

MERIDIAN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL
CAUTIONS, CONSIDERATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
**TO INCREASE THE SAFETY AND ENJOYMENT OF
INTERSCHOLASTIC FOOTBALL**

Football is a highly competitive, fast action game in which physical contact plays a major role. Because of the speed and contact with which the game is played, squad members, their families, and the coaching staff must accept and share certain responsibilities to enhance safety and enjoyment for participants.

Meridian High School has purchased protective helmets that are certified by the National Operating Commission for Safety and Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE). This certification indicates that research has been conducted to verify the protectiveness and shock absorption capabilities of the helmet. In addition, high quality padding has been purchased for protection of other body parts. However, careful fitting and proper wearing methods are imperative to gain maximum protection from any equipment. Each player will or has already received a demonstration of proper wearing and will be, or has already been, fitted by a coach on the day of equipment issue. Proper wearing and use of all protective equipment is the exclusive responsibility of the player after the orientation has been completed. Other player responsibilities include:

UNDERSTANDING TEAM STANDARDS

1. ABSENCES

- a. If you are sick or otherwise, call Coach Ames at home, 592-5052, or on his cell, 510-2333 and let him know that you are sick and will not be at practice.
 - b. Never tell a teammate to tell a coach that you will not be at practice; it is your responsibility to make face-to-face contact, especially during school hours.
 - c. Two or more unexcused absences from practices/games may result in removal from the team and or disciplinary action.
 - d. Absences from practice will result in loss of playing time.
 - e. Upper classmen will not be allowed to turn out late, after practices have started, on August 19th. Exceptions would only include arrangements made with the head coach **prior** to the start of practices and newly enrolled students. Incoming freshmen are exempted from this rule until after the first week of school.
2. Lapses in judgement, deportment, unexcused absence, and tardiness will result in after practice consequences.:
- a. Being late to practice, meetings, and games.
 - b. Slips of the tongue of a vulgar or obscene nature
 - c. Disrespect towards coaches, teammates, officials and opposing teams
 - d. Poor sportsmanship.
 - e. Unexcused absences.
3. Two or more or serious violations of the above lapses or serious violations, may result in a one game suspension, removal from the team, or loss of playoff privileges..
4. On game days, all players dressing for the day's contest will wear a dress shirt with a collar and a tie to school. A tie will be worn all day, except for PE and shop classes. Failure to comply will result in the athlete not suiting and not attending the game with the team..
- a. This rule applies to playoff games; shirt and tie will be worn to get on or off the Bus.
 - b. Shirt and tie will be worn to eat with the team.
5. You are responsible for the care, cleaning and prompt return of all gear and equipment issued to you.
6. Attend all team meetings, practices, fund raisers,, games, potlucks and banquet.

PLAYING TIME

Meridian will field three teams this coming season: a varsity, a junior varsity, and a C team.

1. VARSITY

- a. At this level, there are no guarantees of playing time.
- b. Performance based. Those who know what to do, know how to do it, have the skills to do it and are physically able to compete for playing time, will play.
- c. Players on the varsity will be juniors, seniors, and selected sophomores. Any freshmen asked to suit up with the varsity will require a note from their parents to document their approval.
- d. Substitutions in varsity games are closely monitored to make sure that less skilled and less mature players will not be over-matched and exposed to possible injury.
- e. To be a varsity player you must have completed your 20 mandatory summer work outs to suit up for a varsity game. There will be make ups for those who did not completed their workouts. Injured players and new students who were not here may be exempt from some of the workouts.

2. JUNIOR VARSITY

- a. For practices, this team will be made up of sophomores and freshmen.
- b. During weeks when there are C team games, some juniors and seniors may play with the junior varsity as well as some freshmen.
- c. Players that attend all practices during the week prior to games will play at least part of two quarters, win or lose.
- d. Shirt and tie rules for juniors and seniors playing in a junior varsity contest are waived if they suited for the Friday's varsity contest.

3. C TEAM

- a. During weeks when we have three games scheduled, coaches will decide who will play in the C team games.
- b. Same rule for JV's above applies for playing time in C team games.
- c. As much as we want to keep freshmen separate from the older guys Mondays are days were freshmen maybe needed to help the varsity as scout players.

