

Big Foot Wolves Handbook



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Welcome Letter

The Directors, Officers, and Coaches welcome you to the Big Foot Wolves. We sincerely hope that this season is an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for you. This handbook was designed to help you understand the basic rules, policies, and expectations of our organization. We ask all parents/guardians and participants to review the contents of this handbook and to use it as a resource to answer your questions as the season progresses. It is important to note that all items contained within this handbook were reviewed by the Big Foot Wolves Officers and Directors, and are general guidelines to be reviewed periodically and are subject to change. The Big Foot Wolves are a non-profit organization, and any funds, fees, and donations go to support the operation of the program. We are a total volunteer program and welcome your participation in all areas including the annual Pig Roast, game and Quadplex concessions, and more.

History

The Big Foot Wolves was started in 1998 as a response to the communities of the Big Foot School district who desired a youth tackle football program for grade school-age students. Working very closely with the high school football coaches a program was developed, and the Wolves joined the Illinois Youth Football League. This program continues to operate under the original goals that were created at the inception of the team. These ideals include such things as teaching the fundamentals of football, the spirit of fair play and sportsmanship, working together with others to reach a common goal, and developing a sense of accomplishment in each participant. Other goals include bringing youth from the area schools into a program where they could start to form relationships with future classmates, involving the entire family in the program through activities such as fundraising, volunteering, or providing other skills that fill needs as they arise. While the players are under the guidance of their coaches, doing the best they can do academically and socially are two other goals the Wolves feel very strongly about.

Our Mission

The mission of the Big Foot Wolves is to provide an enjoyable experience for young adolescents based on their developmental characteristics and needs. The development of young adolescents' self-esteem, citizenship, responsibility, and skills in cooperative and leadership behaviors are positive outcomes of appropriate athletic programs. These programs should be enjoyable, vigorous, and safe, and should occur in a positive climate with appropriate adult leadership and support.

Sincerely,
The Big Foot Wolves Directors, Officers, and Coaches

Payment / Refund Policies

All payments are due prior to participants practicing with the team. While the Big Foot Wolves encourages the concept of teamwork and commitment, we understand extenuating circumstances could cause a participant to leave the program. Upon request, the following prorated refund will apply: A 75% refund can be granted up to the end of the first week of practice. A 25% refund can be granted after the first week of practice and prior to the first scheduled game. No refund can be granted until all equipment has been returned. No refunds will be given to a participant who elects to leave after the first game is played. Any participant that elects to quit the team due to injuries or other circumstances will not be eligible to re-join the team and relinquish his/her option to help with practices or be in uniform on the sidelines with the team on game days.

Playing Time

Playing time will be based on an athlete's skill and achievements to be determined by the coaching staff. A player will not be placed in a contest situation that they are not prepared for.

Injury/ Return From Injury

Please acknowledge that you must be an active participant in your child's health. As such, you have the direct responsibility for reporting any and all injuries or illnesses to the Big Foot Wolves staff. Recognize that your child's true physical condition is dependent upon an accurate medical history and full disclosure of any symptoms, complaints, prior injuries, and/or disabilities experienced. Please include in writing any prior medical conditions with your registration and disclose any future conditions to the Big Foot Wolves staff. Understand that there is a possibility that participation in the sport of football may result in a head injury and/or concussion. Information on head injuries and concussions is included at the end of this document.

Any participant who is injured during a Wolves practice or event must report the injury to the coach or advisor at once. If a participant has any "special medical problems," the participant and parent/guardian must ensure that the coach or advisor is informed in advance. If a participant is injured and the coaches or advisors believe a doctor's visit is warranted, a participant cannot return to practice or a game without a written doctor's release. If the parent or guardian elects not to take the participant to a doctor against the advice of the coaches or advisors, a Parental Waiver must be completed and returned to the coaches before the participant can return. All participants must have open wounds bandaged prior to practice or a game. If the wound occurred outside of practice or a contest, the player must arrive at practice or a contest with the wound bandaged.

INSURANCE LIABILITY WAIVER

Please read this form carefully and be aware that in registering yourself or your minor child/ward for participation in the Big Foot Wolves program(s), you will be waiving and releasing all claims for injuries you or your child/ward might sustain arising out of the program(s).

