

# PANTHER JUNIOR FOOTBALL & CHEER



## CODE OF CONDUCT, RULES & REGULATIONS

### GENERAL PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

Panther Junior Football & Cheer (Panthers) is dedicated to promoting football and cheer among the youth of our community, and to providing instruction and understanding related to football and cheer in a safe, positive and fun environment. Our objective is not only to teach area youths the fundamentals and rules of both sports, but to also help each athlete achieve an understanding of how football and cheer develop and promote positive life qualities such as teamwork, discipline, respect, effort, perseverance and physical fitness; qualities which they will practice both on the field and in life. We support our objectives through our commitment to:

- Inspire and encourage our youth participants, regardless of sex, race, creed or color; and to bring area youths closer together through common interests, fellowship and athletic competition.
- Strive to coach fundamentals, skills and rules related to football and cheer, as well as sportsmanship, team work, self-discipline, self-esteem, respect, physical fitness and leadership.
- Promote the development of leadership, character, sportsmanship, tolerance, friendship, discipline and athletic ability.
- Encourage adults to behave in an exemplary manner by demonstrating respect and courtesy, and to provide positive support, care and encouragement to each and every youth participant.
- Keep the health, safety and welfare of each youth participant as our first priority, free from any adult compulsions for power, glory or personal desire to win.
- Help youth participants to develop a lifelong love of the game of football, cheer, and sports in general.

In order to achieve our objectives and promote the safety and spirit of youth football and cheer, Panthers has adopted this CODE OF CONDUCT, RULES & REGULATIONS in addition to the rules, regulations and Code(s) of Conduct included within the By-Laws of the Bill George Youth Football League (BGYFL). Panthers participates in the BGYFL, and operates within the rules and By-laws of that program. The PANTHERS CODE OF CONDUCT, RULES & REGULATIONS does not supersede or amend the rules, regulations, Code(s) of Conduct, or any other provisions included within the By-Laws of the BGYFL, and no provision herein shall be interpreted in such a manner.

The PANTHERS CODE OF CONDUCT, RULES & REGULATIONS is binding upon all Panthers participants, including but not limited to, Board Members, Coaches, Football Players, Cheerleaders, Parents, Volunteers and Spectators.

Violations of this CODE OF CONDUCT, RULES & REGULATIONS will result in disciplinary action against the offender.

### BOARD MEMBERS AND COACHES

Board members and coaches are vital to establishing ethics and enforcing safety in youth football and cheer. Their conduct, ethics and attitude can directly affect the emotional and physical welfare, and behavior of players in the program and/or under their supervision. In their capacity as youth coaches, and as representatives of the BGYFL and Panthers, they must always show proper respect to all and will be held to the highest standards of moral conduct and character both on and off the field. They must additionally always be aware that their behavior, decisions and choices of action have ethical, moral and physical implications relating to youth participants.

Therefore, Board Members and Coaches:

1. Shall not criticize players/cheerleaders in front of spectators, but shall reserve constructive criticism for private discussion.
2. Shall accept decisions of game officials and judges on the field and in competitions as being fair and called to their best ability.
3. Shall not criticize an opposing team, its players, coaches, cheerleaders or fans by word of mouth or by gesture.
4. Shall not permit or encourage "sweating down" tactics in order for a player to make the team weight.

5. Shall not permit a player to re-enter any game or competition after he/she is badly hurt, bruised or injured.
6. Shall place the health, safety and welfare of each member of his/her team or squad, and any other youth in the league, ahead of his/her own compulsions for power, glory or personal desire to win.
7. Shall do his/her best to ensure that their team or squad participates in a safe and healthy environment.
8. Shall refrain from any vulgar, lewd, obscene language or gesture while participating in, attending or watching any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition.
9. Shall not at any time push, shove, punch, kick, fight or be guilty of physical contact as an aggressor upon any official, coach, player, cheerleader or spectator.
10. Shall not verbally abuse, threaten, harass or bait any official, coach, player, cheerleader or spectator.
11. Shall not use tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vaporized pens, alcohol or illegal drugs in front of players or cheerleaders during any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition; or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while at any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition.
12. Shall encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support and respect to all officials, coaches, players, cheerleaders, spectators and volunteers
13. Shall review and be familiar with the Rules, Regulations, By-Laws and Codes of Conduct of both the BGYFL and Panthers.
14. Shall not act in any way that is detrimental to themselves, their team, the BGYFL or Panthers.

