

HF-L COUGARS

YOUTH FOOTBALL & CHEERLEADING



2021

Participation Handbook

**HF-L Cougars, Inc.
P.O. Box 481
Honeoye Falls, NY 14472**

www.hflyouthcougars.com

Football and cheerleading are uniquely American institutions. But beyond the scoreboard, after-school athletic programs help teach kids much more than making touchdowns and cheering for victory. They teach about teamwork, determination, diligence, and fair play.

The goal of the HF-L Football and Cheerleading program is to provide children with a chance to learn some valuable lessons, while having a great time participating in a sports activity that challenges both body and soul.

This handbook has been written in order to provide you and your child with information about how you can be involved with your children as they learn and grow. It will help you take full advantage of all that the HF-L Cougars has to offer.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Mike Kamm
Vice President	Mike Pedrick
Treasurer	Bryan Oathout
Secretary	Patti Gaudieri
Director of Football	Clay Hillegeer
Director of Football Equipment	Sean Finn
Director of Cheerleading	Jamie Spaulding
Director of Fundraising	Joni Mosher
Director of Public Relations	Joni Mosher
Director of Concessions	Ruben Rivera
Director of Medical	Angie and Peter Fenton
Director of Parent Participation	Joni Mosher
Director of Merchandise	Siobhan Oathout
Director of Registration	Siobahn Oathout and Patti Gaudier

FOOTBALL & CHEERLEADING COACHING STAFFS

The Board of Directors will approve Head Coaches by the Board of Directors meeting in May. Assistant coaches are chosen by the Head Coach but must be approved by the Board of Directors.

The deadline to submit an application for any of our head coaching positions will be posted on the website, generally by the end of April. There is no deadline to submit applications for assistant coach positions, but submitting your application as early as possible will help our organization plan for the coming season.

All coaches are required to fill out an application. No one will be considered for a coaching position without a current application on file. Returning coaches must also submit a new application to be considered for the current season.

The application for coaching is posted on the website.

The position of head/assistant coach is a Board of Directors appointed position. As such, no definite period of time is guaranteed and with the approval of the board of directors may terminate your position without prior notice for reasons the board has investigated and found to be detrimental to our purpose of the HFL Youth Cougars.

COACHES CERTIFICATION

- The Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League (FLYFCL) mandates that all coaches and helpers are certified. Football coaches will be certified through USA Football and Cheerleading coaches will be certified through the National Youth Sports Coaching Association (NYSCA). The certification requires participation in a clinic or online program that specializes in various aspects of coaching youth athletics ages 5 through 14. The coaching staff also will be required to participate in various clinics specific to football or cheerleading.
- All Head coaches, assistant coaches and helpers will be required to submit to a criminal background check as mandated and administered by FLYFCL.

KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL COUGARS SEASON

PARENT PARTICIPATION COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR

PARENT PARTICIPATION

- The **HF-L COUGARS YOUTH FOOTBALL AND CHEERLEADING PROGRAM** is a volunteer organization, and in order for the program to be successful, we must have shared participation by all parents/guardians of the children involved.

SIGN-UP

- All parents/guardians (ages 18 and older) will be required to complete game day chores per child participant. Participation may not be limited to a one-time event.
- All parents/guardians will be given their first opportunity to sign up for their preferred volunteer assignments through "SignUpGenius" online service that will be available during the preseason.
- Parent Participation Job Descriptions are posted on the website.

NOTIFICATION

- A master list of game day assignments will be provided on SignUpGenius and distributed prior to the first game. You can also find the master list posted on the volunteer website when it is published.
- A Job Board will be displayed at home games when you enter the High School Stadium with the daily game day postings.
- ***Volunteer assignments may be for multiple games. You may be required to participate in multiple games.***
- If, for whatever reason, you cannot satisfy your participation commitment for a particular game, it is **your** responsibility to find a suitable replacement and to notify the Director of Parent Participation.

CONSEQUENCES

- In order to ensure that all volunteer commitments are met, the Board of Directors has established the following consequence for noncompliance.
- If any parent/guardian is absent from a game day assignment, without having found a replacement and notifying the Director of Participation, their child will not be allowed to participate in that day's game. For parents whose assignments are after their child's game that day, the consequence will be carried forward to the next week's game.