4. LETTERS

All players who finish the season on the Varsity team will receive a Varsity letter. All others who completed the Junior Varsity and C Team will receive a Junior Varsity letter.

5. PLAYOFF PARTICIPATION

All juniors, sophomores and freshmen who have identified themselves as varsity players by completing 20 of their summer workouts are eligible to be invited to participate in post-season practices and suit up. Freshmen will participate by invitation only and with written parental permission.

STATE/DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS

Practice requirements without exception:

- a. A player needs 12 days of practices to participate in the first game.
- b. Each player's first 3 days of practice must be in shorts and helmet only.
- c. Days with two practices count as one day of practice.
- d. Sundays do not count as a practice day.
- e. If a player misses 4 practices or more in a row before he has accumulated his 12 practices, then he subtracts those missed days from the total practices attended and restarts his practice count from that point.
- f. To participate in a jamboree players have 8 practices, varsity players need to have made up 15 summer workouts and be academically eligible.

Players failing one class in the previous semester are not eligible to play in the jamboree or the first game and half of the next game, providing the student athlete attends mandatory after-school study sessions on his assigned days and times and is passing all classes. Academic progress will be checked on a weekly basis.

Students failing two or more classes will be eligible five weeks after the start of school, provided they attend all after-school study sessions and are passing all classes, progress will be checked on a weekly basis.

PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE OR GAMES

1. Wear all protective equipment including mouth guards to every practice or contest unless otherwise indicated by the daily practice plan.
2. Be sure that all stabilizing straps and laces are properly worn and tightened and all fasteners are secured so that equipment is properly positioned.
3. Wear outer and undergarments that are appropriate for humidity and temperature.
4. Players with visual impairment must wear corrective, shatterproof glasses or contact lenses if the impairment affects judgment or perception.
5. In hot humid weather, players should consume 4-6 glasses of water between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. with the last consumption at least 30 minutes prior to practice or games.
Players do not need to ask permission to get a drink. If you are thirsty, go drink.
6. Players needing protective tape, padding, or bracing should arrive early to receive necessary treatment. Taping occurs immediately after school in the training room. Being late for practice because you were late to get taped still counts as a "late to practice."
7. Remove all jewelry and metal hair fasteners.
8. Players with seizure, neuromuscular, renal, cardiac, insulin/diabetic, chronic skeletal problems, disorders, diseases, or medically controlled allergies need a physician's approval to participate.
9. If ill or dizzy, notify your coach. Do not practice.
10. During practices, hydrate yourselves when thirsty don't wait for water breaks.
11. Injured players, while not actively participating, should be with their position groups.
12. Players need to report headaches to the coaching staff immediately and coaches and parents should follow the protocols outline in the concussion safety dictates of the state and WIAA.

IN THE LOCKER ROOM

1. Be alert to slippery floors.
2. Be alert to changes in floor texture and elevated thresholds between lockers and shower rooms.
3. Keep floors free of litter. Place all personal belongings in assigned lockers.
4. **Close and lock locker doors, do not bring money or valuables to practice. When away from your assigned locker, lock it.**
5. Keep soap and shampoo in the shower area.
6. Use foot powder and talc in the drying area between the showers and lockers.
7. Refrain from rapid movements, roughhousing, and horseplay in the locker/shower areas.
8. Identify and report incidents of foot or skin infections to coaches immediately.

9. Hang your gear in the drying room so it will be dry for the next practice. Wash your gear weekly i.e. helmet, pads, girdle, pads, practice pants and practice jerseys.
10. Do not wear cleats in the gym area, halls, and be extremely careful in the locker room
11. Do not go into the training room or coach's office without permission.

