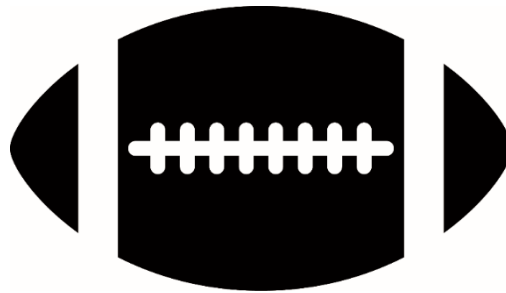




FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY YMCA YOUTH TACKLE FOOTBALL 2017 INFORMATION PACKET



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YMCA SEVEN PILLARS OF YOUTH SPORTS

Pillar One – Everyone Plays

We do not use try outs to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from our program. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays at least half of every game.

Pillar Two – Safety First

Although kids may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. We ask you to make sure the equipment and the facilities are safe and teach the sport as we've prescribed so that the skills taught are appropriate for your athlete's development levels. We ask you to gradually develop your player's fitness levels so they are conditioned for the sport. Coaches should constantly supervise your players and stop any unsafe activities.

Pillar Three – Fair Play

Fair play is about playing by the rules and more. It's about you and your players showing respect for all involved in YMCA Youth Sports. It's about you being a role model of good sportsmanship and guiding your players to do the same. Remember, we're more interested in developing children's character through sports than developing a few highly skilled players.

Pillar Four – Positive Competition

We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. **When adults make decisions that put the best interests of the players before winning the contest – *that's the right perspective*.** Learning to compete is important for youngsters and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. We want to help kids learn these lessons through YMCA Youth Sports.

Pillar Five – Family Involvement

YMCA Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately in their child's participation in our sports programs. In addition to parents being helpful as volunteer coaches and referees, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation.

Pillar Six – Sport for All

YMCA Youth Sports is an "inclusive" sports program. That means that youngsters who differ in various characteristics are to be included rather than excluded from participation. We offer sports programs for kids who differ in physical abilities by matching them with kids of similar abilities and modifying the sport. We offer programs to all youngsters regardless of their race, gender, religious creed or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the kids and their parents to do the same.

Pillar Seven – Sports for Fun

Sports are naturally fun for most kids. They love the challenge of mastering the skills of the game, playing with their friends and competing with their peers. Sometimes when adults become involved in youth sports, they over organize and dominate the activity to the point that it destroys young people's enjoyment of the sport. If we take the fun out of sports for our children, we are in danger of the kids taking themselves out of sports. Remember, the sports are for the kids; *let them have fun*.

YMCA YOUTH FOOTBALL PHILOSOPHY

1. Provide a safe, positive and enjoyable introduction to tackle football.
2. Teach players the basic fundamental skills and strategies of tackle football.
3. Instill in the players the "TEAM" concept and values by recognizing accomplishments of the team, not the individual.
4. Develop spirit, mind and body in working with players to develop positive values such as respect, discipline, confidence, pride, leadership, patience and commitment.
5. Help every player in the program and give equal attention and help regardless of player's skill level.
6. Instill cooperative coaching style by giving direction and providing instruction to young athletes, but also allowing athletes to make decisions and assume responsibility.
7. Teaching fair play, good sportsmanship, good citizenship and character as well as the beneficial opportunities of becoming positive examples for others.
8. Provide a football program which is a positive experience for all members.
9. Instill in the athlete a proper competitive spirit and desire to perform to their potential.
10. Teach players self respect, respect for teammates, respect for other teams, respect for rules, respect for officials and respect for adult leaders/coaches.
11. Make it FUN for all participants of the program.

Sheboygan County YMCA Youth Tackle Football League

The Sheboygan County YMCA Youth Tackle Football League has one division for 3rd and 4th grade. Second graders may join with the consent of the Youth Sports Director.

The YMCA Youth Tackle Football League uses the National Federation of State High School Associations Handbook as a basic guide to govern most playing rules used. Due to the age of players in the football program, some rules have been modified or changed to eliminate situations that might have a higher incidence of injury and to effectively manage the field time allotted for games.

Sheboygan County YMCA Youth Sports Director

1. The Youth Sports Director is responsible for conducting the daily affairs of the league and for executing the policies established.
2. The Youth Sports Director has sole authority to investigate and to take appropriate disciplinary or corrective measures in any club action, non-participant interference or emergency occurring in a Sheboygan County YMCA youth football game or practice.
3. Any additions, modifications or interpretation of any or all guidelines used in the Sheboygan County YMCA Youth Tackle Football League is the responsibility of the Youth Sports Director.
4. To assist the Youth Sports Director in the development and monitoring of the football program, there is a site coordinator. They are direct representatives of the Youth Sports Director and manage day to day operations of the divisional football program and handle all on-field issues when present. Their responsibilities are further identified in the next section.