“I recognize and acknowledge that there are certain risks of physical injury to participants in this program and I agree to assume the full risk of any such injuries, damages, or losses regardless of severity for which I or my child/ward may sustain as a result of participating in any activities connected or associated with any such program.”

“I agree to waive and relinquish all claims that I or my child/ward may have as a result of participating in the program against the Big Foot Chiefs & Wolves Programs, the Big Foot Union High School District, and its officers, agents, servants, and employees.”

“I do hereby fully release and discharge the Big Foot Chiefs and Big Foot Wolves, Big Foot Union High School District, and its officers, agents, servants, and employees from all claims resulting from injuries, damages, and losses sustained by me or by my child/ward and arising out of, connected with, or in any way associated with the activities of any of the program(s)

“I have read and fully understand the contents of the above liability waiver.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Expectations for Coaches

1. The NIFC and RVYFL “Coaches Code of Conduct” must be signed and dated before a coach can start practicing with the team.
2. All Coaches are to be certified by USA Football
3. The coaching staff should act as a role model for good sportsmanship, use of appropriate language, professional appearance, promotion of a healthy environment, and safe teaching techniques.
4. Inform parents and players of all information regarding team requirements, fees, special equipment, off-season opportunities, and location and time of all practices and contests.
5. Understand and abide by the Big Foot Wolves, NIFC, and RVYFL eligibility requirements.
6. Enforce team regulations and expectations that are outlined in this handbook.
7. Organize practices that are insightful and challenging for all players.
8. Encourage a balanced lifestyle between sport, education, and other interests.
9. Place the emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of the team, and any other children in the league ahead of any personal desires.
10. Insist the team participates in a safe and healthy environment.
11. Review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of players.
12. Support all coaches, officers, board members, and others working with the team, to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
13. Accept mistakes as an important part of learning.
14. Remember that the League is for the youth and not for coaches.
15. Enforce good sportsmanship and respect towards teammates, coaches, board members, parents, and spectators, regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
16. Direct all comments and criticisms of parents, participants, officials, board members away from the children participating in the league and conduct themselves in a calm manner when doing so.
17. Read the NIFC & RVYFL rules and regulations, and agree to abide by those rules, responsibilities, and Code of Conduct. Violations of these rules could result in disciplinary action up to and including permanent dismissal from the NIFC & RVYFL.
18. Dress with special care whenever representing the Wolves.

Expectations for Parent(s) / Guardian(s)

1. All required paperwork must be signed and returned before a football player can start practicing with the team.
2. Demonstrate support of the Wolves coaches and all team regulations.
3. Encourage your child/children to discuss any questions or concerns with their coach
4. Display positive support for your child/children, coaches, and other team members.
5. Exhibit good sportsmanship toward officials, players, and coaches at all times.
6. Notify coaches of any schedule conflicts that may occur in advance, including vacations.
7. Recognize that the league is for the youth and not for adults.
8. Refrain from any vulgar, lewd, or obscene language or gestures while participating in or watching any league sponsored event whether it be home or away.
9. Direct all comments and criticisms of parents, participants, officials, and board members away from the children participating in the league, and use a calm, civilized manner when doing so.
10. Respect the NIFC & RYFL rules and regulations, and agree to abide by those rules, responsibilities, and Code of Conduct. Violations of these rules could result in disciplinary action up to and including permanent dismissal from the NIFC & RYFL.
11. Volunteer for activities such as the annual pig roast, concessions, chain gang, or any other necessary opportunities where help is needed.

Expectations for Participants

1. Become part of the team and learn the concept of teamwork.
2. Demonstrate a great work ethic at all times.
3. Use language and act in a manner that is socially acceptable.
4. Display outstanding character, sportsmanship, and respect for yourself, and your teammates, coaches, and opponents.
5. Dress with special care whenever representing the Wolves.
6. Develop individual determination and self-discipline, and learn to set goals.
7. Develop a sense of pride for both individual and group efforts and accomplishments.
8. Play for the fun of the game, not to please parents or coaches.
9. Play by the rules.
10. Never argue with or complain about the referee's calls or decisions.
11. Understand that sportsmanship is a moral behavior in sports. There is more to sportsmanship than simply being nice, it is also understanding why some actions are right or wrong.

