

AMADOR NUGGETS
FOOTBALL & CHEER

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

www.nuggetsfootball.com

WELCOME

Welcome to the Amador Nuggets Youth Football and Cheer program (ANF). This handbook was developed to help our athletes, parents, and volunteers understand how we operate and what is expected from each athlete, parent, coach, and volunteer. This handbook cannot possibly cover every conceivable situation that may arise during the season, but we will follow the spirit of the handbook and allow common sense to prevail. ANF is operated entirely by volunteer members – all input is welcome!

ORGANIZATION

ANF, also known as the Amador Nuggets, is a nonprofit California corporation, and governed by our bylaws. Members may download copies of these bylaws at any time at www.nuggetsfootball.com. We are affiliated with the Mother Lode Youth Athletic Conference (MLYAC). MLYAC bylaws govern the age and weight policies that apply to each team for football and cheer. Each football team may have up to 33 athletes. Each cheer squad may have up to 25 athletes. Any roster may be closed before the maximum number of allowed athletes at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

ELIGIBILITY

Full eligibility regulations are found in and governed by MLYAC bylaws. Rosters that are not filled by eligible participants are open to non-residents in accordance with MLYAC guidelines. Rosters shall be filled with non-waivered athletes before waived athletes are added to the roster. Proof of residence or enrollment is required and waivers may be required. The ANF Board of Directors is not required to accept, approve or sign a waiver and may choose NOT to accept, approve or sign a waiver.

CERTIFICATION

Athletes must be within 2 pounds of the age/weight categories on the last practice day before Jamboree. Being more than 2 pounds under the minimum weight or over the maximum weight on the last day of practice before Jamboree may result in being moved to a different level (Bant/JV/Var) at the discretion of the Board and coaching staff. All athletes must certify for the age/weight category by the first game.

REGISTRATION FEES

A registration fee for each athlete is assessed prior to the beginning of each season. The fee covers all ANF services provided.

Football – \$125 registration fee

Cheer - \$150 registration fee

Registration fees will be refunded if an athlete becomes ineligible due to weight as dictated in the bylaws. If an athlete must move to another level in order to meet be certified, but refuses to move, the athlete's registration fee will not be refunded. Fees are only refundable prior to Jamboree, unless the athlete is forced to drop out due to injury; the registration fee is then prorated. The Treasurer will mail your refund check.

FUNDRAISING

1. Every participant is eligible and encouraged to sell program ads.
2. You or your company may become a corporate sponsor.
3. Cheerleaders are given multiple fundraising opportunities to offset uniform costs.
4. All fundraising activities are managed by the Fundraising Coordinator.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ANF is operated entirely by volunteers – every activity that is part of our program occurs through the efforts of volunteers. Board members, coaches and advisors donate countless hours per person, each

season, to ensure we can offer the highest quality program to our athletes. Each volunteer must be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. There are a variety of levels of involvement within our program.

Board of Directors – these volunteers are elected to two (2) year terms by the general membership. They are responsible for management of all operations in the program, including oversight of the volunteer network.

Football Coaches are volunteers who apply for a coaching position each year. The coaches manage all practices and games for ANF. One head coach and at least one assistant coach up to a maximum of three (3) assistant coaches are allowed per team. Coaches are the athletes' primary instructors, and are responsible for supervision, teaching plays, running drills, and discipline on the field. The coach will manage parent relations and communications also. All issues and questions regarding any coaching or a particular coach should be directed to the Vice President of the Board of Directors.

Cheer Coaches and Instructors are volunteers who apply for a coaching or instructor's position each year. There are up to two (2) coaches and two (2) instructors per squad. Coaches are adults, instructors may be youth of at least 16 years of age. The cheer coaching staff is responsible for discipline, parent communications, planning squad events and programs, team building, instructor relations, and squad fundraising. The cheer instructors are responsible for developing game and competition routines, teaching the routines, and strengthening cheerleader skills. Parents may not discuss the routines or formations with the instructors; these issues should be directed to the Cheer Coordinator on the Board of Directors.

Parent volunteers – we need at least 50 volunteers for each home game to staff the snack bar, gate, and Nuggets merchandise store, etc. Each parent volunteers a minimum of 4 hours for each athlete participating in the program, usually two 2-hour shifts at home games. Documentation of volunteer hours will be kept to assure compliance and loss of mandatory participation rules may be applied if volunteer time is not given. A parent may opt to donate \$50 to ANF in lieu of completing the volunteer hours requirement; however, is not an option to donate \$25 and work one 2-hour shift.

Board members, head coaches and assistant coaches will not be required to complete volunteer hours. These volunteers far exceed the minimum four hours in the course of executing the duties and responsibilities of the board member or coaching position. ANF encourages spouses to volunteer as needed for the benefit of the organization. Each team/squad will be allowed 4 hours of volunteer time for the Team Parent function if applicable.