Site Coordinator

1. Site coordinators have full authority to make on-field decisions that protect the safety of the players, coaches, fans and the integrity of the goals of the Sheboygan County YMCA Youth Tackle Football League.
2. The site coordinator shall have full jurisdiction over enforcement and interpretation of rules and conduct within their division and will conduct investigations, if any, into violations as they in their sole discretion deem necessary and recommend sanctions to the Youth Sports Director as they deem appropriate.
3. The site coordinator is responsible for full jurisdiction over grievances, challenges, enforcement and interpretation of rules, policies and protests within their division and they will conduct such investigations, if any, as they in their sole discretion deem necessary.
4. The site coordinator may authorize to cancel, postpone or terminate games. If an emergency arises that may require cancellation, postponement or termination, the site coordinator will consult with the Youth Sports Director concerning such decisions. If the site coordinator is not present or cannot be contacted, the referees will be in charge of field operations and will consult with the Youth Sports Director.
 - a. In circumstances where safety is of immediate concern, the site coordinator, after consulting with the referees and coaches, can authorize a temporary suspension in play and if warranted, removal of the participants from the playing field. The main concern is the safety of spectators, players, game officials and non-player personnel in the bench areas.
 - b. If possible, coaches of the two participating clubs should be consulted before any decision involving cancellation, postponement or termination of games is made.

Referees

1. There will be an attempt to have at least two referees scheduled to officiate each game played. Please understand that they are attempting to control and watch 22 kids while high school, college and professionals have six to eight officials doing the same job. Due to this fact, they cannot possibly monitor all game situations. Their main goal is to enforce what they see and control safety to their best ability. Coaches are responsible for teaching and instructing proper play and to follow the rules without “bending” the rules.
2. Referees are in charge of on-field decisions concerning the enforcement of rules utilized for play of the Sheboygan County YMCA Youth Tackle Football League. They are not the experts, but have the empowerment and support of the Youth Sports Director to enforce rules and make safety decisions in the absence of the site coordinator.
3. The fields used during the YMCA football season are under the jurisdiction and control of the Sheboygan County YMCA. A game can be halted by a referee if a fan becomes unruly using foul language, making vocal threats or is generally abusive to the integrity of the goals of Sheboygan County YMCA. In other words, if the environment is not good for the players, it must be dealt with in the following manner:
 - a. Warning to both coaches. The game will be stopped and both coaches will be warned. If the individual in question is under their control (parent of player, relative of player, etc.) it is their responsibility to talk to the individual, resolve the issue or ask them to depart the playing location. If the individual becomes unruly or refuses to leave, the referee will notify the site coordinator and/or Youth Sports Director, who will call local authorities to have the person removed.
 - b. Warning to the individual. Stop play and inform the individual that if they do not cease their activities, they will have 5 minutes to depart the playing location or the authorities will be called.
 - c. Play will begin when the situation has met the satisfaction of the referees.
4. If a referee determines that a situation warrants immediate removal of participants from the playing field for safety reasons, they may do so on their own authority. If, however, circumstances allow the time, they must coordinate with the site coordinator or Youth Sports Director and discuss the actual or pending situation to arrive at a decision.
5. A referee must not make a decision concerning the possibility of a cancellation, postponement or termination unless instructed to do so by an appropriate representative of the Sheboygan County YMCA.
6. The referee will be mindful of the safety of not only players and officials, but also of the spectators and other non-participants.

