

# AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, INC.



OPERATIONS MANUAL

REVISED-2015

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AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL® OPERATIONS MANUAL

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## INTRODUCTION

This manual was developed for volunteers and youth leaders as a guide to assist in the set up and smooth operation of youth football and cheer programs. It is intended to be a resource for leaders of teams, associations, and league/conferences. Nevertheless, some questions may not be addressed in this manual. This *Operations Manual* is updated annually and details the current structure, services and resources of AYF and AYC. With this in mind, please send us your input and suggestions, both to resolve your situation and to update future editions of this guide. Contact the AYF National Staff with your suggestions, in writing. Digital versions of this manual can be downloaded at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com).

## AYF MISSION STATEMENT

American Youth Football, Inc., established in 1996, is an international youth football organization established to promote the wholesome development of youth through their association with adult leaders in the sport of American football and cheer. Rules and regulations are established to ensure that players play in an atmosphere of safety with a competitive balance between teams.

American Youth Football is on a mission to *GIVE BACK* to the community.

## WHAT AYF DOES

AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, INC. (AYF) is a non-profit corporation. It is a service organization designed to assist in the administration of youth football programs and all of the membership groups therein. These programs are designed to help youngsters learn skills and develop into productive and healthy adults through their participation in organized, supervised sports.

AMERICAN YOUTH CHEER, (AYC) is American Youth Football's sister organization created to serve AYC cheer, dance, and step member squads.

Sportsmanship, teamwork, honesty, responsibility, self-reliance and self-discipline are among the traits needed by youngsters to face the future with positive aspirations and confidence. If we teach them positive lessons, such as playing by the rules, our young athletes will learn to live by the rules.

American Youth Football and Cheer has many websites and resources to serve our members and can be accessed from our main website, [www.americanyouthfootball.com](http://www.americanyouthfootball.com).

## AYF GOALS

1. *To provide a wholesome competitiveness within the scope of our rules and regulations that will protect the youth football player and cheerleader.*
2. To teach the fundamentals of football and cheerleading and coordinate football and cheer activities.
3. To provide a responsible football and cheerleading program for communities which do not have programs through their school systems.
4. To promote good sportsmanship, teamwork, the highest moral and physical standards, as well as the importance of scholarship and academic achievement.
5. To lend leagues/conferences support by remaining NON-INTRUSIVE to local operations.
6. *To make youth football ALL-INCLUSIVE, by not excluding participants based on superficial factors (such as weight, financial or athletic ability).*
7. To provide programs for special needs (Contender Division), at-risk and anti-gang groups, as well as the international football community.
8. To be the most user-friendly youth sports organization in North America and Beyond by assisting volunteers and keeping paperwork to a minimum.

# AYF STRUCTURE

## AYF NATIONAL STAFF

### National Staff

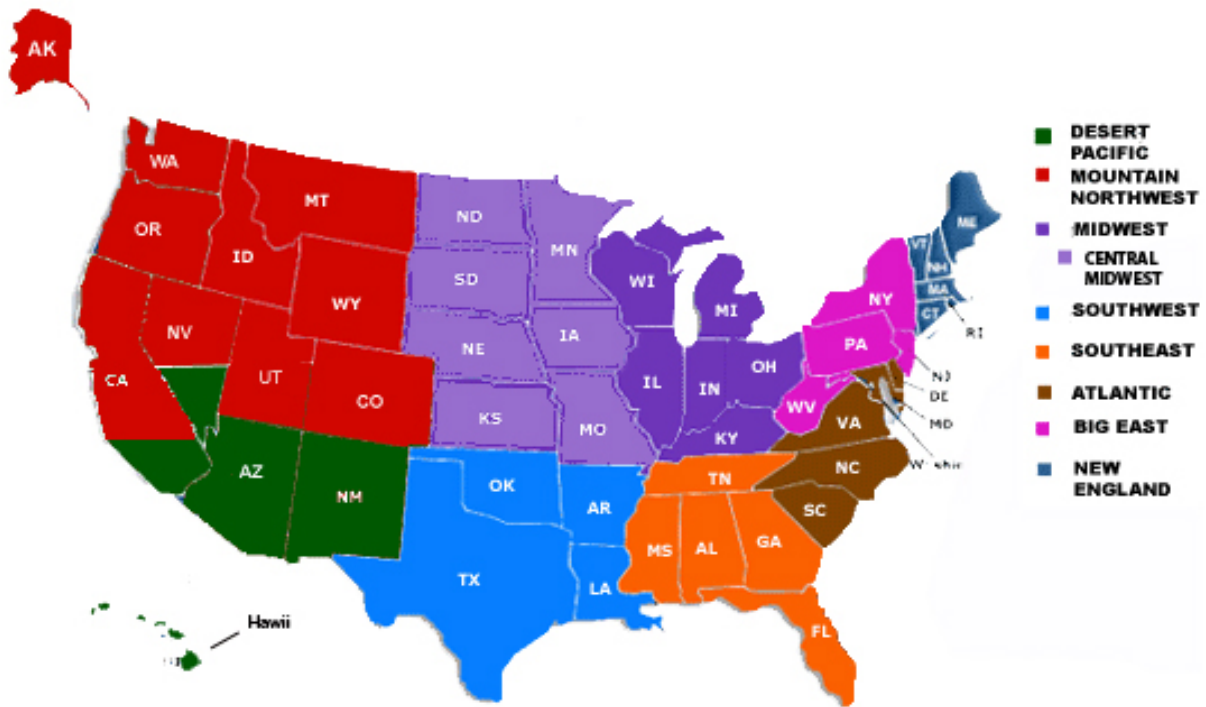
The AYF National Staff are the main point of contact for many of the services that AYF offers. AYF has partnered with national sponsors to provide discounts, fundraising opportunities, Giving Back programs and other benefits for AYF and AYC members. Also, AYF is a 'Youth Football Partner' of the National Football League, a designation that includes the administration of the Local Agency Grant program (in applicable years).

The AYF national staff is committed to responding to your emails and phone calls in a prompt manner. AYF is a service organization developed to support our valued membership. Our members are our priority and we look forward to supporting you. Please feel free to contact us anytime with your questions/comments.

AYF President	Joe Galat	jgalat@americanyouthfootball.com
General Counsel	Adam Laufer	alaufer@americanyouthfootball.com
Director of Operations	Elizabeth Bray	ebray@americanyouthfootball.com
VP Football & Cheer Operations	Craig Karahuta	craig@americanyouthfootball.com
AYF Football Commissioner	Dee Grayer	dee@americanyouthfootball.com
AYC Cheer Commissioner	Tammy Gagne	ayc@americanyouthfootball.com
Membership Chairman	Shannon Shy	shannon@americanyouthfootball.com
Events & Social Media	Jessica West	jwest@americanyouthfootball.com
Risk Management and Insurance Questions	John Sadler	john@sadlerco.com

### Regional Leadership

AYF divides the United States into remove and replace with: nine (9) distinctive geographic regions for the purposes of conducting regional tournaments, local scheduling and training activities. This structure also provides local organizations a way to gain local support. A Regional Advisory Committee composed of elected conference presidents represents each region. *(Please see regional boundaries in the map shown below)* Regional leadership is the main point of contact for regional tournaments, post-season qualifications, and national paperwork compliance.



\*Samoa & Guam are part of the Desert Pacific Region

Regional Representatives are NOT directors of AYF, they are appointed individuals who help to represent AYF in a given region and act as a liaison to the national office. Regional representatives are specifically in charge of coordinating the regional championship event and qualifying area teams for the national championships, while ensuring compliance with national rules.

*Please note: All member organization administrators are invited to contact the AYF National Staff at any time, members are not required to direct inquiries un-related to regional competitions to the regional representative.*

The committees and elected committee members are also expected to ensure all information from AYF National Staff regarding registration, services, benefits, events and programs is disseminated to each league/conference, association, and team in their respective regions. As the old saying goes, “communication is a two way street.” Think of the regional leadership as your senator. Please share any concerns you may have for rule changes or any other by laws, as your regional leadership can bring these issues to the National Staff for review during AYF’s annual leadership meeting.

For information on your AYF Regional Advisory Committee, regional meetings and events, and regional competitions, visit [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) or [www.americanyouthfootball.com](http://www.americanyouthfootball.com). Here you will find contact information listed for each regional representative. These pages will be updated frequently throughout the season.

*Find contact information for current AYF/IYC regional representatives at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) or [www.americanyouthfootball.com](http://www.americanyouthfootball.com).*

**REGIONAL COMMITTEES, CHAIRPERSONS, & DUTIES**

Each Regional Advisory Committee shall be responsible for creating and administering the bid procedure for AYF-chartered organizations seeking to host regional tournaments. They shall also be responsible for reviewing bids, presenting a formal recommendation and ensuring that all bids are submitted to AYF National Staff.

Regional Chair and Staff should develop a system for mentoring new and/or emerging Conferences and Members within their respective regions for both Championship Membership Structure as well as those who would be a Local Membership Structured organization while offering support to all members.

Board administrators of AYF conferences are invited to join their regional committees. Voting seats differ by region but all league/conferences are encouraged to contact their regional representatives and AYF National Staff to announce their desire to sit on a committee. Regional committees' primary duties are to participate in the regional championship host selection, to develop regional tournament compliance protocol, to assist in select regional events, and qualify as representatives for AYF/AYC national leadership meetings.