General membership volunteer hours must be completed during the following ANF events: ANF concession stand, home football games and field preparation. Volunteer hours will not be counted for events such as: football chalk talks, team building parties, transportation. Volunteer hours not listed above may be completed if approved by the President prior to completing those hours. Such request must come in writing one week prior to event. In addition, volunteer hours may be waived if the need exists. This need must be documented in writing and supporting documentation may be required. Any request for waving of the mandatory volunteer hours is subject to Board approval.

Athletes – Each athlete is expected to put forth a best effort, both on and off the field, and to abide by the rules and regulations in this handbook, the MLYAC rulebook, and the ANF and MLYAC bylaws. Athletes will display courtesy and respect, particularly when wearing ANF uniforms or other ANF apparel. Athletes will be on time, ready to practice or compete, and to be open to learning what is taught.

CITIZENSHIP

Nuggets have a long-time tradition of demonstrating pride and respect – to each other, to MLYAC associations and leadership, to coaches, parents, teachers, classmates, and community members. Any derogatory comments, mocking of others, gossip, or criticism that is not constructive in nature will not be tolerated. All athletes, board members, coaches, instructors and parents will abide by the behavior guidelines outlined below.

PARENT & ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

The support of parents is essential to the success of any youth program. This support should be of the off-field variety in such activities as fundraising, promotion, equipment maintenance, team sponsorship, and other volunteer activities. On occasion, well-meaning parents can become overzealous and cause unwarranted problems. For the safety and well-being of everyone involved, ANF provides these rules concerning parent conduct.

- a) Parents should clearly understand that the purpose of this program is to teach teamwork, good sportsmanship, fair play, and a love of the sport.
- b) Alcohol, tobacco use or drugs at practices or games, or other ANF-sponsored activity during the regular season, play-offs or cheer competitions is strictly prohibited.
- c) Parents must stay in the areas designated by the Board of Directors and coaches during all practice sessions and games. Parents (except parent coaches or team parents) are not allowed on the field, sidelines, or locker rooms during practice or games.
- d) Parents are encouraged to cheer loudly for your team, but always in good taste and never in a way that is disparaging to the opposing team. Unsportsmanlike conduct is prohibited at all times, and can result in penalties to the team on the field.
- e) A positive mental attitude, free from parent pressures, is an important ingredient for the success of any athlete in the program. Adults will refrain from open criticisms, especially in the presence of athletes.
- f) Parents should encourage attendance at all practice sessions. Absences impede progress for the rest of the team as well as for the missing athlete. Missing practice can lead to benching during all or part of a game or may result in suspension if excessive absences occur. Missing practice should be limited to illness or serious injury; athletes with minor injuries or mild illnesses can still benefit from observing practice. You must notify your coach prior to an absence.
- g) Parents are responsible for getting all athletes to and from all games and practices, on time. ANF cannot be held responsible for the health and welfare of unattended children. Siblings will not be supervised and are not permitted on the sidelines or practice fields unless in an official capacity with the program.
- h) Parents are responsible for the replacement of damaged or lost equipment.

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for each athlete participating in this program by following this Code of Conduct:

I will encourage and demonstrate by example the importance of good sportsmanship and positive support for all athletes, instructors, coaches and officials at all practices and games.

I will place the emotional and physical well being of my athlete ahead of my personal desire to win.

I will insist on a safe anti-tobacco and drug-free environment.

I will assist in teaching my athlete that rules are important and must be followed to win a team competition.

I will respect and support officials, coaches, instructors and volunteers working with my athlete, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

I understand that verbal and physical abuse is not tolerated. This includes profanity, foul language, racial epithets, negative innuendo about a person's religion or ethnicity, slander, malicious rumors or threats.

I will not engage in verbal or physical confrontation.

I will not create conflict nor will I entice another to do so.

I understand that ANF has adopted a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY. If I violate any part of the Code of Conduct it may result in termination of my athlete's and my participation from any ANF activity for not less than the balance of the current season or longer time period as determined by the ANF Board of Directors, up to the maximum penalty of the loss of my membership permanently.

VIOLATION OF THE PARENT & ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

Amador Nuggets Board of Directors has established a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR IMPROPER ADULT BEHAVIOR**. Each parent or guardian (adult) will be required to sign that they have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct. Violation of the Code of Conduct will result in immediate termination of ANF membership.

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

Hard work and dedication will be required before you can wear the colors of your team. Being a member of the team requires much more than just learning about playing football or being a cheerleader.