COMMUNICATION

COUGARS WEBSITE

- The **HF-L COUGARS YOUTH FOOTBALL AND CHEERLEADING PROGRAM WEBSITE** maintains current information and lists upcoming events. The site is updated frequently during the season and periodically during the off season. Please feel free to visit www.hflyouthcougars.com.

LEAGUE WEBSITE

- The Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League has a website that provides a variety of information including game schedules, scores, standings, maps to away games and other events. Please feel free to visit www.flyfcl.com

FEEDBACK

- It is the goal of the HFL Cougars to provide a fun and rewarding experience for your child. We encourage your positive suggestions. The Board of Directors is committed to continually improving upon the fine HFL tradition.
- In order to ensure that your questions, concerns, comments, or suggestions are addressed by the people that are directly involved, we ask that you follow the following line of communication:
 - If you have a question, concern, comment, or suggestion regarding a specific team, please speak directly to the *Head Coach* of that team first. In order to respect the effort required at practice and on game day, we ask that you speak with the Head Coach before or after practices, and not during practice or on game day.
 - If you feel that the Head Coach was unable to help you, you should then speak to the *Football Director* or the *Cheer Director*.
- If, at this point, your question, concern, comment, or suggestion has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you should feel free to bring the matter before the *Board of Directors*.

BEHAVIOR

- The HFL YOUTH COUGARS and the Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League are committed to promoting the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play at all Team and League

activities. Both organizations will oppose instances and activities which are not centered on the best values of athletic competition in order to ensure the well-being of all youth athletes. We will expect acceptable standards of good citizenship and proper regard for the rights of others.

PARENT/GUARDIAN BEHAVIOR

- The HFL COUGARS do not try-out or cut any child from the program. For some, this is the first time they have ever played contact football or participated on a cheerleading squad.
- Our goal is for every child to learn the fundamentals of football or cheerleading while enjoying a great athletic and teamwork experience. The goal of this program is not simply to win games or competitions.
- You will find it easy to get caught up in the excitement of the game. However, we ask that you remember that this is not the NFL, collegiate, or high school football. Please keep your comments positive and encouraging. We ask that you set a positive example for the children.
- The coaching staff has a very difficult job. They are not compensated in any way. They are volunteer parents from our community. Not all plays will work, not all calls will be good, not all routines will be perfect. Many of the coaches are learning new skills. We ask that you shout your encouragement and keep the negative comments to yourself. The coaching staff works very hard for your child, and they need as much encouragement from you as possible.
- ***HFL COUGARS Sport Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct.***

The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these “six pillars of character.”

Parents/guardians therefore agree to the following by signing the registration form:

1. I will not force my child to participate in sports.
2. I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
3. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
4. I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
5. I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators at every game, practice or other sporting event.
6. I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike-like conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.
7. I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and wellbeing of the athletes.
8. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.

9. I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
10. I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
11. I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.
12. I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participant for making a mistake or losing a competition.
13. I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my child over winning. I will also de-emphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
14. I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
15. I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
16. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
17. I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.

I also understand that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to, the following: – Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or head of league organization – Written warning

- Parental game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file by organizations involved
- Game forfeit through the official or coach
- Parental season suspension

CHILD PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR

- Drinking of alcoholic beverages, tobacco use, or use of drugs is strictly forbidden. Violators will be immediately suspended from the program pending review of the Board of Directors.
- Use of foul language will not be tolerated.
- Misconduct at practice or during a game will not be tolerated.
- Misconduct in the parking lot before or after practices and games will not be tolerated.
- Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League's *Youth Athlete Code of Conduct*.

It is the responsibility of the player/cheerleader to:

1. Demonstrate self-control and respect for their coaches, officials, and spectators at all times.
2. Remember that participation in sports should not be abused by unsportsmanlike-like conduct.
3. Respect the other team and shake hands after the competition and congratulate them on their performance.
4. Respect the integrity and judgment of the officials.
5. Remember that behavior while in uniform reflects on the team, the family, and the community.
6. Understand and abide by the rules.
7. Accept winning and losing with grace and dignity.
8. JUST SAY NO to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

I also understand that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or head of league organization –
Written warning
- Player/Cheerleader game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file by organizations involved
- Game forfeit through the official or coach
- Player/Cheerleader season suspension

TOBACCO/ALCOHOL USE

- The use of tobacco/alcohol is **prohibited** at any function on the HFL Central Schools campus. ▪ New York State mandates that the school campus be tobacco free.