Addressing a Concern with a Coach

Step 1: The athlete will seek out his or her coach to discuss a concern.

Step 2: The athlete's parent(s)/guardian(s) can request a conference with the coaching staff if the concern is not resolved. The conference will not happen immediately after a game or practice.

Step 3: If the conference does not resolve the concern, a meeting will be set up with a minimum of three Board members. A Board member will mediate the conference which will deal only with the specific concerns. Both parties will be allowed to speak in an uninterrupted manner.

Appropriate concerns that a parent/guardian may address with the coaching staff:

1. The treatment of your child mentally and physically.
2. Ways that your child can improve his/her performance and skill level.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior in practices and contests.
4. The make-up of the team in relation to your child.

Please note:

- Coaches will not discuss with other team members, other parents, or other members of the Wolves organization unless requested to by the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the athlete.
- Parents must wait until the next practice day and refer to the recommended procedure for addressing a concern with a coach.

Equipment

Each athlete is responsible for the equipment issued to him/her. Care labels should be carefully followed when washing the uniform. All equipment must be returned in good condition at the end of the season. Failure to return such equipment shall result in one or several of the following:

1. The athlete shall be excluded from any continued involvement in the Wolves program.
2. Awards earned by the individual shall not be presented until such equipment is returned.
3. The individual to whom it was issued will not have the equipment deposit returned.
4. An individual who knowingly continues to retain equipment shall be reported to the proper law enforcement agency.
5. Any extra or replacement equipment purchased by parent/guardian, or player, must be approved by coaching staff.

Practice/Game Schedules

Practice times will be determined prior to the start of the season. Precedence is given to all high school programs first and our practice schedule will reflect that. Game schedules are created by the leagues and are subject to change throughout the season.

Drop Off & Pick Up

Participants should be dropped off no more than 15 minutes prior to their scheduled practice. Participants should be picked up within 15 minutes of the scheduled practice end. Coaches will communicate with parents and participants when players should arrive for games.

Communication

Communications regarding time changes or cancellations for practices or games for any reason will be sent by coaches through the TeamReach app. Please ensure that at least one parent/guardian and the participant are signed up for their respective TeamReach group. If you have a question regarding a practice or game time change or cancellation, or anything else regarding your participant or the Big Foot Wolves program, please contact the coach using a direct message in the TeamReach app. The Big Foot Wolves Facebook page will share news of any time changes or cancellations but will have a delayed posting time compared to decisions and communications sent through TeamReach.

Travel

All participants are required to provide their own transportation to practices and games. If the Big Foot Wolves elects to bus participants to a game or practice, a parental release will be required before the participant will be allowed on the bus. Please communicate with other parents/guardians and coaches if transportation is a problem to or from a scheduled practice or a game.

Inclement Weather

During the season, there will be some practice or gamedays with inclement weather. Teams WILL practice and play games in the rain. If lightning is spotted, coaches will follow the WIAA protocol and delay the game or practice for 45 minutes. Coaches will be responsible for contacting parents/guardians if a practice or game is canceled. You have the final decision on whether you deem it safe for your son/daughter to practice or participate in a game or not.

Use of Photographs, Videos, Profiles, and Stories

Periodically the Big Foot Wolves use photographs, videos, profiles, and stories for products that are promotional, advertising, educational, and/or archival in nature. As such, the Big Foot Wolves collects on an ongoing basis individual and group photos and testimonials relating to our volunteers, supporters, and activities. By signing the enrollment form you hereby grant the Big Foot Wolves and its legal representatives the irrevocable right and unrestricted permission to use and publish photographs or video images of your child which may be included, for any purpose authorized by the Big Foot Wolves, including but not limited to website use, publications, and advertising use. This includes the right to modify and retouch the images at the discretion of the Big Foot Wolves. You understand that the circulation of such materials could be countywide and that there will be no compensation to you for this use. Furthermore, you understand that you will not be given the opportunity to inspect or approve the finished products or the advertising copy or the printed matter that may be used in connection therewith. In granting this permission to the Big Foot Wolves and its legal representatives, you are fully and without limitation releasing it from any liability that may arise from the use of the images.