### **SPECIFIC RULES APPLICABLE TO COACHES**

In addition to their Code of Conduct, Panthers specifically requires that all coaches:

1. Maintain proper communication with the parents and/or guardians of participants on their team/squad by keeping them informed and updated regarding game decorum, league and team rules, scheduling, changes, etc. and also ensure that all questions and concerns of team parents are addressed to the best of their ability. Head coaches are further required to have at least one team meeting with parents to discuss these matters.
2. Ensure that each player on his/her team plays a minimum of ten (10) plays per game
3. Abide by any and all BGYFL and/or Panthers approved protocols and procedures relating to safety matters, such as lightning, heat, dehydration, concussion and injuries.
4. Complete ASEP Cheer certification (cheer), and USA Heads Up Tackling certification (football). Two Board positions are dedicated to monitoring certification compliance.
5. Participate in league approved sponsorship and/or fundraising activities or, if he or she unable to participate, to do their best support, encourage and help those who do participate in such activities.
6. Participate in providing help at and during other Panther home games, including: field setup and take-down, announcing, chain gang, score keeping, etc.
7. Report any improper conduct, wrongdoing, Code of Conduct violations or team disciplinary action(s) to the Panther President and/or Board member(s). Coaches establishing team rules, or disciplinary measures must also report any and all violations that resulted or may result in the participant(s) "sitting out" during games, losing competition/game privileges, being suspended, or being removed from the program.

### **FOOTBALL PLAYERS AND CHEERLEADERS – CODE OF CONDUCT**

Youth football players and cheerleaders are the most important and integral part of the Panther organization. The role of a player / cheerleader is an honor and privilege, and carries with it an enormous responsibility. Players and cheerleaders not only generate enthusiasm, but they also must control and direct it so it always makes a loud and positive statement of good sportsmanship. As ambassadors of the BGYFL and Panthers, players and cheerleaders are quite visible in the public eye, so that what they do and say, whether good or bad, has tremendous consequences upon the respect ascribed to them, other BGYFL and Panthers participants, the BGYFL and Panthers organizations and the fans. Both the BGYFL and Panthers strive to teach the values of hard work, teamwork, sound fundamentals, and dealing with winning and losing in a constructive way.

Therefore, Football Players and Cheerleaders:

1. Shall promote interest and enthusiasm among fans at games (both home and away) and at competitions.
2. Shall encourage good sportsmanship for the opposing team, its cheerleaders, fans and officials by setting a good example.
3. Shall support and be respectful to all coaches, board members, adult volunteers, teammates, parents, opponents and officials.

4. Shall refrain from any vulgar, lewd, or obscene language or gestures while playing/cheerleading or watching any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition.
5. Shall refrain from smoking, drinking alcohol or using any other illegal substance during any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition.
6. Shall respect the property of all league franchises and the property of the residents living in the homes surrounding all game and practice fields.
7. Shall be responsible, courteous and cooperative in dealing with coaches and teammates.
8. Shall support their team or squad – win or lose.
9. Shall respect their team or squad by wearing the appropriate team uniform and making sure their appearance is neat and clean.
10. Shall attend regular practices (make practice a priority).

#### **SPECIFIC RULES APPLICABLE TO FOOTBALL PLAYERS AND / OR CHEERLEADERS**

In addition to their Code of Conduct, Panthers specifically requires the following of its football players and/or cheerleaders:

1. Football players must wear cups and league approved mouth guards while participating in practices and games.
2. Cheerleaders must wear their hair up and/or pulled back while participating in practices, games and competition(s).
3. Cheerleaders must not wear jewelry, nail polish and/or inappropriate attire while participating in practices, games and competition(s). Inappropriate attire includes: tummy shirts, tank tops, jeans, jean shorts, platform gym shoes and flip flops.

#### **PARENTS – CODE OF CONDUCT**

Parents of youth football players and cheerleaders have a great influence on their child's enjoyment and success. Their support is essential to the success of any youth program. Not only should parents provide loyal and fair fan support in the stands on game day, but they should also provide support in such activities such as fund raising, promotion, equipment maintenance, team sponsorship and other volunteer activities. Whether sitting in the stands or helping out as a volunteer, parents should be models of good sportsmanship and lead by example both on and away from the playing field.

Therefore, Parents:

1. Shall not criticize players/cheerleaders in front of coaches, parents, players, spectators, officials, etc., but shall reserve constructive criticism for private discussion.
2. Shall not interfere with the operation of the team just because their son or daughter is a member of the team.
3. Shall place the health, safety and welfare of their child(ren) ahead of his/her own compulsions for power, glory or personal desire to win.
4. Shall positively support the coaches, players and officials and help teach the value of commitment to the teams, sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play.
5. Shall accept decisions of game officials and judges on the field and in competitions as being fair and called to their best ability.
6. Shall not criticize an opposing team, its players, coaches, cheerleaders or fans by word of mouth or by gesture.
7. Shall encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating respect to all officials, coaches, players, cheerleaders, spectators and volunteers.
8. Shall refrain from any vulgar, lewd, obscene language or gesture while participating in, attending or watching any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition.
9. Shall not at any time push, shove, punch, kick, fight or be guilty of physical contact as an aggressor upon any official, coach, player, cheerleader or spectator.
10. Shall not verbally abuse, threaten, harass or bait any official, coach, player, cheerleader or spectator.
11. Shall not use tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vaporized pens, alcohol or illegal drugs in front of players or cheerleaders during any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition; or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while at any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition.
12. Shall review the FOOTBALL PLAYERS AND CHEERLEADERS CODE OF CONDUCT with their child(ren) and encourage them to follow the Code during and throughout their participation in Panther programs.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO SPECTATORS, FANS AND VOLUNTEERS**

The conduct, expectations and attitudes of fans, spectators and volunteers have a significant bearing on youth football players' and cheerleaders' attitudes toward officials, coaches, players, cheerleaders, spectators and volunteers. Fans, spectators and volunteers should always provide positive support and encouragement not only for Panther players and cheerleaders, but also for members of the oppositions, as well. Whether or not they have a child in the program, they should always be models of good sportsmanship and lead by positive example.

Therefore, the following conduct WILL NOT be permitted or tolerated at any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition:

1. Criticizing coaches, officials, players, cheerleaders, spectators or volunteers (home or opposing) by word of mouth or gesture in front of other coaches, parents, players, spectators, officials, etc.
2. Interfering with the operation of any team or squad before, during or after games or competitions.
3. Using vulgar, lewd, and/or obscene language or gestures.
4. Pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, fighting or be guilty of physical contact as an aggressor upon any official, coach, player, cheerleader or spectator.
5. Verbally abusing, threatening, harassing or baiting any official, coach, player, cheerleader, spectator or volunteer.
6. Using tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs and/or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
7. Being in the coaching box, players' area, or on the game field before, during or after games or competitions.

## **RULES PERTAINING TO USE OF INTERNET & ELECTROINC COMMUNICATONS**

Board Members, Coaches, Football Players, Cheerleaders, Volunteers or any other persons associated with Panthers shall not use the internet (including online communities or websites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) or any other means of electronic communication to post or share negative or offensive content / comments directed toward any Panthers and/or BGYFL program, member or participant. "Negative or offensive" content / comments includes those which are derogatory, demeaning, malicious, defamatory, abusive, hateful, threatening, harassing, or which the Panthers Board of Directors otherwise determines to be of such a serious nature that it negatively impacts and/or reflects on the Panthers program, its image or reputation within the community.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Panthers has the authority to impose any disciplinary action(s) it deems necessary and appropriate for those who violate the PANTHERS CODE OF CONDUCT, RULES AND REGULATIONS. Disciplinary action(s) for any violation(s) may include:

1. A written and/or verbal warning.
2. Request to leave and/or removal from league sponsored activities, including games, practices, events or competitions.
3. A period of suspension.
4. Removal from the league.

## **WARNING / REQUESTS TO LEAVE**

Multiple warnings or requests to leave / removal from league sponsored activities may result in a suspension of one or more games and/or other league sponsored activities. All written warnings will be kept on file with Panthers. Any person who refuses to leave a league sponsored activity after being requested to do so by Panthers may be subject to removal by park district or local police authorities.

## **SUSPENSIONS**

Any person who receives a period of suspension by either the BGYFL or Panthers will be barred from participating in ALL league sponsored activities in any way, and further will not be permitted to be present as a participant, volunteer or spectator at any league sponsored game, practice, event or competition until the period of suspension has ended. Two suspensions within the same season will result in immediate suspension for the remainder of the then current year.

## **REMOVAL FROM THE LEAGUE**

The following will constitute grounds for removal from the league, which are not subject to protest or review:

1. Removal from the league by the BGYFL pursuant to the rules and regulations of its By-Laws.
2. Conviction of or pleading guilty to theft or illegal taking of funds or equipment from Panthers or any other organization.
3. Any action(s) resulting in a pleading of guilty and/or a legal conviction of a criminal act as determined by a court of law, which the Panthers Board of Directors determines to be of such a serious nature that it negatively impacts and/or jeopardizes the Panthers or BGYFL programs, their image and reputation within the community, and/or the health, safety and welfare of their youth participants.

## **COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES**

Panthers encourages its participants, parents, volunteers and spectators to provide positive and constructive feedback, suggestions, praises, complaints, or other comments via email to the Panther President or Executive Board. Any and all complaints, allegations or grievances must be made in writing and delivered personally or via email to the Panther President in order for official action to be taken. Improper conduct and/or wrongdoing should be reported to the Panthers President no later than 48 hours after the incident.