Regional Chairpersons report directly to and are the primary regional liaison in each region accountable to the AYF National office. Regional Chairpersons, in execution of their duties:

1. Serve as chair of the Regional Executive Board, which is comprised at least of the Football Commissioner, the Cheer and Dance Director, and the Presidents of the conferences participating in tournament play in the region;
2. Convey the votes of the Regional Executive Board on any matter relating to football and cheer that require the attention of or action by the AYF National staff;
3. Ensure the Region has on its staff, at least, a Football Commissioner, a Cheer and Dance Director, an Academic Achievement Alliance Coordinator, a Recruitment Coordinator, and a Website/Social Media Coordinator;
4. Coordinate with the Regional Football Commissioner and Regional Cheer and Dance Director; communicating regularly with Conference Football and Cheer Commissioners to ensure information required by the regional and national office for regional and national play is submitted on time;
5. Coordinate with the Regional Football Commissioner and Regional Cheer and Dance Director, ensuring conferences and associations participating in tournament play are eligible to participate in the AYF/AYC regional and national tournaments, (ie. are in compliance with age/weight matrixes and checking and approving team books prior to regional play);
6. Serve as a liaison between conferences and the AYF/AYC national office. For matters related to participation at the regional and national championships, the Regional Chairperson will coordinate directly with the National Football Commissioner (and other national staff as required) and the Regional Cheer and Dance Director will coordinate directly with the National Cheer Commissioner (and other national staff as required);
7. Coordinate with the Regional Academic Achievement Alliance Coordinator, working with the conferences to obtain the names of all qualified student athletes for AYF's Academic Achievement Alliance awards and submitting them to the AYF national office;
8. Coordinate with the Regional Website/Social Media Coordinator to establish and/or maintain the appropriate regional website and social media sites.
9. Forward information from the AYF/AYC national office to the conferences;

10. Forward to the AYF/AYC national office all information required by the AYF/AYC national office from conferences which host the regional tournament;
11. Help resolve boundary issues between conferences or, if asked by the AYF/AYC national office, at the association level ;
12. Assist the National Membership Chairman with recruitment by cultivating relationships with prospective conferences/associations, answering questions within 24 hours (unless 24 hours is not reasonably practicable, then, in such case, as soon as practicable);
13. Assist and recruit volunteers to aid in the staffing of the national championships.

AYF/AYC is non-intrusive in how conferences and associations operate, however, there are times when in order to protect its reputation and to encourage participation, AYF/AYC may seek information about the operations of enrolled conferences or associations. Moreover, to facilitate the growth of AYF/AYC as well as participation in the regional and national tournaments, tournament play organizations should maintain regular communication with the Regional Chairperson and the Regional Staff about matters including, but not limited to, conference growth, participation in regional and national tournaments, and disciplinary issues that may warrant termination of membership or may involve restrictions on participation in the regional or national tournaments.

Conferences and associations should resolve their own disciplinary issues without regional or national involvement. The Regional Chairperson shall forward to the national office for consideration and appropriate action any disciplinary or other issue that may warrant termination of membership or may involve restrictions on participation in the regional or national tournaments.

#### STATE DIPLOMATS

Select states have an official AYF state diplomat. The responsibility of the state diplomat is to support and encourage AYF growth in their given state by educating local leagues/conferences on AYF programs, conducting local PR initiatives, assisting giving back donations, and connecting and supporting local leagues/conferences.

#### KEEPING IN TOUCH

We love when our members keep us informed about community events! Whether you have found an incredible fundraiser, built a new field, been supported by a professional athlete, Given Back to your community, helped out a neighboring community or even played another AYF league/conference across the state, please share your news with us! Send your stories to [ebray@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:ebray@americanyouthfootball.com).

### AYF & AYC MEMBERS

All community run youth football & cheer organizations are invited to join AYF & AYC. Organizations may join in the form of a team, an association, or a league/conference. AYF is all-inclusive and accepts all community youth football & cheer organizations as members.

AYF membership includes youth programs affiliated with: Boys & Girls Clubs, Police Athletic, Optimist Clubs, Park and Recreation Leagues, JCC, YMCA, non-scholastic organizations, local community organizations, city leagues, and community centers, independent leagues and others.

## LOCATING MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

AYF has a strict member privacy policy, which it subscribes to in order to protect its members from unsolicited communication. AYF's strict privacy policy reflects the reality that AYF cannot distinguish whether requests for a "local contact" are for reasonable or acceptable circumstances. Because our membership's contact details are primarily made up of private households and not businesses, AYF will not release any contact information to any third party.

Those looking for a program in their area should first refer to the AYF Google Earth map (accessible via [www.americanyouthfootball.com](http://www.americanyouthfootball.com)) to see if there is an AYF organization in the desired area. Then, should use Google and enter key words "AYF" and/or "youth football" along with the name of the city/town/county. Checking local community papers and local Park and Recreation Departments is also a great way to find a local AYF organization.

If you are part of an already established league/conference and want to find an AYF organization close by to play against or if you are interested in competing regionally, AYF regional representatives or league/conference presidents will be happy to discuss these options. Contact our Membership Chairman, Shannon Shy at [Shannon@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:Shannon@americanyouthfootball.com) to get more information.

## MEMBERSHIP SERVICES AND REWARDS

All AYF members are eligible to receive the services and benefits that the AYF National Staff has negotiated for AYF and AYC as a whole. These services and benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Grant opportunities
- Discounted Insurance packages
- Applying for 501(c)3 subordinate status (a much simpler way to apply for tax-exempt status)
- Equipment donations
- Sponsor offerings
- Administrative Resources
- Fundraising opportunities
- Discounted background checks
- Giving Back programs
- Academic Alliance Award scholarships
- Online Registration and team management system

To access these services and benefits, organizations must join AYF and provide all the required information in their Member Profile at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com)

## HOW TO JOIN

To become a member of AYF, a team/squad/association/league/conference must register annually at [JoinAYF.com](http://JoinAYF.com). Visit [JoinAYF.com](http://JoinAYF.com) to learn what information is required upon registration. As soon as your registration is complete, you can access your member profile at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com).

All AYF member organizations must register EVERY team/squad that will be fielded by their organization during the membership season. This includes both competitive and non-competitive teams/squads and all age groups.

## CONTACT INFORMATION AT MYAYF

Failure to enter the required contact information at [www.MyAYF.com](http://www.MyAYF.com) will not affect your ability to join AYF, but will restrict you from benefits and will prevent your league/conference from participating in regional and national competition. If you have not completed all your submissions by the prescribed due dates, your league/conference will need express written consent of AYF to remain eligible to receive those benefits to submit delinquent information. Otherwise, all teams whose

information is not entered into MyAyf.com will be uncertified; and therefore, ineligible to qualify for any AYF and AYC events and any benefits. Please contact us by email for more information about submitting your information to AYF after the prescribed due date at [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com).

**MyAYF required information includes:**

- One (1) Contact Person, (1) Team Parent, (1) Head Coach per team by August 1 of the current season for every team/squad in your organization.
- A complete team roster for each team (including all team coaches) in your organization by October 1 of the current season.

There are multiple permission levels assigned to the different users at MyAYF.com and your organizations administrative personnel designate these user levels. When assigning permissions to your administrators, please note that only specific users are permitted to enter/modify/print team rosters; to learn about permission levels and user access, refer to the *MyAyf User Manual* found at MyAyf.com.

<b>MEMBERSHIP FEE</b>
-----------------------

Membership fees are \$30 per football team, \$25 per cheer squad and \$20 per flag football team, 7 on 7. A \$5 surcharge is added per team on paper-based registrations.

There is no other required fee for membership in AYF or AYC.

<b>NON-AFFILIATED CHEER SQUADS</b>
------------------------------------

Any youth cheer/dance organization is welcome to join American Youth Football, Inc. at [JoinAYF.com](http://JoinAYF.com). AYC gives non-affiliated organizations the opportunity to participate as a full member of AYC. There is a special insurance package available for non-affiliate cheer members, from AYF partner, Sadler & Co. Insurance. Please contact Sadler Sports at [sport2@sadlersports.com](mailto:sport2@sadlersports.com) for more on the insurance packages.

<b>MEMBERSHIP YEAR</b>
------------------------

The AYF membership year is **April 1- March 31** All past season members will be locked out of MyAyf.com as of March 31 and will need to renew their membership at [joinayf.com](http://joinayf.com) in order to regain access to MyAyf.com and all services.

Organizations may join anytime after December 1 of the previous year to participate in the upcoming season. Early registration is encouraged, as it will ensure that members do not miss out on any great pre-season offers that AYF and its sponsors make available early in the year. If the number of teams that the organization will field is unknown, you can still join AYF and add or drop teams later.

MyAyf.com will be updated with current season services and publications as of April 1.

<b>PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP</b>
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As soon as registration at [joinayf.com](http://joinayf.com) is complete, a membership certificate will be available for download at MyAyf.com. This certificate will prove useful for fundraising, reserving field space, conducting discounted background checks, and can be used as proof to get discounts from AYF partners. **The certificate reflects the number of teams in the organization, so it must be kept current as the organization adds or drops teams. An up-to-date copy of the membership certificate should be kept in the organizations by-laws/league/conference books.**

Once you register at JOINAYF.COM, the next steps are simplifying your team management. PlayAYF is an EASY online registration system that allows organizations to reduce paper applications, forms, roster management, and more and go digital.