1. All players must be registered and permission must be given by the parent or legal guardian on the signed registration form.
2. An eligible player must be physically fit and maintain satisfactory attendance at practice. Parents assume responsibility to ensure that players are in satisfactory physical condition to play tackle football. A sports physical is strongly recommended prior to participation in any physical contact in practice or games.
3. Once the player is registered and assigned to a team, they will not be allowed to transfer to another team unless approved by the Youth Sports Director, the player's parents and the team coaches involved. Failure to comply with proper registration or transfer of a player will make the player ineligible to play for the remainder of the season.
4. The Sheboygan County YMCA will issue all players the equipment below. This equipment is required for wear during all practices and games. Due to insurance compliances and safety, there is no substitution of personal gear to be used in place of equipment issued by the Sheboygan County YMCA.
 - a. Helmet and chin guard. Under no circumstances will any player be allowed to wear bandannas, scarves or any other type head covering under the helmet at any time. This could cause problems with the fit of the helmet and safety of the player.
 - b. Shoulder pads.
 - c. Football pants with pads included.
 - d. Practice/game jersey.
5. If equipment is damaged from abuse or misuse, the players will reimburse the Sheboygan County YMCA the replacement cost of the damaged equipment.
6. If equipment is damaged, but is not the fault of the player, contact the Youth Sports Director or site coordinator for reissue. Players are not allowed to practice or play in games with damaged or improperly fitted equipment.
7. Clean equipment weekly. If tape is used on helmets to identify players, the helmet must be fully cleaned of all tape and its residue prior to turning in the helmet.
8. Only coaches, referees and Sheboygan County YMCA staff are allowed to alter or attempt to repair equipment.
9. Players will furnish and wear the following equipment in both games and practices:
 - a. Jersey
 - b. Mouth guards. Mouth guards must be worn and attached to the helmets at all practices and games. Special dental mouth guards must be brought to the attention of the referee prior to the start of the game.
 - c. Tennis shoes with molded rubber cleats are recommended. Metal or primarily metal tipped cleats cannot be worn.
 - d. Glasses should preferably be athletically approved with non-shattering safety glass or contact lenses.
10. Player's equipment is inspected prior to each game or practice by the coach to ensure player safety. Referees or league directors will conduct spot checks of players to ensure compliance with equipment standards.
11. Wearing of jewelry of any kind is strictly prohibited under any circumstances during practice or games.
12. Allowable optional equipment includes:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cold weather clothing b. Gloves made for football c. Un-altered manufactured elbow, forearm, hand and shin pad only 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> d. Neck protector e. Ace bandages f. Medical tape/cloth for injury prevention only g. Rib pads
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Weigh-In

1. Players will be weighed in as natural weight without mandatory football equipment during equipment issue. For safety reasons and fair competition, there is a maximum weight limit for all players eligible to carry or receive the football during the course of a game. **The third/fourth grade league weight limit is 90 pounds.**
2. All players over the maximum allowable weight will be identified with an adhesive blue dot placed visibly on both sides of the helmet.
3. If a substantial weight gain or loss is noticed by any coach, referee or site coordinator, the player can be re-weighed at the discretion of the Youth Sports Director.

Coaching

- Remember tackle football is not an easy sport to play. Everyone involved must remember these are impressionable youngsters who we are dealing with and this is a new experience for them. Coaches along with parents must remember that the season will have some difficult moments for their kids, as well as coaches. Overcoming these difficulties in a positive manner helps to build confidence and pride.
- Coaches do not make league policies, however they are expected to follow all rules and regulations. On the playing and practice fields, the coaching staff is in complete charge of their players and fans and shall not be interfered with except in cases of rules violations and any other conduct deemed inappropriate by the Youth Sports Director, site coordinator or referees.
- Successful coaches, faced with the pressures and excitement of competitive sports, should think carefully about what they say and emotions they communicate. Inappropriate comments or gestures can only harm coach-athlete relationships.
- Head coaches are responsible for:
 1. Preparing a practice plan appropriate for the age and skill level of their team for the entire season including conditioning, skill building drills and a focus on every member of their team.
 2. Communicating with players and parents a realistic assessment of every child's potential, encouraging every child to improve, to work as a team and to enjoy their contribution to the team.
 3. Preparing a play book appropriate for the age and skill level of their team.
 4. Teaching teamwork, football skills, conditioning and a love of the game.
 5. Ensuring that the team, coaches, parents and players are in full compliance with Sheboygan County YMCA Youth Tackle Football League rules and guidelines.
 6. Coordinating and communicating with the team parent volunteers so that they understand and perform their assignments.
 7. Directing assistant coaches.
 8. Coaches are expected to come to practice prepared with clear outline and plan for the day's practice.
 9. Coaches are expected to be present at all practices and games.
 10. Coaches shall strictly abide by all blocking and tackling rules addressed below:
 - a. ALL blocking and initial blocking contact is to be above the waist without exception. Blocking below the waist is unacceptable. The penalty when this is called is for unsportsmanlike conduct and carries a 10 yard penalty. The coach will address the participant and take the appropriate actions. A second offense may result in ejection from the game. This will be at the discretion of the referees and site coordinator.
 - b. There will be no intentional contact or tackling done above the shoulder pads. For safety reasons contact in the neck and helmet area are unacceptable without exception. The penalty when this is called is for unsportsmanlike conduct and carries a 10 yard penalty. The coach will address the player and take the appropriate actions. A second offense may result in ejection from the game. This will be at the discretion of the referees and site coordinator.
 - c. The helmet top (spearing) will not be used to block or tackle. For safety reasons this is unacceptable use of equipment and will not be tolerated without exception. The penalty when this called is for unsportsmanlike conduct and carries a 10 yard penalty and possibly game ejection depending on the intent. A second offense will result in the player being ejected from the game and additional sanctions may occur if the Youth Sports Director reviews these infractions and finds them to be deliberate.