Any person making a complaint, allegation of misconduct, or grievance should be as specific as possible and include:

1. The date, time and location of the incident or conduct.
2. The name(s) of the person(s) involved.
3. The name(s) of any witness(es).
4. A description of the incident or conduct.
5. Their own contact information, including their name, address and phone number.

Please note that Panthers cannot / will not take official action based on oral complaints alone, anonymous complaints, or complaints based on hearsay (what others said). If requested, Panthers will do its best to handle the complaint, allegation or grievance in as confidential a manner as possible. In most such cases, the identity of the person(s) making the complaint will remain confidential. However, should the incident or conduct complained of warrant possible removal from the league, Panthers Executive Board may conduct a fact finding hearing behind closed doors in which both sides may be asked to appear.

## **DISCIPLINARY & FACT FINDING PROCEDURES**

The Panthers President will notify the Executive Board of any written complaint or grievance that is received. Thereafter, the Executive Board will either (a) conduct an informal investigation or (b) provide written notice of a fact finding hearing to all those involved. Written notices will be provided in-person, or via telephone, email and/or U.S. Mail delivery.

## **INFORMAL INVESTIGATION**

An informal investigation shall consist of the Panthers President or Executive Board interviewing/talking to the person(s) involved, including one or more named witnesses, if any. Following the investigation, the Panthers President will provide the Executive Board with a brief summary of the investigation and the President's recommendation regarding any disciplinary action(s). Disciplinary action(s), if any, will be determined by members of the Executive Board who were involved in the investigation. Notice of disciplinary action(s) will be given to the offender(s) either in the form of a verbal warning or in writing by the Panthers President. The Executive Board shall make every effort to complete its informal investigation and provide notice of any disciplinary action(s) to the offender(s) within seven days of receipt of the written complaint, allegation(s) or grievance.

Decisions made by the Executive Board regarding disciplinary action(s) ARE FINAL. However, the President of Panthers reserves the right to overturn, change and/or modify any and all disciplinary decisions and action(s) at any time.

## **FACT FINDING HEARING**

A fact finding hearing may be requested by:

1. The Panthers President if, in his/her/their opinion, the reported allegation(s) of improper conduct and/or wrongdoing warrants such a hearing prior to imposition of disciplinary action(s); and/or
2. Panthers participants, including Executive Board, Coaches, Football Players, Cheerleaders and Volunteers, accused of the improper conduct and/or wrongdoing and who are subject to possible removal from the league.

The ultimate decision whether or not to conduct a fact finding hearing rests solely with members of Panthers Executive Board who will make the decision based on simple majority vote. In the event of a tie in voting, the Panthers President will have the deciding vote.

Notice of the hearing will be provided in-person or via telephone, email, and/or U.S. Mail delivery to all persons involved, and will include the date, time and location of the hearing.

The hearing will be conducted confidentially behind closed doors and will take place within a reasonable period of time following the alleged incident, improper conduct, or wrongdoing.

Hearings will be attended by members of Panthers Executive Board.

## **HEARING PROCESS**

1. The fact finding hearing shall be run by the Panthers President.
2. The Panthers Executive Board may then hear from other sides and/or witnesses in an orderly manner.
3. Following the hearing, the Panthers Executive Board will determine, by simple majority vote, whether the allegations of wrongdoing and/or improper conduct are, more likely than not, supported by the evidence and/or facts presented.
4. If the Panthers Executive Board determine that the allegations of wrongdoing and/or improper conduct are, more likely than not, supported by the evidence and/or facts presented, they will then, by simple majority vote, impose any disciplinary action(s) they deem necessary and appropriate, and/or as specified in the PANTHERS CODE OF CONDUCT, RULES AND REGULATIONS.
5. In the event of a tie in voting, the Panthers President will have the deciding vote.

NOTE: In making its determination(s) and/or decisions regarding disciplinary action(s), the Panthers Executive Board may take into consideration either side's absence from the hearing should he/she/they fail or choose not to be present.

I have read (\*reviewed with my parents) and understand the terms and conditions of the PANTHERS CODE OF CONDUCT, RULES AND REGULATIONS, and agree to obey and be bound by its provisions.

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Signature

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Date

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Printed Name

\*Applicable to all football players and cheerleaders. Parents with a child(ren) participating in Panthers youth football and/or cheer program(s) are responsible for reviewing the Panthers Code of Conduct, Rules and Regulations, and in particular the FOOTBALL PLAYERS AND CHEERLEADERS CODE OF CONDUCT and the rules pertaining to internet and other electronic communications, with their child(ren) and encouraging him / her / them to follow the Code and rules during and throughout their participation.