- a) Good grades in school are encouraged. A "C" average is expected.
- b) Vulgarity, temper tantrums, and fighting are absolutely prohibited. Any athlete observed displaying conduct below the acceptable standards for a Nuggets athlete may be subject to suspension.
- c) If you are going to miss a practice or game, notify your coach. You are expected to arrive at games and practices on time, or to alert your coach if you will be late. Excessive tardiness may result in disciplinary actions being taken including being suspended from a game at the discretion of your coach.
- d) Report all equipment or uniform problems to your coach immediately. It is your responsibility – not your parents – to keep your uniform and equipment clean and in good repair. Football and cheerleader uniforms must be cleaned before every game.
- e) Uniform is to be worn ONLY by the registered athlete.
- f) Football athletes are required to wear the complete official practice uniform and pads to each practice.
- g) Athletes are expected to learn and know their plays (offensive and defensive) or cheer routines. Failure to learn plays or cheer routines place the participant and other participants in danger. Coaches will document each athlete's violations.
- h) Athletes will not engage in public displays of affection while in ANF uniforms nor at any ANF sanctioned events. Violations may result in loss of mandatory play or participation in cheer performances.

In the event of a violation of the Codes of Conduct or other policies outlined in this handbook, the violation will be documented and subject to progressive consequence.

COMMUNICATION

We welcome your ideas, concerns, and input at all times! If you have a question or an insight to share, you should begin with your athlete's Coach. If you do not feel the situation is resolved, you can next speak with the appropriate Vice President. If you still feel your concern has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you can take your concern to the Board of Directors by speaking with the Vice President and President and completing and submitting an official complaint form in writing. No complaint will be considered if not in written form.

SCHEDULE

Practice begins on the date specified by MLYAC. Generally, and subject to change, practice is Monday – Friday, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., at Amador High School. After Jamboree, practice is only Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Amador High School. Football and cheer will practice at the same time whenever possible. Game schedules are set by MLYAC.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all practices and games is mandatory. Failure to properly attend games and practice may result in disciplinary actions. An athlete will not be allowed additional unexcused absences due to a longer season and/or playoffs. Participants are allowed only five excused absences per season. Any unexcused absences of one (1) day during the week will result in the reduction of MPR to one (1) play for the upcoming game. Excused or unexcused, an athlete must participate in a minimum of one (1) practice during a game week or they will not be permitted to suit up and will be ineligible to participate in that game.

Excused Absences include but are not limited to:

1. Medical/Injury (with a doctor's note)
2. Academic (with proof of a field trip or other school-required activity)
3. Religious (worship or education)
4. Family emergency
5. Another activity in which he/she has been involved for several weeks and is in a playoff/championship (such as All-Star baseball) during try-outs, if the other activity overlaps tryout hours.
6. Prescheduled and approved (by Head Coach) family vacations

If you cannot attend practice or a game, your parent must notify your head coach or an assistant coach (do not tell another athlete or parent to tell the coach for you) in advance. If you do not show up and have not notified your coach, it will be counted as an unexcused absence. Any cheerleader with an unexcused absence may be moved within in the routine or dropped from the routine altogether for the safety of the squad.

EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

ANF has adopted the practice, game day, and competition uniform requirements established by MLYAC. Whenever athletes, cheerleaders, coaches or board members are in an ANF uniform, they are expected to conduct themselves with pride and respect at all times. Any game or competition uniform, whether owned by the participant or by ANF, is not to be worn outside of games or competition at any time. This applies to football pants, pads, helmets, practice jersey and to cheer skirts, shells, liners, shoes, and bows.

Exceptions -Football players are encouraged to wear home jerseys to school on Fridays before each game. Cheerleaders are encouraged to wear their full uniform to school on Fridays before each game, if permitted by the school's principal.

Some uniform and equipment elements are provided by ANF, some things you keep, some you give back, some things are provided by the parents as detailed below.

Provided by ANF to each football athlete: personalized game jersey and game socks (yours to keep). Also provided by ANF to each football athlete, but returned in good condition at the end of the season: helmet with chinstrap, practice pants with belt, practice jersey, girdle and pads, shoulder pads, and game pants with belt.

FOOTBALL ATHLETES are expected to pay for cleats and mouth guard (required), and may choose to pay for additional football camps, specialized pads or gear, or equipment bag.

Provided by ANF to each cheerleader: cheer shoes, practice clothes (2 each t-shirts and shorts), and cheer bow (yours to keep).

CHEER ATHLETES are expected to pay for the basic cheer uniform consisting of shell, bodyliner, skirt, briefs, and poms and cheer camp provided by an outside company and hosted by ANF. Cheer athletes may choose to pay for warm-ups and a personalized gear bag.

PRACTICE ATTIRE

Football – After conditioning, athletes are required to wear practice pants, pads, cleats, socks, belt, and helmet with chinstrap, mouthpiece, and practice jersey. Athletes must wear designated practice jersey only. If you forget or lose your mouthpiece and if the Equipment Manager has an extra you may purchase another mouthpiece from the Equipment Manager. If you do not have proper protective gear for practice, you may be suspended from practicing, and will be viewed as an unexcused absence. Game pants may NOT be worn to practice. Cleats must abide by the MLYAC Rulebook.