PETS

- Dogs, cats, or any other pets are **not allowed** at HFL COUGARS games and practices per HFL Central School District policy.
- As a courtesy to our hosts, we ask you not to bring pets to our away games.

PROGRAM IN GENERAL

- If you have a question, concern, comment, or suggestion regarding the HFL COUGARS program, please feel free to contact any member of the *Board of Directors*.

MAKING THE SEASON WORK

CALENDAR
PREPARATION
GAME DAY

CALENDAR

- A calendar detailing the HFL COUGARS season is on the website. While it is unlikely, it is possible that some dates and times may change. Any changes will be communicated through the coaches, team parents and will be posted on the website.

PREPARATION

EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION

- The HFL COUGARS provide most of the equipment necessary for football players and cheerleaders. This equipment will be distributed prior to or during the first week of practice. Time and location will be posted on the website and will be communicated by the coaches and team parent.
- The child participant must be present to ensure the proper equipment fit.
- Please bring some type of bag (i.e., plastic grocery bag) to make it easier to carry some of the equipment.
- To completely ensure the proper equipment fit, please have your child try on all equipment at home before the first practice session. If something does not fit, please contact or see the Equipment Coordinator before the start of the practice sessions.
- Football players are responsible for supplying their own football cleats, mouthpiece, and protective cup.
- Cheerleaders are responsible for supplying their own black body suit, briefs, hair bows, cheerleading socks and sneakers. Body suits and white sneakers saved from the previous season can be used this season. It is encouraged that these items be ordered through the HFL Cougars to enhance our quantity purchasing power.
- Child participants are not allowed to wear pierced earrings, watches, or jewelry of any kind during practices and games. Tape and adhesive bandages are not allowed over pierced earrings. EXCEPTION: Medical I.D. is allowed, but must be taped to the body.

PRACTICE (GENERAL)

- **NO PARTICIPANT WILL BE ALLOWED TO START PRACTICE UNTIL ALL REGISTRATION PAPERWORK IS COMPLETE**
- Practice will be held on the fields at the HFL Middle School.
- The HFL Cougars are not affiliated with the HFL Central School district. We are allowed to use the practice fields for a nominal fee.

- Practice sessions in August and up to the first game, will be held on Monday through Thursday from 5:30 to 8:00 PM unless otherwise noted, starting on the first Monday of August.
- After the games start, the practice sessions will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 PM and Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 11:00 AM.
- Later in the season, as daylight dictates, the hours of the practice sessions may change. If a change occurs, you will receive notice by your team coach/ team parent and will be posted on the website.
- Later in the season the cheerleaders will begin to practice indoors. If a change occurs, you will receive notice by the participants coach/ team parent and information will be posted on the website.
- Players and cheerleaders must be at the practice field at least 5 minutes before the start of practice. Please do not drop your child off any earlier than 15 minutes before the scheduled practice time.
- Please be punctual when picking up your child. Practice will end on time so that you may pick up your child at the scheduled time.
- If, for any reason, the HFL Central Schools cancel all after-school activities, the HFL Cougars Youth Football & Cheerleading will not practice.

PRACTICE (WEATHER)

- The HFL Cougars will practice and play in the rain, snow, heat, and cold.
- If the weather conditions are questionable at the start of practice, the Board of Directors will determine if practice will be cancelled within the first 15 minutes of any scheduled practice.
- If it begins to thunder and lightning, practices and games will be stopped immediately and the players/cheerleaders will be brought indoors. After a 20 minute delay with no thunder and lightning, we will resume practice. If threatening weather conditions continue, the HFL Cougars Board of Directors will make the decision whether to cancel games or practice.
- You are responsible for picking up your child following such cancellations. If the weather conditions are questionable at the start of a game or a practice, we recommend that you stay instead of dropping off your child.

PRACTICE & GAMES (ABSENTEE POLICY)

- Football and cheerleading are sports that require a significant amount of practice to ensure the safety of all participants. While unavoidable and unanticipated events requiring participants to miss practice happen, patterns of absences will not be tolerated. To fulfill your commitment to your teammates, improve your skills, and help prevent injury, it is necessary to attend all practices. Missing practice does have consequences.