- Coaches are responsible to ensure all players participate in at least two quarters worth of playing time in a league game. This is subjective and sometimes hard to do without someone on the sidelines helping you shuffle players in and out. Make an honest effort and do your best to accomplish equal playing time.
 1. The playing time requirement may be forfeited by a player due to poor practice attendance, health reasons, injuries or unwillingness of the player wanting to play.
 2. In all situations, notify the player's parents before just sitting them out.
- The coach is responsible to handle all situations dealing with players and parents. Handle the situation at your level prior to elevating the problem to the site coordinator or Youth Sports Director. This can be one of the most difficult aspects of your coaching duties.
- Coaches are required to attend all scheduled team and league events.
- Coaches cannot allow players to participate until everything is turned in to the Sheboygan County YMCA.
- Coaches are issued a medical bag and are required to have it readily available at all practices and games. Contact the league director if additional supplies for the medical bag are needed.
- Coaches are required to fill out an injury report on any player injured during practice or in a game requiring possible hospitalization or a visit to a physician. The injury may turn out to be nothing, but the Sheboygan County YMCA still needs a courtesy heads-up concerning the injury. The injury report must be turned into the Youth Sports Director.
- Coaches are required to keep on hand an Emergency Information and Response Card on all players. This is useful if a player is injured or has a medical condition and the parents are not available to answer questions needed by police or emergency medical responders.
- Each coach is responsible to meet with parents of team players to discuss the Sheboygan County YMCA Youth Tackle Football League rules, philosophy and other matters of interest to the parents.
- Coaches are encouraged to share ideas and concerns with the site coordinator and Youth Sports Director. Your help in making this program better for all involved is greatly appreciated. Without you, this program would not be possible.

Conduct

1. Players are prohibited from using obscene or abusive language during practice, games or other league activities. Such behavior is subject to disciplinary action by the coach, site coordinator and Youth Sports Director. Disciplinary action will be determined by the coach, site coordinator and Youth Sports Director and may include suspension from a scheduled game or removal from the league.
2. All coaches are prohibited from physically pushing, punching, or in any way, physically/verbally assaulting another coach, parent, referee or a player. If any of these actions should occur, the game will be cancelled and the coach removed from the league.
3. Players and coaches will participate in the "end of the game handshake."
4. If a parent has concerns or issues with another parent's conduct, that concern/issue should be brought to the attention of the coach. The coach will then determine if it should be addressed with the site coordinator or the Youth Sports Director.
5. No parent may use abusive, threatening or inappropriate language directed toward the Youth Sports Director, site coordinator, coach, player or referee. Parents can be asked to leave or be removed from practice or playing fields by law enforcement if the situation dictates it.
6. The Sheboygan County YMCA would like to ask for your cooperation in helping maintain the practice and playing fields for the safety of the athletes.

Practice

1. **No player will be allowed** to practice or play a game until they have been properly registered, assigned to a team and properly fitted with and wearing all equipment.
2. A player must have a minimum of four and a maximum of six practices before participating in any regular scheduled games.
 - a. During the pre-season, practice sessions are limited to one 2-hour session per day. A mandatory water break after the first hour of practice is required. During extreme heat, breaks should be given often to avoid heat exhaustion/fatigue. It is highly recommended to require water over soft drinks during practice.
 - b. The first practice is specifically designed for conditioning of players and position alignment. No pads are allowed, only helmets during this practice.
3. There is a maximum of one practice per week after the first scheduled game. During the season, practice sessions should be limited to 1 ½ hours - 2 hours.
4. No team will be allowed to scrimmage a league opponent.
5. Notify parents and players on the dates, times and locations of practices and games.
6. Unexcused attendance for a practice may result in missing the next scheduled game at a coach's discretion.
7. Be aware of the whereabouts of all team members during practice and games; remain at the sites until all players have left.
8. Keep a current list of each parent's contact numbers in case of injury or illness of a child.
9. Encourage parent involvement by providing volunteer opportunities for parents.
10. If you cannot attend a practice, make sure that someone has been notified to replace you with the appropriate practice schedule and other necessary information.
11. Check the condition of the equipment and field for safety hazards before beginning practice.
12. Before leaving a practice site, make sure everything is picked up and returned to proper storage.
13. Each player will have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills for the position they would like to play. Attempt to honor their desire as long as it fits the team's need and the player demonstrates the necessary skills.
14. All practices where contact takes place shall be conducted with full protective gear.