

SPOTSYLVANIA PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
2021 YOUTH CHEERLEADING BY-LAWS

I. Organization

The Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department shall be the sponsoring agent of the Youth Cheerleading Program. The Parks and Recreation Director or his designated representative shall be the Executor of this program.

II. Purpose

1. To develop good sportsmanship and foster a spirit of cooperation and friendliness among the participants.
2. To provide the opportunity for fun and enjoyment in a healthful activity.
3. To provide an opportunity for girls to be a part of the Youth Football Program.

III. Participants

1. The program is open to girls who are residents of Spotsylvania County and are between the ages of 5 and 14. Effective date for age determination is November 1 of the current year.
2. The girls will be divided into squads to cheer for the teams in the Youth Football program by the Parks and Recreation Department.
3. Girls who have brothers playing football will automatically be assigned to their brother's team. Daughters of cheerleading or football coaches will be assigned to their respective squad.

IV. Equipment

1. Uniforms will consist of a t-shirt and jumper that will be provided by the Department. This will be the official uniform for all Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation cheerleaders. Coaches cannot ask parents to provide any additional uniform. Participants who do not wear the official uniform will be unable to participate.
2. Special shoes for cheerleading are not required.

V. Coach's Duties

1. To insure that each and every team member that participates in the program is in accordance with the stated by-laws.
2. Each team is allowed four coaches (one (1) head and three (3) assistants). Assistant coaches must be approved by Parks and Recreation department. **It is the head coach's responsibility to make sure anyone working with the children has been approved by Parks and Recreation Department (Background Check).**
3. Responsibility for the safeguarding and timely return of all equipment issued to her by the Parks and Recreation Department.
4. To see that each girl on her squad has the proper uniform.
5. To schedule practices and teach the girls how to cheer or see that someone is available to teach them.

6. To be present at each game or practice or appoint a responsible adult to supervise the squad.
7. To see that the players meet the age requirements.
8. To provide the Parks and Recreation Department with an up-to-date roster and to insure that the roster does not exceed or fall below the levels set forth by the Parks and Recreation Department.
9. To safeguard and maintain all equipment issued by the Parks and Recreation Department and to be directly responsible for the return and/or disposition of that equipment.
10. To notify all team participants of:
 - a. rules, regulations and by-laws set forth by the League.
 - b. scheduled games, and practices. It is then the coach's responsibility to keep up with the schedule for their team.
 - c. cancellations and/or make-ups as indicated by the Parks and Recreation Department.

11. CHILD ABUSE Mandated Reporter Law

The following persons who, in their professional or official capacity, have reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately to the local Social Services Department of the county or city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or to the Social Services Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline:

- Any athletic coach, director or other person 18 years of age or older employed by or volunteering with a private sports organization or team;
- Administrators or employees 18 years of age or older of public or private day camps, youth centers and youth recreation programs;

Mandated reporters are required to report as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after having a suspicion of a reportable offense. The Social Services Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline is **1-800-552-7096**. Training and other mandated reporter resources are available at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/index2.cgi>

Inclement Weather and Make Up Games

1. Cancellations due to inclement weather will be announced on the cancellation line and through the Spotsy Alert Information Notification System. Cancellations will be placed on the cancellation line as soon as a decision is made. Listen to the announcement carefully. The cancellation line phone number is 898-8546. If weather conditions are questionable and you do not hear a cancellation announcement then you should report for your game.
2. Notification of makeup games should be received within five calendar days. If you have not received notification within five calendar days, it is the Head Coach's responsibility to contact our office. A team not attending a rescheduled game will constitute a forfeit.
3. The Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to arrange postponed games at its convenience in order to catch up with the schedule. The Parks and Recreation Department also reserves the right to cancel games, if necessary, due to conditions beyond our control. In the event of misunderstandings or error, coaches are urged to contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 507-PLAY (7529).
4. The Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to cancel games when weather conditions present possible health problems, such as heat. The department will use caution when making these decisions.
5. Coaches, players, and parents should use extreme precautions in inclement weather especially during lightning or thunderstorms. Coaches should have players and parents wait in their vehicle until the official arrives if it is storming before game time.

Lightning Procedures:

Coaches and game officials please use the following criteria for suspension and resumption of play when thunder or lightning is present.

- a. When thunder is heard, or a cloud- to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
- b. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
- c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
- d. All team members should seek shelter in a vehicle away from dugouts and fields. Game officials will notify coaches when play will resume or if game will be suspended.