MOVEMENT TO GAMES AND PRACTICE SITES

Be alert to:

1. Ramps leading to practice/games areas such as the one at LC.
2. Variations in surfaces of locker rooms, ramps, natural or artificial turf and wear appropriate and legal footwear.
3. The location and activity in proximity to:
 - goal posts
 - Blocking sleds
 - Kicking/kick return drills
 - Passer/receiver drills
 - Agility, sprinting, or other fast action drills
12. Warm up thoroughly before full speed participation.
13. All players must travel to and from games in school provided transportation. Exceptions:
 - a. A face to face hand-off of a student to his own parent. If the coach suspects the parent is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the student will remain on school transportation.
 - b. A student will not be allowed to leave with someone else's parents without prior approval and written permission from the principal or vice-principal.
14. While travelling to game sites, players are expected to behave, respect others, and use pre-game travel time to prepare themselves for the upcoming contest. Students who do not display appropriate behavior on trips will not be taken on future trips.
15. Players will either dress at home or in the locker rooms at our opponent's fields. We will not dress in the bus.

CAUTIONS SPECIFIC TO FOOTBALL

All players will be taught blocking and tackling techniques that are approved by the National Federation and our state association, the WIAA. The following techniques are of major importance for player safety.

1. The Head and Helmet
 - a. Tackle or block or break tackles with the shoulder pad. **NEVER USE THE HELMET TO STRIKE AN OPPONENT.**
 - b. Keep the chin and eyes up when blocking, tackling, or running with the ball. Lowering the head/helmet jeopardizes the neck and spinal cord and can result in death and serious injury.
2. Blocking and Defensive Contact
 - a. The forearm-striking surface would be accelerated as a unit with the shoulder and extension of the trunk. DO NOT "wind up" to accelerate the forearm separately.
 - b. Block from the front, the side and above the waist.
 - c. When pursuing an opponent ball carrier, do not "pile on" when the opponent is down.
 - d. Do not chop or slash with the arm when executing a tackling.
3. General
 - a. GET UP! When on the ground you are vulnerable to being stepped on or receiving a leg, shoulder, or knee injury.
 - b. When falling, tuck and roll. Leave no extremity extended either to absorb the fall while on the ground.
 - c. Participate fully in all neck strengthening exercises.
3. Water / hydration

Frequent drink breaks will be scheduled during practices and players should hydrate themselves frequently during practices and games. If you are thirsty, go get a drink you do not need permission.

4. Weight Room

Maintenance strength training procedures will be utilized. Observe all weight room policies and safety standards for progressions, spotting and general safety.

EMERGENCIES

Because of the nature of football, some injuries may occur. Most will be minor and can be managed with basic first aid. All injuries must be called to a coach's attention. However, an occasional situation may require more intense management and may also necessitate involvement of squad members as follows:

1. Stop all practices, scrimmages or drills
2. Call the coach to manage the situation if he is not already at the site.
3. Sit or kneel in close proximity.
4. Assist by
 - a. Calling for additional assistance
 - b. Bringing first aid equipment or supplies to the site
 - c. Keeping onlookers away.
 - d. Directing rescue team members to the site.
5. Fire or fire alarm
 - a. Evacuate or remain outside the building.
 - b. Move 100 yards from the building.
6. Lightening - clear the field and get into the locker room

OLD SCHOOL TACKLING

We are taking a proactive approach to some of the dangers inherent from the types of contact initiated during tackling. In the forefront of changing tackling to a more tackler friendly technique, the Seahawks have been in the fore front in professional by teaching what they call Hawk tackling. After watching their Utube video, then attending the spring Husky football clinics, I listened and watched how Chris Peterson has adapted the Hawk tackle to the Dawg tackle.

Both the Seahawks and Huskies are convinced that their Rugby style tackling has greatly reduced concussions thereby making the game safer and their players are responding by having fewer and fewer concussions and other injuries. The goal is to take the head out of tackling, placing it behind the ball carrier and out of taking /delivering he blow and shoulder tackling and wrapping up the legs of the ball carrier.

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Parental acknowledgement of having read with your athlete the above document concerning participation in the Meridian Football program. That you have also listened to and viewed the videos about safety and explanation of Old School Tackling as presented by Coach Ames. This document and the concussion and the head injury video will be on our Athletic Department website. The Hawk, Dawg tackling and Old School tackling drills are on our HUDL site. If your athlete does not have access then contact Mr Kurz to get access.

Parent or legal guardian signature

student athlete signature