It is a 1 STOP SHOP for:

1. Team Registration / Data and Fee collection
2. Team and Roster Management
3. Team and Volunteer Communication
4. Background Checks
5. Concussion Management

VISIT: [playayf.com](http://playayf.com) to get started:

For more information on PLAYAYF please email: [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com)

**About PLAYAYF:**

PlayAYF is an exclusive, secure and affordable Sports Management solution (online registration, roster management and risk management) provided by AYF to help AYF families, coaches and volunteers play more and work less. The PlayAYF registration system follows AYF/AYC rules and automates your registration services, to simplify or automate many tasks previously considered time consuming.

**MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION STRUCTURE**

**Membership Structure**

Any Membership organizations that DOES NOT plan on participating in AYF post-season play or in AYF inter-league competitions can do so. The membership structure stays true to the AYF objective, as AYF remains non-intrusive and supports all football and cheer teams regardless of their competitive intentions. These members have the freedom to participate as a member of AYF without strictly abiding to the rules outlined in the Official AYF Rules and Regulations Manual. They are free to play in accordance with their own locally adopted and current governing rules and divisions, so long as their rules subscribe to the following governing principles:

- a. Safety
- b. Sportsmanship
- c. Full Participation (everyone plays)
- d. Academics
- e. Insurance minimums must be met

Excluding these minimal requirements, organizations can maintain independence in creating a customized organizational structure that fits their local needs, and take advantage of AYF's basic services and benefits.

**Important: Organizations are NOT required to participate in AYF/AYC Regional or National Championship Tournaments. This Membership Structure simply provides a more rigid membership structure that will help establish a program, which institutes best practices to establish a strong and stable community organization.**

**Tournament Member** refers to those members that would like the option to participate in AYF Regional and National Championships, pre/post season games/tournaments and other AYF competitive events. These members must strictly abide by AYF/AYC Official Rules and Regulations. Rules must be followed during Pre-Season, In-Season, and Post-Season play (year round). These members must organize their teams into their chosen AYF divisional competition structures. Details of AYF & AYC divisions can be found in the rulebooks.

Tournament teams are eligible and will be first considered to receive special offers, donations, giveaways, recognition programs including: All-Star, scholarships, awards, and special events.

## TOURNAMENT COMPETITION ELIGIBILITY

AYF/AYC Tournament members should immediately acquaint themselves with the national football/cheer commissioners. Contact the football commissioner at [football@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:football@americanyouthfootball.com) and the cheer commissioner at [cheer@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:cheer@americanyouthfootball.com). Even though information on upcoming due dates, events and tournaments will be sent via the *E-Huddle Newsletter* and email blasts, there are certain deadlines and procedures required from tournament members that will require preparation, so it is beneficial to be proactive and begin a personal dialogue with the commissioners.

Mandatory participant and conference forms can be found at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com). Those with tournament teams must have completed certification and/or collection in the post season. These forms can also be found at [www.ayfchampionships.com](http://www.ayfchampionships.com).

## THE AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL NAME AND LOGO

### Trademarks

AYF is the owner of the "AYF logo and shield" and the variations stemming from the AYF shield. This includes iterations that include the logos with both the football and megaphone and those specific to football and cheer (megaphone), respectively. AYF is the owner of the name "American Youth Football®" and "American Youth Cheer," and the AYC logo and shield, hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Marks."

**AYF licenses its Marks to Sponsors and Licensees, any unauthorized use of the Marks may cause trademark dilution to AYF and economic injury to AYF and our Sponsors and Licensees. Any unauthorized use of our Marks may result in legal action from AYF and/or our Sponsors/Licensees for economic, consequential, and special damages.**

### AYF grants member organizations a Limited Use License.

This license allows your team/association/league/conference to use the AYF Marks on paper goods and websites only; and specifically only on office supplies, business cards, identification cards, marketing materials, pamphlets, flyers and web-sites, solely for the purpose of identifying your organization as a member of AYF. You may also use the Marks on trophies, medals, awards and banners to be displayed at games, meetings and competitions. The AYF Marks may not be used in any other way by your organization or any of your agents, assigns, and subordinates, sponsors and/or affiliates. AYF Marks are available for download at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com).

You may not alter the Marks in any way other than by adding a textual reference to your own geographic location or league/conference name. You may include the words "American Youth Football" and/or "AYF" into the legal name of your corporation in so long as it appears in connection with your local geographic location and or league/conference name.

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## ORGANIZING AN AYF PROGRAM

**ORGANIZING YOUR FOOTBALL PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST TIME OR FOR THE SEASON**

Organizing a program can be complex. We recommend that you review your needs before taking the steps to begin operations. Keep your tasks organized by referring to the sample Start-Up Checklist below. NOTE: Other tasks may be applicable to your local organization; this is just a sample.

**START-UP CHECKLIST**

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Category</u>
___	___	Contact American Youth Football for assistance
___	___	Legally incorporate under state law, adopt by-laws and apply For non-profit status as a subordinate of AYF
___	___	Risk Management and Insurance
___	___	Financial requirements: Banking/merchant accounts
___	___	Players and cheerleaders: Recruitment and registration
___	___	Schedules and calendars
___	___	Special events - Local Championships, Regional & National Games/Competitions
___	___	Summer Camps- Football / Cheerleading
___	___	Playing fields and meeting facilities
___	___	Equipment: Purchase, care and storage
___	___	Coaches requirements
___	___	Coaches education: clinics, certification, etc.
___	___	Fundraising
___	___	Publicity and media relations
___	___	Background check procedure

Securing game and practice facilities is crucial. Contact the local recreation department, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, churches, school systems, camps or other groups with field space to see if there is an interest in sharing their fields.

Share your ideas and intentions with other members of your organization. Conduct one or more informal meetings with those who share your interests and want to participate in this AYF program in your community. Work through the items on the Start-Up Checklist. When there are answers to most of these items, conduct the first public meeting - one that is well publicized throughout your community. AYF has helpful presentation materials for such meetings at MyAyf.com and National Staff who will be happy to lend you support.

## PLANNING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S YEAR

AYF has found that a successful program requires attention throughout the year. Plan ahead! Making plans will give you a sense of direction and the opportunities to achieve your goals.

### January

Hold officer elections. Publicize the election and the results of the election. Provide dates and times of your meetings and invite anyone who wishes to participate in your organization to get in touch with your organization's contact person. You should pick one day, for example, the third Tuesday of each month.

Regional Committee contact list and Regional Tournament Bid Application is due.

### February

Appoint your committees and committee chairpersons. Determine budgets and equipment needs. Ensure you have an updated equipment inventory. This is an important month to begin ordering for the next season. If you want to register players online, now is the time to set up a registration site using Playayf.com. Online registration will make it easy to register, collect payment, manage and communicate to your members.

It is also the time to think about recruitment strategies, new sponsors and PR initiatives; AYF has resources at Myayf.com to support you through this.

Regional Chairs will invite Conference/League Presidents to attend the National Leadership Meeting when date is announced.

Previous years (ie 2014) Regional Event Host Financial Report are due 2/1 to the National office.

### March

Plan for player and cheerleader registration for the season. *\*We suggest you use the release forms required by AYF/AYC National Championship Tournament/Cheer Championships and the Participation, Tracking and ID Card for the National Division and the All American Division as part of your registration package, once they are signed and in the player/cheerleader team book you will not have to worry about getting them signed if your teams or squads are going to compete at the Regional or National Tournaments/Championships.*

You will also want to work out playing schedules and begin to reserve playing fields from the schools or recreation departments. You will need to determine who your coaches will be and begin to search for any replacements that are needed. March is also good time for a league/conference or association banquet to salute your kids and volunteers for the past season

### April

April is an ideal time to register your membership with American Youth Football, Inc. at [www.JoinAYF.com](http://www.JoinAYF.com) as it is the first month of annual membership and the time when all resources are updated at MyAyf.com. It is also the time to think of obtaining insurance for your organization. Have your Insurance Committee study all available plans and what will be best for your organization. Also, be aware that AYF offers an insurance plan with complete coverage at nationally negotiated rates. This should also be a time for your Coaches' Selection Committee to be active.

Make sure that you know where you stand concerning your uniform and equipment purchases. Regional Staff is advised to educate their Conference/League Presidents about the April 1<sup>st</sup> cutoff date to access MyAYF.com and is required to renew their membership.

Regional Staff is also recommended to host one Regional meeting in the Spring and notify the National office at least 30 days in advance to allow for sponsored speakers, booths and National staff also for potential handouts/presentations

### May

A training program for all coaches could be done this month. Look forward to June and plan for player sign-ups and registration before school lets out for the summer. If you are having any internal problems

with your boundaries, get this straightened out. If you are having external problems with boundaries, get in touch with AYF headquarters. You may be expanding your program and this will have to be attended to immediately.