- A note or communication between a parent/guardian to the Head Coach explaining an absence from practice is required. Otherwise, the absence will be considered unexcused.
- Habitual lateness during the season may result in reduced playing time, or ineligibility to participate in the scheduled games.
- If you must miss a practice or a game, it is required that you notify one of your coaches PRIOR to the practice or game.

FOOTBALL ABSENTEE POLICY

Preseason Policy ○ If a participant misses (4) practices in the preseason, they will not be eligible to participate in the first game, but must attend with team on the sidelines.

- If a participant misses *more than* (4) practices, they may not be eligible to participate on the team for the remainder of the season and no refunds will be issued. In this circumstance, the coach and the HFL Cougars Board of Directors will render a decision on the participant's eligibility.

In - Season Policy

Absent from 1 practice	No penalty
Absent from 2 practices	Does not participate in the first half
Absent from 3 practices	Does not participate

CHEERLEADING ABSENTEE POLICY

Preseason Policy ○ If more than 4 practices are missed (10 hours) before September 1st, the cheerleader will be removed from the team and no refunds will be issued.

In - Season Policy ○ If more than 3 practices or games (6 hours) are missed, the cheerleader will be removed from the team and no refund will be issued.

PRACTICE (CONDITIONING)

- The first four practice sessions (10 hours) are reserved for conditioning drills only.
- The Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League requires that every child complete ten hours of conditioning drills before they participate in any football contact drills or cheerleading stunts.
- Football players are required to wear their helmets, cleats, and camp shirts for conditioning week.

PRACTICE (REGULAR)

- Starting on the fifth practice session or after 10 hours of conditioning practice, the football players start contact drills and the cheerleaders start to learn their stunts.

- Football players are required to wear all of their equipment from this point on, unless specified differently by the Head Coach.

PLAYER CERTIFICATION

- A representative from the Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League (FLYFCL) will visit our practice session during the second week of practice to certify all players, cheerleaders, coaches, and Board of Directors. More details regarding this event will be provided by the coach and posted on the website.
- All paperwork will be reviewed to ensure that it is complete. The paperwork that will be reviewed includes the FLYFCL player/cheerleader contract, a copy of the child's birth certificate, and the child's physical (medical release) form.
- The league representative must meet your child. Therefore, it is very important that your child be present on this night.
- If your child is not present, certification can not be completed and your child will not be able to participate in the games or competitions.
- If your child is not present at "certification night", it will be your responsibility to work with Director of Football/ Cheerleading to make other arrangements.

SCRIMMAGE

- After the Second Full week of practice, a scrimmage arranged by the FLYFCL will be held. Details for the scrimmage will be given out by the coach/team parent and posted on the website.

GAME DAY

GAME TIME

- All games are played on Sundays or Saturday Night. The FLYFCL will publish the schedule by the end of June. The starting times are as follows, but are subject to change.

Sunday Games

Flag	8:30 AM
------	---------

C-Team	10:00 AM
B-Team	12:00 PM

Saturday Games

Flag	4:30 PM
C-Team	6:00 PM
B-Team	8:00 PM

- Football players & Cheerleaders must be at the game field 1 hour before the start of the game or as directed by the coach.

HOME GAME LOCATION

- The HFL COUGARS four home games will be played on the HFL Central Schools James Dollard Athletic Stadium. Since we are not affiliated with the school district, we are allowed to use this field for a nominal fee.

AWAY GAME LOCATIONS

The four away games will be determined by the league schedule. Maps with directions to the game fields can be found through a link on the FLYFCL website.

MANDATORY PLAYS AND MONITORING

- The Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League mandates that all players in all classes, who are physically able to play and are not being disciplined, must play at the minimum number of plays per the schedule below. The number of plays shall be determined by the active "Game Day Roster" determined after official weigh-in.
- 11-20 players 9 plays per half
- 21-30 players 7 plays per half
- 31 players or more 5 plays per half
- The plays of every eligible football player are monitored by representatives from each team during the game to ensure compliance with the Play Rule.
- ***All playing time in excess of the minimum plays during each half of the game is earned by the participant. This additional playing time is based and earned by the participant's experience, effort, ability and skill level to execute assignments during the practice sessions and the games.***

CHEER COMPETITIONS

- The annual cheer competition will be held at the RIT Gordon Field House on Sunday October 28th. As this event approaches, more details will be provided by the coach/team parent and posted on the website.
- Two additional in-season competitions will be scheduled. As these events approach, more details will be provided by the coach/team parent and posted on the website.