VI. Rules

1. Squads will only cheer for their football team.
2. No cheer will be used that will encourage competition between squads. Cheers should be in "good taste" and should be encouraging to the squad's team - not derogatory to the opposing team.
3. No cheer or dance should incorporate any inappropriate body movements.
4. **No stunts or tumbling will be performed.**
5. A squad is limited to a maximum of four (4) meetings per calendar week. A calendar week is Sunday through Saturday.
6. Coaches may schedule practices on Sunday; however, no squad member may be penalized for not attending a Sunday practice. Sunday practices will be counted in the number of meeting per week.
7. If a cheerleader misses two or more consecutive games and/or practices, she may be asked to **sit out ¼ of non-consecutive time of a game**. No cheerleader will be required to sit out a whole game as a penalty for missing practices or games.
8. If a cheerleader is traded or moved to another squad, both coaches and both sets of parents must be in agreement. All squad changes must be made prior to the first football game of the season.
9. Coaches, cheerleaders, and parents should use extreme precautions in bad weather, especially during lightning or thunderstorms. Coaches should have cheerleaders and parents wait in their cars until the officials arrive if it is storming before game time.
10. It is recommended that practices last no longer than 1½ hours.
11. The use of tobacco products by coaches and players is prohibited in the proximity of the playing field during games and/or practices.
12. NO uniform or equipment will be replaced unless the damaged item is returned.
13. NO uniform or equipment will be issued to an individual until all items are returned from previous sports.
14. **The Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department will not change the schedule due to player's involvement in school, scout, church or any other activity.**
15. The Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to cancel games when weather conditions present possible health problems, such as heat. The department will use caution when making these decisions.

Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department Youth Sports Concussion Policy

Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department has created the following policy that will be in effect as of **August 2015** and beyond for all youth sports leagues.

Objective:

To establish a policy that will provide ALL youth sport coaches and parents associated with the Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department with guidelines relating to how to recognize signs of a concussion, procedures for dealing with athletes and parents when a concussion is suspected, as well as mandatory rules concerning the return to action for the participant.

Criteria:

A concussion can be caused by a blow to the head, jolt to the body, or any sudden force that results in a rapid acceleration/deceleration of the brain inside the skull. This impact of the brain against the rigid inside walls of the skull can cause a change in neurological function and a host of other symptoms depending on which part of the brain was injured. Youth athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of a concussion. Even what appears to be a "minor ding or bell ringer" has the real risk of catastrophic results when an athlete is returned to action too soon. Second impact syndrome, which in some cases can be fatal, is a direct result of returning to game action before all symptoms have cleared. While most players heal within a few weeks, an athlete who returns to play before a concussion has completely resolved risks re-injuring an already injured brain which can have life threatening consequences. Therefore, continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as increased risk for further injury to the brain, and even death.

The well-being of the athlete/participant is our greatest concern during any practice or game. Officials, coaches, and parents are being asked to make all efforts to ensure that concussed athletes do not continue to participate. Thus, coaches, parents, and officials should be looking for signs of concussion in all athletes and shall immediately remove any suspected concussed participant from play.

When in doubt, sit them out! It's far better to miss one or two games as a precautionary matter than to risk possible brain injury. No game is worth that.

What to look for:

Concussions can appear in many different ways. We know that a person does not have to lose consciousness to suffer a concussion. Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, such as those mentioned below shall be immediately removed from the game or practice and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

1. PROBLEMS IN BRAIN FUNCTION:

- a. Confused state – dazed look, vacant stare or confusion about what happened or is happening.
- b. Memory Problems – can't remember assignment on play, opponent, score of game, or period of game; can't remember how or with whom he or she traveled to the game, what he or she is wearing, what was eaten for breakfast, etc.
- c. Symptoms reported by participant – headache, nausea or vomiting; blurred or double vision; oversensitivity to sound, light or touch; ringing in ears; feeling foggy or groggy; dizziness.
- d. Lack of sustained attention – difficulty sustaining focus adequately to complete a task, a coherent thought, or a conversation.

2. SPEED OF BRAIN FUNCTION: Slow response to questions, slow slurred speech, incoherent speech, slow body movements and slow reaction time.

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3. **UNUSUAL BEHAVIORS:** Behaving in a combative, aggressive, or very silly manner; non-typical behavior for the individual; repeatedly asking the same question over and over; restless and irritable behavior with constant motion and attempts to return to play; reactions that seems out of proportion and inappropriate; and having trouble resting or “finding a comfortable position.”

4. **PROBLEMS WITH BALANCE AND COORDINATION:** Dizziness, slow clumsy movements, inability to walk a straight line or balance on one foot with eyes closed.

Seek medical help immediately if...

Most concussions do not result in emergency care. However, if symptoms worsen, or you notice behavioral changes or any of the following, seek care immediately:

➤ Headaches that worsen; seizures, neck pain; very drowsy, can't be awakened; repeated vomiting; increasing confusion or irritability; weakness, numbness in arms and legs; inability to recognize people/places, less responsive than usual.

If you observe any of the above signs, call your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

Role of Coaching Staff:

Coaches/Coaching Staff will NOT be expected to “diagnose” a concussion. That is the job of an appropriate health-care professional. Coaches/Coaching Staffs will be asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms and behaviors, associated with concussions. If a member of a youth team coaching staff observes questionable signs, symptoms, or behavior, he/she must remove the participant from the game for further evaluation and notify the parent/guardian.

The responsibility of further evaluating and managing the symptomatic participant falls upon the head coach, parent/guardian or appropriate health-care professional. If an appropriate health-care professional on site determines that the athlete HAS NOT suffered a concussion, the athlete may return to play. If there is no appropriate health-care professional available to evaluate the athlete, the athlete SHALL NOT be allowed by the coach or parent/guardian to return to play.

Role of Game Officials:

Neither officials, nor coaches, will be expected to “diagnose” a concussion, as that is the job of an appropriate health-care professional. Officials are being asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms and behaviors, associated with concussions. Officials will not be asked to make what could be perceived to be a medical opinion. If an official observes questionable signs, symptoms, or behavior, the official must notify the coach and remove the participant from the game for further evaluation.

The game official is not responsible for the sideline evaluation or management of the athlete after he or she is removed from play. The responsibility of further evaluating and managing the symptomatic athlete falls upon the head coach, and/or an appropriate health-care professional. If an appropriate health-care professional on site determines that the athlete HAS NOT suffered a concussion, the athlete may return to play. If there is no appropriate health-care professional available to evaluate the athlete, the athlete **SHALL NOT** be allowed by the coach or parent to return to play. The official does not need written permission for an athlete to return to play after evaluation, nor does the official need to verify the credentials of the appropriate health-care professional. Ensuring compliance is the responsibility of the head coach and NOT the game official.

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Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department Required Course of Action when an athlete is suspected of sustaining a concussion:

1. Remove athlete from any activity (game or practice).
2. Notify parent or guardian.
3. Any participant suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional within a day of the "injury". NOTE: An "appropriate health-care professional." A Physician, Physician Assistant, Osteopath Physician, or Athletic Trainer licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine; a Neuropsychologist licensed by the Boards of Psychology; or a nurse practitioner licensed by the Virginia State Board of Nursing.
4. No participant may return to play or practice on the same day after a concussion has been diagnosed, nor until evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.
5. Any participant with a concussion shall be medically cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or league play. This clearance shall be in the form of a written letter signed by the healthcare professional. One copy must be supplied to Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department and one must be supplied to the head coach prior to any return to play. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol should be a part of the medical clearance.

NOTE: Athletes with continued concussion symptoms are at significant risk for recurrent, cumulative and even catastrophic consequences of a second concussive injury. Such risks are minimized if the athlete is allowed time to recover from the concussion and return to play decisions are carefully made. No athlete may return-to-sport or other at-risk participation when symptoms of concussion are present and recovery is ongoing.

These guidelines shall be applied to all sports related activity.

Coaches Compliance:

Any coach that disregards the safety and well being of a youth sport(s) participant as it relates to concussions will be suspended indefinitely from coaching. Additionally, any coach that misuses this policy to prohibit an otherwise, healthy, fit, uninjured player from participating will be suspended indefinitely from coaching.

We strongly suggest taking one of the following course on concussions.

<http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html> or <http://nfhslearn.com/courses/38000>

These courses can be found on our website at <http://www.spotsylvania.va.us/parksandrec>

Senate Bill 652, the 2010 General Assembly

Code of Virginia § 22.1-271.5

House Bill 410 & Senate Bill 172, the 2014 General Assembly

Code of Virginia § 22.1-271.5

and

House Bill 1096, the 2014 General Assembly

Code of Virginia § 22.1-271.6

The Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department has provided these by-laws for each coach to read and fully understand. If you have any questions concerning any of these rules, you should make it known before signing this document.

I hereby pledge that I have read and understand these by-laws.

Team _____

Signature _____

Date _____