Cheer -participants will wear suitable shorts and fitted t-shirt such as camp gear provided by ANF. Apparel may not have hoods, pockets, zippers, rhinestones, or snaps. Lycra leggings may be worn during cold weather. Cheer shoes (without loops or buckles) with socks (no nylons) and shoelaces are required at all times.

Neither football nor cheer athletes may wear jewelry (rings, earrings, necklaces, etc.) during practice or games. All body jewelry (earrings or other body piercing) must be removed or taped. Fingernails will be trimmed and smooth with no colored polish.

Game Day Attire

Football - game pants, ANF socks, cleats, shoulder pads, girdle and pads, belt, and helmet with chinstrap, mouthpiece, and jersey. Socks pulled over cleats, tape around belts, or anything else use for decorative purposes will not be allowed when in uniform on game days.

Cheer - skirt (or warm-up pants), vest, shell and bodyliner if appropriate, socks, shoes, briefs and game bow, as directed by individual coaches. Warm ups and a change of clothes should be in your cheer bag at all times.

ANF is not responsible for providing forgotten game day attire; parents must retrieve equipment. Participants are also expected to arrive on time. Failing to suit up properly for games may result in an athlete being benched.

GAMES

All game participants must certify before each game. MLYAC rules require that any participant who does not certify will be suspended from that game. Football players and cheerleaders are required to arrive 60 minutes before the scheduled start of their game to weigh-in (football) or certify (cheer) and warm up.

Mandatory Play Rules (MPR)

Players will have a minimum number of plays they will be required to play during the course of a regulation game. A regulation game is defined as the first regular season game through the last

regular season game and does not include dual practices, scrimmage, playoff games, and the Superbowl. The Mandatory Play Rules for football is three (3) plays and are to include special teams and will only apply to regulation games. Non-regulation games will have a MPR of the MLYAC minimum of one (1) play per game. * **Disciplinary action may result in adjustments to the MPR.**

SAFETY

Your athlete's safety is our highest priority. The following safety measures will be followed at all times:

1. **Food and water** – absolutely no eating on the field for any coaches, instructors, board members and athletes. Water breaks will be taken as needed, and athletes are responsible for bringing clearly labeled adequate-size water jugs to each practice and game. Water bottles should not be shared. **NO SODA** during practices or games. In addition, no fluids other than water will be permitted on the sidelines at the Jr. Cats and Warriors away games as a result of the synthetic turf fields.
2. **Physicals** – every participant is required to provide proof of a physical dated after January 1st of the current year by a recognized medical doctor prior to the first week of practice at family expense. Athletes may see their own doctor.
3. **Conditioning** – conditioning exercises will be part of each practice, to ensure athletes are able to keep up with the rigors of their sport.
4. **Equipment** – required equipment is evaluated by outside vendors to ensure quality and safety. Cheerleaders will stunt only on grass or mats that are at least ½" thick.
5. **Special Needs** - If parents, coaches, and/or board members determine that an athlete has special needs or presents a possible danger to self or other athletes during the course of practice or game, this athlete may be removed from physical contact or simulated game play conditions. An alternative practice environment may be created, but the Mandatory Play Rules will be altered or dropped. This determination will be made by the Board of Directors and must be documented in writing.
6. **Certification** – cheer stunt groups will not be allowed to advance until they have consistently demonstrated proficiency. Stunt groups will not be mixed unless they have been evaluated for proficiency and certified in all possible stunt group combinations.
7. **Injuries** – an EMT on duty will manage injuries during games. Only certified personnel can manage injuries, which may include deferring to a licensed medical professional. In the event of any injury, parents who are licensed medical professionals should identify themselves to the staff person in charge but should not intervene until asked. Injuries occurring at practice will be treated with first aid by a coach or board member. Athletes with head, neck, or back injuries will not be moved and an ambulance will be summoned to the field. Athletes with other injuries who state they are unable to continue with practice will be taken to the sidelines and monitored.
8. **Support devices** – casts or braces with extensive metal or hard plastic may not be worn during practice or games at any time.

CAMPS

To further reduce risk of injury and increase proficiency, athletes are encouraged to participate in summer camps and clinics, especially the non-contact football camp hosted annually by the Amador High School Football. Registered athletes will be notified of other camps in the area. Should a participant desire to participate in additional camps the request will be submitted to the Vice President for approval and the Equipment Manager will arrange for the issuance of necessary equipment. Participation is also encouraged for the cheer and stunt camp provided by a competitive cheer organization and hosted annually by ANF. In addition, additional stunt camps may be scheduled as needed. Coaches and instructors will be **required** to attend a coaching clinic.