MEDICAL FACILITIES/SPECIAL NEEDS

- The HFL Cougars volunteer medical team will be on hand at all practices and games. The Honeoye Falls Ambulance Corp will be on call. This group does this as a favor to the HFL Cougars.
- If your child has any special medical needs (i.e., asthma, allergies, contact lenses, etc.), please be sure that your child's Head Coach is informed.

INJURY AND INSURANCE

INJURY

- Football and cheerleading are rigorous physical sports and therefore there is a risk of injury for all participants.
- Please promptly report every injury, regardless of how minor, to a member of your child's coaching staff.
- Please promptly report every injury, regardless of how minor, to the coach and the Medical volunteer on duty. For insurance purposes, it is necessary for the HFL Cougars to complete and file an Injury Report form.
- **It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian** to ensure that any injury is reported to the HFL Cougars medical team and that the required reports are completed. Otherwise, insurance coverage will be denied.

SECONDARY INSURANCE

- The Finger Lakes Youth Football and Cheerleading League provides its members with medical insurance for all injuries associated with participation in the football and cheerleading programs.

- The League's medical insurance is considered secondary coverage. The medical insurance of the parent/guardian is the primary coverage.
- The League's medical insurance has a \$250 deductible.
- If you should have to file a claim, you must file it with your own medical insurance carrier first. After this primary insurance has paid, the League's medical insurance will go into effect.
- It is your responsibility for paying the remainder of the medical bill after the primary insurance payment. The League's insurance will reimburse you for the remainder less the \$250 deductible.
- To file a claim with the League, please give an original of the medical bill to the Secretary of the Board of Directors. You may have to ask the medical service provider for two copies of the bill.
- An example of how the League's medical insurance works is given below.

Bill for medical services	\$1500
Your medical insurance payment	-\$1000
Remainder	\$500
You pay the service provider	\$500
League insurance deductible	-\$250
League insurance reimburses you	\$250

- It is your responsibility to contact the child's primary-care physician before going to the emergency room, if this is required by your insurance provider.
- If you do not contact your child's primary-care physician and your medical insurance denies your claim because you did not follow the proper procedures, you run the risk that the League's medical insurance will also refuse coverage.
- You have one (1) year from the date of injury to file a claim.

EQUIPMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- The HFL Cougars provide **most** of the equipment necessary for football players and cheerleaders.

- **Absolutely** no changes or modifications are allowed to HFL Cougars Equipment without **prior** approval from the Equipment Manager.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian for the care of all equipment provided. This includes the proper laundering of all clothing.
- Please follow laundering instructions on all uniforms. Please do not use chlorine bleach on the uniforms. Instead, mix some dry automatic dishwasher soap with Clorox 2 and apply the paste to difficult stains. Wash later.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian for the return of all equipment provided.
- The parent/guardian will be responsible for paying the replacement cost of equipment that is not returned.

FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT

The following list details the replacement cost of the uniforms and equipment for football players. The prices for the equipment are budgets and have yet to be determined for this season.

Helmet	\$375
Shoulder Pads	\$75
Rib Vest	\$35
Girdle Hip/Tail Pads	\$30
Thigh Pads	\$7
Knee Pads	\$6
Game Jersey	\$60
Practice Jersey	\$30
Game Pants/Belt	\$60
Practice Pants/Belt	\$30

CHEERLEADING EQUIPMENT

The following list details the replacement cost of the uniforms for cheerleaders. The prices for the equipment are budgets and have yet to be determined for this season.

Shell:	\$90
Skirt:	\$80
Windpants:	\$30
Jacket:	\$50

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITY FOOTBALL \$50 - \$75

Protective Cup, Cleats, Socks, Mouth Guard

CHEERLEADING \$75 - \$100

Bow, Sneakers, Socks Headbands, Briefs, Wind Pants, Bodysuit