Disclaimer

To participate in the NIFC & RYFL leagues, this handbook must be adhered to. Failure to read will automatically render the parent or participant ineligible to participate in League activities home or away. In addition, by signing the application parents and participants agree to abide by the guidelines set forth above, and to conduct themselves in the appropriate manner. Failure to abide by this handbook and NIFC & RYFL rules, or violation of any of the guidelines set forth, will automatically render the player unable to participate and the parent unable to attend any league-sponsored events, either home or away. Big Foot Wolves Board Members have the sole right to enforce violations.

Date(s) of Revision: March 29th, 2022

HEADS UP: CONCUSSIONS IN YOUTH SPORTS

A Fact Sheet for COACHES

To download the coach's fact sheet In Spanish, please visit:

www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports

Para descargar la hoja informativa para los entrenadores en español, por favor visite:

www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports

THE FACTS

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in any sport.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost. The potential for concussions is greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common. Concussions can occur, however, in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity. As many as 3.8 million sports and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year.

RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your athletes: 1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in a rapid movement of the head. -and 2. Any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning. (See the signs and symptoms of concussion.)

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Signs observed by Coaching Staff

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events are hit or fall

Symptoms reported by Athlete

- Headache or "pressure" In head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

Adapted from Lovell et al. 2004

Athletes who experience any of these signs or symptoms after a bump or blow to the head should be kept from play until given permission to return to play by a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can last from several minutes to days, weeks, months, or even longer in some cases. Remember, you cannot see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. If you have any suspicion that your athlete has a concussion, you should keep the athlete out of the game or practice.

PREVENTION AND PREPARATION

As a coach, you can play a key role in preventing concussions and responding to them properly when they occur. Here are some steps you can take to ensure the best outcome for your athletes and the team:

- Educate athletes and parents about concussions. Talk with athletes and their parents about the dangers and potential long-term consequences of concussion. Explain your concerns about concussions and your expectations of safe play to athletes, parents, and assistant coaches. Pass out the concussion fact sheets for athletes and for parents at the beginning of the season and again if a concussion occurs.
- Insist that safety comes first.
- Teach athletes safe playing techniques and encourage them to follow the rules of play.
- Encourage athletes to always practice good sportsmanship.
- Make sure athletes wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Review the athlete fact sheet with your team to help them recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion. Check with your youth sports league or administrator about concussion policies. Concussion policy statements can be developed to include the league's commitment to safety, a brief description of concussion, and information on when athletes can safely return to play following a concussion (I.e., an athlete with known or suspected concussion should be kept from play until evaluated and given permission to return by a health care professional). Parents and athletes should sign the concussion policy statement at the beginning of the sports season.
- Teach athletes and parents that it is not smart to play with a concussion. Sometimes players and parents wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Do not let athletes persuade you that they are "just fine" after they have sustained any bump or blow to the head. Ask if players have ever had a concussion.

- Prevent long-term problems. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first, usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)-can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage, and even death. This more serious condition is called second impact syndrome. Keep athletes with a known or suspected concussion from play until they have been evaluated and given permission to return to play by a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion. Remind your athletes: "It's better to miss one game than the whole season."

ACTION PLAN: WHAT SHOULD A COACH DO WHEN A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED?

1. Remove the athlete from play. Look for the signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head. Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of concussion should not be allowed to return to play. When In doubt, keep the athlete out of play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have several methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the Injury:
 - Cause of the Injury and force of the hit or blow to the head.
 - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long.
 - Any memory loss immediately following the injury.
 - Any seizures immediately following the injury.
 - Number of previous concussions (if any)
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concuss on and give them the fact sheet on concussion. Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.
4. Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for a concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. Prevent common long-term problems and the rare second impact syndrome by delaying the athlete's return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play If you think your athlete has sustained a concussion... Take him/ her out of play and seek the advice of a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

For more information and to order additional materials free-of-charge, visit:

www.cdc.gov/ConcussioninYouthSports

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncl pc/tbl/TBI.htm>

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U.S DEPARTMENT OF HEA LTH AND HUMAN SERVICE'S CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION