct, clipping, late hits, or other serious safety violations may be removed for the remainder of the game.

Know the name of each position.

Arrive on time for practices and games. Example: 5:30 pm means you are on the field and in position at 5:30 pm, so you must be a few minutes early. A 5:30 pm practice begins at 5:20 pm. Practice starting time and ending may change as daylight shortens. Games may require earlier arrival.

The shortened season makes it all the more important for each player to learn his responsibilities early and well.

#### REWARDS

Rewards can come in two forms: verbal and material. Many of the rewards a player receives are positive reinforcement from coaches and parents. Often the coaches will not require individuals to run sprints at the end of practices if the player has showed some exceptional behavior. However, the best reward is always a smile and a pat on the back by a parent. Game captains will be used to honor our hardest workers. A game captain has shown, through considerable effort that week, that he deserves the honor of representing our team to the officials. Typically game captains will be drawn from the ranks of offensive and defensive linemen, because it is their hard work and determination that will make us successful this season.

#### DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Running is an everyday part of practice. On those few occasions when it is necessary to discipline a player for a minor infraction, like failing to pay attention, or talking while the coaches are talking, the player may be asked to run additional laps around the practice field, do push-ups, or perform another exercise. Normally that will be the end of disciplinary action. A player will be asked to leave practices early for more severe incidents (i.e. fighting or profanity). If a parent is not present the player will be supervised until the child is picked up. The last resort is to use game suspensions.

#### FIELD POSITIONS

During the first few weeks of practice the coaches will decide the best position for each player. In general, the fastest kids play in the backfield on both offense and defense. Typically the heavier built players play on the line. Aggressive kids who combine speed, strength, and agility play linebacker. Taller kids who have some quickness play end, offensive end if they can catch and block, or defensive end if they have the discipline required for that position. The quarterback is the one who has it all: He or she must know every position, and have agility, good hands, and a strong arm. He or she must be able to receive snaps, remember plays, and hand off the ball securely. Throwing the football is secondary when compared to the player's ability to lead the offensive unit and earn the respect of his or her teammates. The Quarterback must know every position, every play for the entire offense. He or she is the field general of the team, and the coach on the field.

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. A player is never condemned to play offensive line; they earn the right through hard work and effort. To be an offensive lineman on this team is to be one of the elite: you will be stronger, faster, and better trained than any other player in this league. That is our coaches' promise to you.

Defense is the key to winning football. Vince Lombardi once said, "A good offense will win you games, but a good defense will win you championships." Playing defense requires a more aggressive mentality and a desire to make an impact. The coaches have put in a lot of hours of research in order to find and develop the most effective defense for this level of play. Our defense requires much more discipline than some others, so our defensive players must be ready to do the right thing, first time, and every time.

The defensive unit also uses a quarterback, called Sam, who is the strong side linebacker. Sam must be the most "football smart" player on the team, and a strong leader as well. He or she must also know every player's position and responsibility for the defense. In the defensive huddle, Sam is the only player who talks.

A player's attitude plays a large role in the position they play. The child who has a bad attitude, who is oversensitive, or who demonstrates any sort of problem with a position will be passed over. A negative attitude is costly. When selecting starting players, attitude and desire wins over ability every time. Can't has no place on this football team.

If you wish to play a particular position, then make an effort to study that position's responsibilities. Make certain you do not neglect your assigned position while you are learning the new one though!

#### 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. Try this: Ask your child if he or she had a good time instead of whether he or she won or lost. Be supportive!

By the same token, we feel that we owe it to the players to do everything we can to help them to be successful. 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?

We're going to practice hard, we're going to play hard, and our scores will reflect this.

#### COACHES

We can only do our best. We view coaching as an awesome responsibility. Your coaches will:

Get the players in shape

Understand each player's potential

Work on individual skills for each position

Work on team execution of plays

Motivate, communicate, lead

Perform the "behind the scenes work" that will give the players the maximum chance of success; like researching our opponents and doing necessary scouting.

Teach the players the skills they need to play football safely

Coaches must have the freedom to develop three things in their athletes: pride, poise, and self-confidence. We use the following steps to instruct the game of football.

Explain what is required

Demonstrate the technique

Have the player perform the technique

Explain the consequences of not performing the technique properly

If necessary, execute the consequences

If you have any problems with the coaching staff please contact the coach.

The following is the chain of communication we use to resolve issue regarding our football program:

Parents to Coaches

Parents to Coaches to Football Director

Parents to Coaches to Football Director to Parks & Recreation Director

#### 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. Please remember a

parents reaction to a situation will influence your child, please be positive and supportive.

Although many parents have coaching experience, and may have played on a higher level than the current coaches of this team, the coaches must ask that you refrain from coaching your kids at home. These kids are being taught to play as a team, each player performing a set function that his teammates can rely on. A player who abandons his teammates to do something his parents coached him to do is letting down his team, his coaches, and himself. At best he may open up the door for the opponent to win the game, at worst he may cause himself or a teammate to be injured.

If you have suggestions or ideas, please do not hesitate to present them to the coaching staff 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. The coach's will inform your athlete as to practice schedule. Practice's will held at Poland Middle School Field unless instructed by coaching staff otherwise.

#### HOME CONDITIONING

Proper nutrition and hydration is very important to a young football player. Players need to drink as much water as possible every day. Heat stroke is always a danger, despite cooler weather during fall, so it is very important to stay hydrated at all times. It is also recommended that players wear a tee shirt under their pads and jersey to help keep them warm during the colder practices and games. We will not be teaching any form of weight lifting other than standard calisthenics like push-ups and sit-ups. If your child wishes to lift weights during the off-season he or she is encouraged to do so, provided he or obtains a doctor's permission to do so and has his workout designed by a specialist in youth fitness. Improper weight lifting can cause irreparable damage to young joints and bones.

#### CHALK TALKS

Chalk Talks are a five to ten-minute period near the end of every practice where the coaches will teach or discuss a wide variety of topics with the players. Sometimes we will tell old "war" stories of our days in football to motivate the players. Sometimes we'll discuss athletic role models. Chalk Talks are an important part of playing football. They give the coaches a chance to teach concepts that may otherwise be left out of a regular practice due to time constraints or other reasons. Practice is not over until the Chalk Talk ends.

#### NECESSARY SKILLS OF FOOTBALL

The following skills have been taught during the preseason, and will be honed by daily practice. They are highly important to a successful football team.