## **June**

School will soon be out. Registration of all your players (not tryouts) should be done. No tryouts are permitted in AYF. July/August practices should be announced to the registrants. You will need to do this because baseball season usually ends toward the last of June or the first week in July. Parents usually plan vacations at this time, so be sure that everyone be made aware of practice dates for your program in July/August. Hold your general meetings this month. Outline and plan all of your goals and any events that will take place for the rest of the year. If you can, you should try to plan two registrations for your players this month.

## **July**

July is usually a slow month due to vacations. This is also another good time to promote the Certification programs for your coaches and conduct background checks. Be sure that all committees are in readiness for the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in July practice dates. Be sure to submit the ONE CONTACT, ONE TEAM PARENT, and ONE HEAD COACH per team requirement into your MyAyf.com Organization's Profile by the due date of August 1.

Regions must report which divisions in football and cheer they will field and ultimately qualify for the National Championship Tournaments. These reports should be sent to the National Football Director and the National Cheer Director by the end of July.

## **August**

Conduct player certifications. Forms can be found at MyAyf.com. Publicize practice dates and the opening of your playing season. Publicize who your sponsors are and distribute playing schedules to the media and players' parents.

Make final plans for any opening day ceremonies. If possible, plan Labor Day weekend ceremonies such as jamborees or exhibition games. \*(If your season starts in August see September plan).

Regional Staff to inform Conferences/Leagues that they must attribute each team/squads contact person and it's coaches on MyAYF.com in order for the team/squad o be certified to participate in any AYF/AYC competition.

## **September**

The season schedule begins. It would be a good idea to invite all team sponsors to the games and, if possible, give them recognition for their help. Assign your program officers to contact as many of the sponsors and issue the invitation. If the sponsor is a team sponsor, have him meet coaches and players of the team and also the cheerleader coaches and cheerleaders.

September is also our "volunteer month" and focus on "giving back". You will also want to finalize any special events for the season and began preparing for playoffs and championships. Regional Staff to inform Conferences/Leagues to submit all roster changes, adds/drops and other team/squad changes must be completed by 09/15.

Regional Staff must inform Conferences/Leagues that all DII and waivers are due to the Regional Chairperson and Tournament host and final reports submitted to the National Football Director and National Cheer Director by 09/15.

Regions must report all details concerning Regional Football Tournament and Cheer Championships to the National office by 09/30. Details of these events will be posted on Regions web page on the [www.americanyouthfootball.com](http://www.americanyouthfootball.com) website.

## **October**

Season schedule continues. Playoff and championship games should be in place and ready to go when the regular season is over. Make sure that all rosters are in order, properly certified and entered into the MyAyf.com Roster System by the due date of October 1 (to ensure your team/s is eligible for intra-league/conference competition). Now is the time to see what is available concerning post-season

(bowl) games and AYF/AYC regional competitions. Cheerleader coordinators who plan on hosting local cheer competitions should do so this month.

Regional Staff should inform and ensure that all Conferences/Leagues are in compliance with the paperwork and have uploaded final rosters to MyAYF.com or PlayAYF.com 10/1 is the last date that any changes can be made. \*Exceptions will not be considered.

Regional Tournament Brackets are due to the National Office with placeholders by 10/15. Regional Staff must inform all Conference/Leagues that the AAA Forms should be collected and verified before being submitted to the National Office.

Each Region must encourage their Conference/Leagues to create and maintain a viable AAA program and consider selection for Regional Scholarship.

Regional Chair must report Wild Card Slot to the National Football Director by 10/15.

Regional Staff will reach out to the Conferences/Leagues members to volunteer for the National Championships in December, the RC will send out an AYF Volunteer Application, application must be completed and emailed to the RC, who will in turn forward it to the National Office. *The National Office will determine the last date to submit these applications. The Regional Chair must ensure that the volunteer(s) understand that completing the application does not guarantee comped rooms, and AYF or their Conference/League will not pay for flights, accommodations' or food.*

## **November**

Season schedule should end during this month. Playoffs and championships should be underway. All-Star nominations are being collected. AYF and AYC Regional Competitions, coordinated at the regional level, are held during November - on the path to Nationals. It is a good time to have an end-of-season ceremony. This is best done at the championship game of your League/conference. Associations or Teams should begin taking up equipment. Plans should be made for storing, cleaning and reconditioning equipment.

Regional Staff must send out the Regional/National Championship packet to all Conference/Leagues that will be participating in the Regional/National tournaments. The Regional Staff will be responsible for checking and certifying that the Official AYF/AYC paperwork procedures have been followed and have been certified; check list will be signed and stamped by the Regional Staff.

Regional Chair must report/email a list of qualified teams/squads to the National Football/Cheer Director immediately following the regional tournaments/championships. All qualified Teams and Squads must register and complete the registration form for the National Championships, (due date will be posted) on the [www.ayfchampionships.com](http://www.ayfchampionships.com).

Regional Chair must inform their Conferences/Leagues that their "All Star" commitments are due to HQ by 11/01. The "All Star" division is based on a "First Come First Served" commitment. The "All Star" Division is the fastest growing division in AYF.

## **December**

December is the month for Football and Cheerleading National Championships. Qualified teams have finalized plans to attend. It is also time for the Nominating Committee to begin screening and securing officers for next season. Although, the election takes place in January, you want to be able to hand over the reins to your successor leaving the office in good shape. Some programs find it advantageous to have the books audited at this time. Also, you want to be available to give good advice to your successors and offer help in getting them started in preparation for the New Year. Adding your successors as users to MyAyf.com is a good way to help with the transition.

Regional Chair/Staff must deliver ONE Paperwork Checklist for each qualified/participating TEAM/SQUAD in the National Championships PRIOR to the scheduled "Team/Squad Check-In Day" at the National Championships. RC/Staff will advise the AYF/AYC National Staff of any issues/discrepancies at the time of submission.

Each Region is responsible for staffing field personnel (2 person minimum) to a field at the National Championships throughout the entire Championship Week.

## THE FIRST MEETING

The purpose of the first meeting is to let people in your community know what you plan to do and why. It should occur at least six month prior to any activity for the youth is planned. Select an attractive and accessible location for this event. Organizers should have a basic understanding of AYF, as well as its purpose and place in the community for youth. The organizing committee should be prepared to answer questions like: who, what, when, where, why, how, and any associated fees.

### Invitations/ Who Should Attend?

Invite the leaders of local youth community organizations. Invite local business people, as they may have a financial interest in supporting your program. Invite local sports editors and broadcasters to encourage their participation. Using the media may assist the work of publicizing of your plans. Promotional materials are available for your download at MyAyf.com.

## SETTING UP YOUR ORGANIZATION

### Incorporating as a non-profit organization

As a new organization you should strongly consider incorporating yourself as a non-profit corporation under your state's laws. Incorporating will provide your organization, its administrators and volunteers a level of protection against personal liability that may arise from the operation of your youth association. Your organization should consult with an attorney to discuss the process of incorporating, either as a member or non-member-run organization, adopting your by-laws and establishing operating and organizational principals. Additionally, your organization should request to be included as a subordinate of AYF to take advantage of our non-profit 501(c)(3) status, which can be conferred upon your program by following the steps as outlined at MyAYF.com.

### Choose your Officers

As a new organization, your officers should be nominated and selected and then memorialized in your corporate minutes book. Positions should include a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Their duties are outlined in the "Administration" section of this manual.

**Note:** It is recommended that your organization add two additional positions such as Football Commissioner/Director of Football Operations and Cheer Commissioner/Director of Cheer Operations. These positions are critical positions of responsibility and oversee the football and cheer programs, respectively, ensuring compliance with all rules by coaches and participants.

It is efficient to form an Executive Committee composed of officers and selected committee chairpersons. This is a small work group that can meet when necessary between general meetings, share information, plan established timetables and make decisions.

## COMMITTEE DUTIES

Following the election, the new officers should select volunteers or appoint chairpersons of committees. These volunteers, as with other officers, must be people of action - not just good talkers. They should have experience in the following areas and be able to contribute to the organization as facilitators of:

- Coaching - Football and Cheerleading
- Finance
- Fields and Facilities
- Publicity

- Equipment
- Game Officials (Referees)
- By-Laws
- Background Coordinator
- Scholastic Programs and Eligibility

#### Variations in committees:

Duties or job descriptions can vary between communities depending on size, facilities, geography, transportation needs and economic conditions. There is no correct job description and number of members. Experienced leaders and committee workers who can identify what needs to be done and who can execute effectively will be valuable human assets.

Larger leagues/conferences should have more elaborate committees. Those listed here should serve only as a basic guide.

### APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP

Organizations become members of American Youth Football, Inc. by filing a Membership Application Form online at [www.JoinAYF.com](http://www.JoinAYF.com) and submitting payment of the membership fee. Each organization must renew its application for membership every year.

Applications should be completed no later than August 1, as team contacts must be submitted to MyAYF no later than August 1.

It is the responsibility of the member organization to understand and abide by the AYF ‘Terms of Service.’

Once your Application form is submitted, you will receive access to MyAyf.com where you can access your profile and AYF services.

***It is the responsibility of your organization to add personnel, team contacts, coaches and other users to the MyAyf.com system. We encourage you to add all of your administrative personnel and volunteers so we can better serve you. Large league/conferences should use the Partition Tool to simplify and delegate entering multiple association information.***

***Once your membership application and payment is submitted, your Membership Certificate will be available for download at MyAYF.com. This certificate must be kept current and include the number of teams administered by your organization in the membership year. A copy should be kept in your organization Book or corporate by-laws.***

An official AYF Charter Membership may be granted after an AYF Tournament Member completes one full year in good standing.

Consult the *MyAYF User Manual (in MyAyf.com)* for support on adding users and the MyAYF Roster system.

### PARTITION TOOL

Members that register with AYF in the form of a league/conference will have access in MyAyf.com to the ‘Conference Tool or Partition Tool.’ This will make assigning Team Contacts and entering team rosters a more manageable process.

Using the ‘Conference Tool,’ a league/conference can add its Associations to its membership and then distribute the teams among those associations (which will then fall under their designated representatives). As a result, the association will then be responsible for entering its ‘Primary Team Contacts’ for permission to enter the team rosters by October 1.

## HOW MANY TEAMS CAN YOU SUPPORT?

AYF encourages youth leaders to field as many teams as they can handle and to provide playing opportunities for as many players as possible. When youngsters are given the opportunity to play football or to cheerlead in a supportive environment, they come out in significant numbers. Available space, financial considerations and adult leadership are primary factors to take into account when determining how many participants and teams an organization can support.

If active participation is limited to just the starting team, football coaches will learn that inactive players become less than enthusiastic about attending practices and games. Coaches may find that limited players may be reluctant to attend some practices and give up other activities to accept a role as a substitute. Having too many players on a team can cause just as many problems as having too few players on a team. Coaches should be aware that a football team should function under a team concept and everyone has a role to play. The concept of participation will be covered in more detail in a later section of this manual.

For more budget samples and support visit [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) under resources or at the end of this manual.

## TOO MANY ATHLETES

What a luxury! AYF rules state that there may be a maximum of 36 football players on a team and 36 cheerleaders per squad on the regional or national competition floor.

If you have too many players here are some considerations:

Athletes may drop out during the early practice periods, but this still may not bring you below the maximum roster size. The logical answer would be to form two teams. It is recommended that two teams of 21 players each be formed rather than one team of 42 players, six of who would have to be removed from the roster if the AYF team was a part of the Tournament Structure. Other strategies would be to form waiting lists (first come, first serve) or create practice squads, but youngsters want to play, not wait. In the long run, these moves will limit your ability to adequately serve the youth in your community. Participation is one of the most important features of sports for youngsters. If they are denied opportunities to play, they may leave the program.

AYF recommends that all youngsters who register be incorporated into the program. One such path is Flag or Touch Football - or to create a non-competitive 'Rally Squad' for an overflowing cheerleading program. These programs have been extremely popular in school intramural programs for years and are showing outstanding growth in the adult sector. With proper leadership and supervision, we believe that AYF Flag and Touch Football or Rally Cheer Squad will exceed all other aspects of your program in participants. This program will be explained in another section of this manual.

## DIVISIONS

AYF and AYC offer all-inclusive divisions, meaning there is a place for every child to participate and there are divisions in the 'tournament structure' that are easily adaptable for all youth football programs.

**Members are not required to adopt to AYF/AYC divisions, however AYF, a third party risk management team, and a group of lifelong youth football administrators have designed the AYF divisional guidelines to set the gold standard for youth football and cheer participation; AYF and AYC divisions are inclusive and best protect young players.**

**Adopting AYF/AYC divisions will allow your league/conference the opportunity to be eligible for bowl/tournament play should there ever be the desire to participate outside your league/conference.**

The All-American division, AYF's age based divisions have unrestricted weight football divisions allow for players to make a smooth transition into high school football, allowing your organization the opportunity to leverage itself as a 'feeder program' in the community and obtain additional support from local high schools and the high school coaches. Please note: THIS IS AGE BASED FOOTBALL FOR AGES 5-15 YEARS OLD. THE ONLY EXCEPTION IS NO 10<sup>th</sup> GRADERS ARE PERMITTED TO PLAY IN AYF.

AYF and AYC competition divisions can be found in the Rule Book and at [www.americanyouthfootball.com](http://www.americanyouthfootball.com). If you have questions about divisions, contact the football/cheer commissioners at [football@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:football@americanyouthfootball.com) or [ayc@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:ayc@americanyouthfootball.com).

## ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM LEAGUES

### **7 on 7 Teams, Spring Football and Summer Passing Leagues:**

AYF members participate in spring and summer football and cheerleading. AYF recommends that any member organization participating in spring and summer leagues do so by following the format established by their state high school athletic governing board. AYF requires that no pressure be placed on individuals to participate. Coaches that “require” or in any way manipulate fall football participants to join or participate in any way or who do not plan and allow for participation in other sports and family vacations should be immediately suspended from coaching any team during the regular (Fall) season. League/conferences are required to monitor any spring or summer events and should check with your insurance provider to ensure that your league/conference has appropriate coverage.

### **Developmental Leagues:**

Many AYF members run developmental football programs, including arena football leagues, girls-only football leagues, special needs leagues/teams, home-school leagues and international leagues. AYF would like to extend support with these initiatives and offers special needs and international leagues free membership in AYF. Please contact us so that we can further support these very important programs.

### **Inspiration Division: (Formerly known as Contender Division)**

The Contender Division is to support and develop participation for youth with special needs.

### **International Division:**

AYF likes to support international programs to promote the bridging of cultures. To learn more about the international program please view the following website:

<http://americanyouthfootball.com/ayfinternational.asp>

## FLAG AND TOUCH FOOTBALL

AYF offers these programs as an alternative to tackle programs. Some youth athletes are not interested in the contact aspect of football and are apprehensive about blocking and tackling; however, they still retain their interest in football. What do you do for this child? Try to foster his interest in the game of football? Establishing a flag and touch football program within your program provides an invaluable introductory program to a tackle football program.

AYF has established rules and regulations for flag football at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com). It is a good, economical move because the cost is minimal and no padding is needed. One of the best benefits is that you keep the kids in your program and eventually they may move into your tackle program. All the football skills are available in flag and touch football, the only exception is that there is no contact. It also builds another volunteer base as parents will come out to coach flag football and, perhaps, volunteer in other activities.

Although the rules and regulations may seem sophisticated, they can be modified to suit your individual needs. Let this program serve as an introduction to your overall program.

For those who establish flag and touch football, you are required to register your teams with AYF. Insurance plans are available, along with information on starting and running a flag or touch football program.

## BOUNDARIES

Leagues/conferences establish their own boundaries. Associations or teams establish their own boundaries; however, boundaries must be approved by the league/conference with which the association or team is affiliated.

AYF understands that some boundaries have historical and geographical roots and may have been in place for many years. Leagues/conference can be accepted into AYF with their existing boundary lines.

AYF policy permits leagues/conferences to retain their boundaries as requested and to the maximum extent practicable. However, changes may be necessary when it is determined that they cannot, or do not, fully serve players

living within their area or if they infringe on an existing AYF league/conference. When situations such as these are discovered, AYF will consult with all pertinent leagues/conferences before boundaries are approved.

New leagues/conferences interested in altering boundaries must submit a clearly drawn map of the desired boundary changes (old and new) with their AYF Membership Application. If there are no conflicting situations involving other AYF organizations, the application will be approved without comment.

Leagues/conferences must use care in establishing boundaries for member associations and teams. Associations that draw from the larger population bases of 50,000 people or more or large school districts will have certain advantages that do not exist in areas with smaller or more senior populations. It is strongly recommended that large populated areas have more teams than smaller areas.

This emphasizes an important principle of AYF and youth sport in general. We expect leagues/conferences to give all youngsters living within your area ample opportunities to play in your program. If a national tournament structure league/conference does not offer both playing divisions (i.e. National and All-American) in its boundary, then AYF may approve, at its discretion, the establishment of an AYF league/conference within the same boundary.

## GAME OFFICIALS

Game officials (referees) for your organization can be volunteers or professional (high school officials) who belong to an association of officials. Officials can also be trained and paid by your league/conference.

Large leagues/conferences often depend on an officials association. Leagues/conferences, especially intramural programs, sometimes train their own referees. The success of this type of program is largely dependent upon the quality of referees who have gone through this training. Successful referees, paid or volunteer, must know the rules of football, as well as the techniques of officiating and AYF rules.

Let's assume that your program cannot afford game officials, or none are available. You may have to set up your own training program for volunteers who may or may not be paid for their work. You will need to get someone with officiating experience, preferably from the high school or college level, who can assist you in setting up a training clinic for officials. You will probably draw your volunteer referees from young adults who have played high school football and are interested in getting into officiating. Of course, you do not want to forget your parent pool either.

Do not rely upon pulling people from the stands to officiate. This can cause disputes throughout the season and can only cause problems in the long run.

The success of your program depends upon the understanding of coaches, teams, administrators and parents. Volunteer officials will make mistakes and may not be familiar with the finer points of the rules. In any case, harsh criticism could chase these people away. Your program will suffer for it. Everyone must be educated in this program. Ideally, an organization should use an official's association whenever it is possible.

## ADMINISTRATION: PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATION

### OFFICER POSITIONS

**President:** The President of the league/conference or association will preside at all meetings. This person will chair the Executive Committee and Board of Directors and will supervise the tasks of all committees. The President is responsible for seeing that the rules, policies and principles of AYF are followed.

**Vice President:** The Vice President will preside at all meetings in the absence of the President and is an *ex-officio* member of all committees. This person also carries out other duties and assignments, as delegated to him or her by the President. Some programs may designate the Vice President to be the next President.

**Secretary:** The Secretary records minutes of the meeting and handles all correspondence.

**Treasurer:** The Treasurer keeps all financial records of the organization. This person is charged with collection and disbursement of all funds, prepares financial reports for regular meetings and oversees the Organization’s annual budget.

**Other Administrative Officers:** Additional positions may be necessary in larger organizations. They may include, but are not limited to Business Manager, Athletic Director, Football Commissioner or Director, Cheer Commissioner or Director, Scholastic Director, Risk Management Officer, Conduct Official (child abuse/molestation protection) and Public Relations Director. The scope of your revenue-generating efforts may require that you also establish officers for league/conference and team sponsor solicitations, general fundraising, game concessions and Booster Club functions.

### LEAGUE CONTACT PERSON

Every program must designate one person as a primary liaison between the organization and AYF. This responsibility is often given to the President since it involves correspondence with AYF National Staff. In some cases, the Secretary may fulfill this duty, but it can be the responsibility of any officer in the organization. The title of ‘League Contact’ is designated to the registering party upon registration at JoinAYF.com; however this contact may be designated or changed at any time by visiting MyAyf.com.

Please be advised that ALL administrators/personnel must be on record with AYF and can be added at any time at MyAyf.com.

### DEFINITIONS OF TEAM, ASSOCIATION, AND LEAGUE/CONFERENCE

**Team:** The Team is the basic unit of organization in AYF. A team is composed of one age and /or weight class (e.g., Cadet, Jr. Pee Wee, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade All-American). A single team may be registered with AYF when it is not a member of a larger association, an intramural program or other sponsoring agency.

**Association:** Multiple teams from the same location can come together to form an Association. AYF defines local organizations as an “Association” in keeping with the traditions of the sport. The local association is the sponsoring organization for all of its participants. Associations may join with other associations to form a league/conference.

**League/Conference:** The terms “league” and “conference” are synonymous, as used in this manual and in the AYF National Rulebook. A league/conference is a collection of associations. It can be two or more divisions, e.g., East Division and West Division; A league/conference can be made up of multiple towns and cities, e.g., “Central Montana AYF”.

Note that the term “league”, in many cases, has been used to identify an intramural (in-house or within the walls) program. Many large recreation departments use this concept, as well as some Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs and PAL units. It may be formed to serve a limited number of age groups such as Middies, Junior Middies or a combination of both classes. In earlier years, many youth football programs were organized in this manner. Their operation was simple with a coaching staff for each team. The officers were the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and they were the Board of Directors. In some cases, the league was the main sponsor and they recruited sponsorships for each football team. The structure was similar to that of many youth baseball league.

**Organization/Program:** Since AYF members may join AYF/AYC as a Team or Squad or Association or League/Conference, “Organization” or “Program” is used interchangeably throughout this manual to describe an AYF Member regardless of its structure.

**League/Conference:**

AYF will assist new and existing groups to organize their football and cheer. Existing organizations will be accepted into AYF provided they conform to the basic tenets of AYF and do not offer a national tournament structure that is conflicting with an existing AYF national tournament structure organization.

## SPREAD THE RESPONSIBILITY

Nothing can be more important for your program than maintaining it over the years. If you are experiencing a decline in volunteer interest or difficulty in recruiting officers, maybe it is time for you to check how you are delegating responsibilities. Current leaders should have a committee of people, volunteers, and other individuals who are willing to get involved in all aspects of the program. A decline in adult participation may be a sign that too few people hold planning and decision making too tightly.

In the early years of most organizations, manpower is usually readily available. It is important to fight the tendency to have a few people do most of the work, rather than keeping multiple volunteers involved. Otherwise, volunteers will begin to drop out with the feeling, "Well, Joe does a good job as president; I guess he doesn't need my help anymore." Poor Joe has definitely worked himself to a corner as president. This happens in many organizations where volunteer help is necessary for survival. A few do all the work! Joe's mistake was that he didn't delegate responsibility. What's going to happen when Joe retires? No one else will be aware of the lessons Joe learned during his time as president and it will hurt the organization, moving forward. Does the organization fail? You bet it will!

To encourage participation, it helps to delegate responsibility to as many people as possible. Have different people serve on key committees. Make them a part of the organization when they first come into the program with their children or as an interested volunteer. Train your successor! When Joe eventually steps down, there will be someone ready, willing and qualified to fill his shoes.

## THE AYF ANTI-SUBSTANCE ABUSE RULE

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco have an enormously negative impact on our society. Drugs and alcohol are immediate hazards for young athletes, as well as their adult leaders. These substances continue to be among the most devastating habits our children can pick up.

AYF believes that the influence of positive role models can prevent many youngsters from starting these habits during their early years. Children generally look up to and respect their coaches, teachers and adult leaders. These people can be living, walking heroes. What better influence can there be on our children, other than their parents? For those of you who can afford it, make substance-free messaging a focal point of your communications and spirit efforts. Put the message on tee shirts, caps and certificates. Take these positive steps with your players.

During the season, each team should present a substance abuse lecture to players and cheerleaders all ages. The lecture will be presented during the first week of practice and will be repeated as many times as necessary to insure all youth participants are aware of the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. The lecture must be given by a member of the coaching staff or by an adult volunteer designated for that purpose. Parents, physicians, nurses, health educators, teachers, police officers, community substance abuse counselors and former users are among those who can be invited to speak with the players. Some possible topics are:

- Signs of substance abuse among friends and teammates
- What specific drugs do to mind and body
- Long-term effects of smoking
- The effects of drugs and alcohol on sports
- What to do when someone you know is under the influence
- Emergency situations involving drugs and alcohol
- Effects of solvents, glue and other dangerous inhalants on the respiratory system

AYF organizations are negligent when they fail to stress the importance of the anti-abuse rules and fail to enforce them. Once the community realizes what you are doing to address substance abuse, your community support can rise dramatically.

## CHILD ABUSE/MOLESTATION

The position statement of AYF/AYC on this issue is as follows:

- 1) Child abuse/molestation has become a growing concern within recent years and can take many forms including verbal abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. Any form of child abuse/molestation is despicable and goes against everything that American Youth Football, Inc. and American Youth Cheerleading stands for.
- 2) AYF/AYC is committed to addressing concerns over child abuse/molestation by informing and educating its affiliated organizations on this risk by providing both strongly recommended guidelines and requirements for establishing a risk management plan that may significantly lessen but not totally eliminate the chance of an occurrence. Failure to implement a child abuse/molestation risk management program may expose teams/associations leagues/conferences and its officials, volunteers and other representatives to significant legal liability.
- 3) AYF/AYC **strongly recommends** that all franchised organizations adopt and implement a comprehensive child abuse/molestation risk management program. Guidelines for establishing a child abuse/molestation risk management program are available at no charge through the AYF/AYC national office or the league/conference may develop a similar comprehensive program.
- 4) AYF/AYC has no operational control over team/association/league/conference security, including the selection of volunteers associated with affiliated teams/associations/leagues/conferences. Therefore, it is the sole responsibility of the affiliated organizations to take action by adopting and implementing a child abuse/molestation risk management program.
- 5) Some associations/leagues/conferences have adopted criminal background checks for coaches/volunteers as the sole means for protecting against this risk. While criminal background checks are an important aspect that should not be overlooked, they are just part of a comprehensive risk management program.
- 6) Elements of the AYF/AYC Child Abuse/Molestation Risk Management Program that are strongly recommended guidelines are highlighted below:
  - a) Screen all volunteers who have ongoing access to youth by requiring completion of a Volunteer Application and by running a criminal background check. All criminal background checks indicating a conviction involving crimes against a minor must result in disqualification of the volunteer. In addition, other charges and convictions may be an indication of an unfit volunteer and may result in disqualification. Written disqualification criteria must be established prior to running criminal background checks.
  - b) Distribute materials to educate administrators, volunteers, and parents on the warning signs of child abuse/molestation and how to respond to an allegation. All suspected instances and allegations of child abuse/molestation must be immediately reported to local law enforcement.
  - c) Appoint a Conduct Official to administer the program and to be the primary contact for allegations of child abuse/molestation.
  - d) Encourage the use of a “buddy system,” so that a non-related adult is never alone with a single child.
  - e) Encourage the use of take home/pickup policies to ensure that a single child is not being transported by a volunteer as a result of a parent failing to pick up a child in a timely manner.
  - f) Prohibition of any overnight sleepover event at any official’s house.
  - g) Limit the distribution of directories/rosters with names, phone numbers, addresses, and pictures to persons on a need-to-know basis.
- 7) Elements of the AYF/AYC Child Abuse/Molestation Risk Management Program that are minimum requirements of all AYF/AYC organizations as a prerequisite of AYF/AYC membership are highlighted below:
  - a) Establish a written criterion that disqualifies volunteers for appearing on any state’s sexual offender registry.
  - b) Run background checks on all volunteers who have repeated access to youth on any state’s online sexual offender registry. Searching registries is free in most states.

- c) Agree to immediately report all suspected instances or allegations of child abuse/molestation to local law enforcement agency.

Elements a-c in this section are minimum requirements for membership in AYF/AYC. It is strongly recommended that your program exceed these minimum requirements by implementing all the elements as outline in section (6) above.

### **BOOSTERS AND AUXILIARY UNITS**

Funds must be raised to operate a successful program. Because of the many responsibilities of coaches and administrators, it leaves a limited amount of time for fundraising.

Fundraising involves many tasks and requires a ‘team’ effort. Booster clubs and fundraising committees may be formed to manage fundraising efforts. In addition, members of the units can also be tapped for other duties, such as equipment managers, team registration and field maintenance.

These support units can be a parents’ group, or any group that would include any persons interested in assisting the program. AYF/AYC recommends that all funds raised be deposited into one program coffer to facilitate proper financial accounting. If there are multiple bank accounts, a proper financial report will be difficult to produce. The managers of these funds and committees should be on your board of directors, not only for their continued support, but also for cohesiveness of your program.

We suggest that auxiliary and booster clubs be considered as committee within your program and not incorporated separately.

### **LEGAL COUNSEL**

There are times when legal help is needed in the operation of your program, especially to ensure your program is in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. It is always in your organization’s best interest to seek advice from a local attorney. You may have a child in your program whose father or mother happens to be an attorney and may be willing to volunteer some legal help. It will be important for your team to have some sort of legal resource in the event of an emergency.

### **CHECKING ACCOUNTS**

All organizations that have financial transactions should have checking accounts. A well-administered organization will require at least two officers’ signatures on all checks drawn on the organization accounts. In addition, someone who is not authorized to deposit or withdraw should reconcile the monthly bank statement. The bank you choose to do business with will be glad to discuss more details with you. As your organization searches for a financial institution with which to do business, it is helpful to ask whether the institution waives monthly fees for non-profit youth organizations and what information is required to secure the fee waiver.

### **HONORING YOUR VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are very special to AYF/AYC! Someone once said, “The worst paid people are those that volunteer to help someone or something.” While it is true you don’t pay your hard working volunteers, you should take into consideration the contributions they make. A pat on the back is great, but we suggest that you do something more substantial.

Most organizations conduct formal or informal awards ceremonies and banquets to recognize players and cheerleaders for their effort and achievements. Coaches may be honored at these ceremonies for commitment to youth, hours of service, conducting great events, putting good ideas into practice, and performing service beyond the call of duty.

Honoring volunteers for their service encourages them to continue working in your program. Before you consider any volunteer awards, you should have a committee to study and weigh the person’s contribution and dedication.

### **Recognition for Sponsors and Media**

Recognition should be given to sponsors. This allows them to display their awards of appreciation in prominent places within the business. It is suggested that this type of word not overshadow that of volunteers. Volunteers and sponsors are the backbone of any program. Recognize their participation in an appropriate manner. Honoring volunteers for their service motivates them to continue working for the youth in your program. Establish categories of awards and ask for nominations for special awards. The responsibility for this may be an existing committee that can administer all aspects of the awards program.

The media is usually expected to report the results of your games and contests. Consider establishing one or more media awards for exceptional contributions in this area. It might include someone who wrote a complimentary article about the program, a news feature on local television, a photo exhibit, and regular features throughout the season.

<b>AWARDS FOR YOUR AYF/AYC COMMUNITY</b>
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Do not take awards lightly. When the media is invited to participate in this event, it provides another way to bring attention to your organization. National AYF awards are noted below. All members are eligible to nominate deserving people for these awards. An outline of the requirements for the awards will be sent by AYF to your contact person upon request. Honorees will receive certificates and/or awards and will be identified in *The Huddle* e-newsletter and on AYFs home website. The awards include:

#### **The American Youth Football Hall of Fame Induction**

Every year American Youth Football inducts distinguished individuals to the American Youth Football Hall of Fame. Inductees are people who have made significant contributions throughout their lifetime to youth sports. These individuals have given a minimum of 25 years of service and dedication to youth sports and continue to have a significant impact on players, coaches, volunteers, and their community.

#### **The American Youth Football/Cheer Volunteer Award**

This award is given to the top volunteer of the year. It is not a coaching award. All leagues/conferences are eligible to nominate a volunteer for this award. If you have an outstanding volunteer in your program, you may submit the person's name for consideration.

#### **The American Youth Football/Cheer Coach of the Year Award**

Two national awards are given to the top football and cheerleader coach of the year. The purpose of this award is to recognize people who best demonstrate the qualities that are expected of any AYF coach. Wins and championships are not the sole criteria for selection. Rather, it is everything that illustrates that this coach has gone above and beyond the typical coach.

#### **The Academic Achievement Alliance (AAA) All-American Football and Cheerleader Awards**

All AYF organizations are encouraged to nominate their top academic and athletic achievers for the AYF Academic Achievement Alliance. Nomination forms are available at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com). See the description later in this manual.

#### **The Regional Scholarship Awards (9 Regions)**

This exceptional football or cheer athlete is awarded a scholarship in the Name of the current Regional Director serving that season.

#### **The Team Academic Achievement Award**

This award is presented to the team of 22 players or more with the highest combined academic average.

#### **The Team Community Giving Back Award**

This award is presented each year to the team that has developed and implemented the best Giving Back project for their community.

#### **The League/Conference Giving Back to the Community Award**

This award presented to the league/conference that has developed and implemented the best Giving Back initiative for another community or league/conference.

## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

### DUE DATES at MyAYF.com

An organization's contact information and rosters are collected in different stages to simplify the process and to adapt it to your organizations calendar.

**Note:** At MyAyf.com there are a number of permission levels that administrators must designate to ensure that only certain users can enter/manage team rosters. Instructions for using the rosters system and designating permission levels can be found in *the MYAYF User Manual* at MyAyf.com.

Please note that for each 'user' added to MyAYF.com, there must be a valid and unique email address.

#### 1. Administrative Personnel Contact information:

Administrative personnel contact information should be entered during registration at JoinAYF.com, or organizations can add administrators after at MyAYF.com ensure that you add all key administrative users to MyAyf.com.

#### 2. Primary Contacts:

Administrators must assign a Primary Team Contact, Team Parent and Head Coach to each team/squad in the organization. These assignments must be completed by August 1. This information is used to 'certify' the existence and eligibility of the team for AYF initiatives, including donations, giveaways, travel grants and awards. This team contact is also the person who is ultimately responsible for inputting the team's roster.

Once an administrator adds their primary team contacts, the team contacts will be forwarded a passwords that will give them access to MyAyf.com and allow them to enter/modify the designated Team's Rosters for the October 1 due date. Aside from the League Contact, only the Team Contact will have access to manage the team roster. Organization administrators should decide who has this responsibility.

#### 3. Team Rosters:

The due date for Team Rosters is October 1. Team rosters must include players and coaches. Any amendments to team rosters after the October 1 will be flagged as INELIGIBLE for AYF/AYC sanctioned competitive play (unless otherwise expressly permitted by AYF/AYC National Commissioners).

Player rosters need not include home address, but should include a valid email address, which will allow players to receive a PLAYER MEMBERSHIP NUMBER to access www.AYFPlayers.com, an online community exclusively for AYF/AYC athletes.

#### 4. Certified Rosters for Tournament Organizations:

Organizations that have teams planning to compete in regional tournaments must have their rosters certified by their league/conference and then must digitally submit them at MyAyf.com before October 1. The certified 'paper' roster will be checked against the digitally submitted roster at MyAYF.com; the copies must be consistent for eligibility to compete in AYF/AYC tournaments.

## ROSTER AND DATA COLLECTION

AYF requires that all member organizations enter their key administrators, teams, coaches and rosters at MyAyf.com.

**All members are required to enter roster information into the secure AYF database by the deadlines (listed below) in order to be eligible for AYF services including: 501(c)(3) status, grants, donations, scholastic recognition and awards, all-star selection, sponsored initiatives, sanctioned events including (but not limited to) regional and national competitions.**

Full contact information, including: mailing address, phone, and email is required from adult members (administrators and coaches). A home address is NOT required from players.

## MANDATORY PLAY ROSTER

All members are required to comply with 'Full Participation' requirements; meaning that all players on the team get a chance to play in every game. AYF's 'Mandatory Play Roster' is required for use at AYF sanctioned tournaments. The Mandatory Play Roster form can be found at MyAYF.com.

## PRIVACY POLICY

All member data and rosters collected will be kept private to AYF. No personal data will be made available to parties outside American Youth Football, Inc. **without expressed consent.** Members' contact information will be used only for internal communication, direct promotion, to verify membership, and so that AYF can appropriately allocate funds/grants/donations and resources bestowed to AYF for their 'certified' membership.

If team contact and roster data is not entered at MyAyf.com, teams will be unable to be 'certified' as AYF members and therefore will forfeit promotions and/or giveaways. Contact information will never be shared with third parties and is strictly used to aid AYF in acquiring programs to aid our membership and distribute gifts.

## FORMS AND WAIVERS

AYF requires a number of completed forms; waivers and affidavits from participants of AYF/AYC sanctioned tournament participation. This paperwork along with a number of other official forms are posted at MyAyf.com.

Members may use the Official AYF forms as a guideline for the local organizations paperwork, however, local authorities must tailor all forms and local legal counsel should be consulted as states differ in requirements. AYF is not responsible for any legal issues arising within your organization and membership, so members must do their due diligence when creating forms/waivers for the organization.

## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR ADMINISTRATORS

### **Risk Management Education:**

AYF offers a number of educational resources to make sure that your organization, officers and participants are protected from many of the common threats to a youth football organization. Safety programs/guidelines can be found at MyAyf.com.

### **Soliciting Funds:**

When different grant opportunities become available, AYF will post them at MyAyf.com along with application procedure, administrators are encouraged to check MyAyf.com often for updates and read all editions of the E-Huddle so not to miss any opportunity.

Occasionally local companies contact AYF to find local AYF organizations to support. AYF will forward these requests to the member organizations 'league contact' via email.

MyAyf.com features many tools to support you in the process of soliciting funds from local businesses and sponsors. See visit the 'fundraising' page at [americanyouthfootball.com](http://americanyouthfootball.com) for the best fundraising programs available.

### **Help from AYF and AYC National Sponsors:**

AYF and AYC national sponsors are committed to offering members the best possible deals on their products and services. When in need of new products or services for your organization, contact [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com) to help find you the best possible pricing and incentive packages available.

Additionally, all AYF & AYC sponsors are required to have a 'Giving Back' component; these programs will be administered by AYF when they become available. In order to qualify your organization must have the required roster information submitted for verification at MyAyf.com.

## BACKGROUND CHECKS

LexisNexis Volunteer Screening offers low-cost volunteer background screening to youth serving and other nonprofit organizations. American Youth Football has partnered with LexisNexis Volunteer Screening to offer their members access to our premier nonprofit background screening services at deep discounts. Since 2002 LexisNexis has screened more than 3.7 million potential employees or volunteers, identifying over 189,000 individuals with criminal convictions - including more than 2700 registered sex offenders.

Partnering with LexisNexis, you will receive access to in-depth reporting that will help you confidently approve volunteers and employees; and, a "volunteer-friendly" background screening process, which will allow you to perform comprehensive online screening. The Lexis Nexis website will allow you to perform single screenings; as well as, multiple volunteer screenings. You will also have the ability to set up a self-screening website, where volunteers can enter their information to initiate their own background screening; and, even pay for their background screening.

By signing up for background screening services with LexisNexis, not only are you taking effective steps to protect your organization, but you are also gaining access to those services at a discounted price to fit your budget-just \$1.50 for a nationwide criminal check! Find details at [MyAYF.com](http://MyAYF.com)

## 501 (c)(3) TAX EXEMPTION

American Youth Football is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and is recognized as a central organization by the IRS. AYF member organizations can qualify as a subordinate of AYF and be recognized under the AYF 'tax exempt umbrella'. The process is a relatively simple one and there is no cost to your organization. Visit [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) for more information and the application process.

Please note that when soliciting donation or grant funds that all checks MUST be made payable to the local organization and NOT to American Youth Football Inc. as there will be a lengthy delay in obtaining your funds  
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## ONLINE REGISTRATION, MANAGEMENT, WEBSITES

### Online Registration and Team Management:

AYF has developed [www.PlayAYF.com](http://www.PlayAYF.com), a secure platform for AYF member organizations to conduct online registration and collect payment from their members. This system is customizable to your data needs, has no upfront costs, requires no contract, and allows you to manage teams, volunteers, forms, and communicate for free with all of your members via email, text etc. Any AYF organization can establish a PlayAyf.com registration site and make it adapt to your structure.

Playayf.com does not replace or act as a website, it simply is a registration site and management platform/database that generates a URL address/link that you can simply cut and paste to your website or promote on flyers.

If you choose to use another registration program/online management sites, choose carefully. Do not pay set-up or hosting fees, and make sure that you 'opt-out' of any 'data sharing' programs in order to protect your participants' privacy.

### Websites:

Today, nearly all youth football organizations have their own website to recruit and communicate with members. There are hundreds of website hosting companies. AYF does not endorse any company.

All AYF members are encouraged to add AYF Logos and links to their own websites. Instructions and logos can be found at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com).

## FIELD DEVELOPMENT

AYF has been building fields of dreams for nearly a decade through the 'Take Back the Fields' Initiative. AYF will help your organization plan, fundraise and acquire a state-of-the-art field for a thriving program for years to come. Contact [cmpamerica@aol.com](mailto:cmpamerica@aol.com) for more information.

## BIRTH AND WEIGHT CERTIFICATION

AYF rules and regulations cover the following two items thoroughly. We cover the basics here because of its importance and as a precaution.

**Birth Certificates:** All players and cheerleaders in AYF must be certified by the methods described in the rulebook. Certification should be by birth certificate or other eligible papers whenever possible. In any case, players must be certified prior to the first game of the season. Failure to do this can result in problems later. Do not delay this item. Any game in which an “uncertified” player participates in is an official forfeit - plain and simple. Players should not play until their proof of age is verified. Take care of this before practice begins, as there is nothing more disruptive than a protest over age. A team can be disqualified from championships and post-season events, not to mention the forfeiture of regular season games. This is a good reason to appoint a ‘team roster manager’.

For the **National Division**, AYF uses **July 31** as the cutoff date for the athletes’ ages for the playing season; i.e., if a player/cheerleader is 14 years old on July 31, but turns 15 years old on August 1, he or she participates as a 14 year old, during this season. For the **All-American Division**, the cutoff date for the athletes’ ages for the playing season is **July 31**.

**Weight Certification:** If you offer weighted divisions, make sure that a player is the proper weight and has been certified on the Official Roster prior to the first game of the season. If players are placed on an Official Roster without their weight listed, they are not certified and are declared ineligible to play. Don’t accept the explanation of, “All you have to do is look at him and tell that the weight is right.” Take the guesswork out of it and weigh the player. In this way, you will know for sure. Make sure that all players are weighed in according to AYF and your local rules.

Age and weight regulations can cause trouble in any youth program. Good administrators take care of this immediately and a team business manager will monitor these regulations. Let the coach handle the youth on the field and let the business managers take care of rosters and other administration.

## EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

The purchase of inexpensive or cheap equipment may be more costly over time than the purchase of more expensive, but longer lasting equipment. Equipment that is inexpensive today may wear out more quickly and must be replaced. More expensive equipment may require larger upfront costs, but will not have to be replaced for four or maybe even five years. The key is durability when purchasing equipment.

AYF encourages teams to consider the best affordable helmet and shoulder pads before you put your hard earned cash into expensive jerseys or pants. **Safety is a priority in youth sports. Helmets and shoulder pads are two of the more important purchases for the safety of football players. Invest in good protective equipment.** Save money by purchasing stock or plain jerseys (with numbers), pants and socks. Decorative trim adds to the cost of football jerseys and pants. Durability is more important than style. Add the trimmings when the financial resources of the organization improve.

Since the purchase of equipment is generally the responsibility of the association or individual team (unless you are sponsored by an intramural type league/conference), we suggest that your organization selects a good equipment manager. This person, along with the treasurer, should adhere to your organization’s budget. He should establish purchase records and keep an accurate inventory of all equipment.

### **Maintenance:**

All hard padding, especially helmets need to be checked annually. You will not need to replace all of your helmets every year. However, you should check for stress and cracks and get helmets reconditioned in accordance with the manufacturer’s guidelines. The same reconditioning and disposal cycle also applies to shoulder pads. Reconditioning of helmets involves having an expert inspect and repair a used helmet by: fixing cracks or damage, replacing missing parts, testing it for safety, and recertifying it for use. Helmets should be reconditioned regularly by a licensed NAERA (National Athletic Equipment Reconditioning Association) member. **DO NOT** allow your athletes to use a used helmet that is not approved/recertified for use by a NAERA reconditioner.

**Naera 10 year and out rule:** No manufacturer’s helmet that is 10 years or older can be recertified, football helmets should be replaced NO later than 10 years from the date of manufacture. Many helmets will need to be replaced

sooner, depending upon wear and tear. Call your Riddell rep for a FREE consultation and inspection.  
Contact: [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com)

### **Footballs:**

The AYF Sanctioned football is Wilson®. AYF strongly recommends using an AYF Wilson football (leather or composite) during the regular season games. As the exclusive ball of the postseason, AYF requires the use of an AYF logo'd Wilson football during all AYF sanctioned tournament play; this includes regional and national championships. **A team may play with their own game ball at Regional and National tournaments ONLY if it is an AYF Wilson Football; If teams do not bring their own AYF Wilson Game Ball, then one will be provided to them at game time.** Most AYF Leagues adopt AYF standards regarding Wilson Footballs. Your equipment manager will need to know how many balls are required for each of your teams, game balls, etc. If you are a new organization just starting out, you'll need a certain amount of practice balls for each team. As time goes on, game balls will eventually become practice balls. Either way, expect to purchase footballs every year. To get your AYF logo Wilson Footballs email [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com) or ask a local sporting goods retailer/dealer.

It will also be the responsibility of the equipment manager to maintain and store the equipment. Be careful where and how the equipment is stored. Equipment should be stored in a secure, climate controlled space. **INSURE YOUR EQUIPMENT!** Fire is the number one culprit, but water and theft can be just as bad.

You must impress upon your players that the care of equipment during the season is their responsibility. Make sure that parents are given proper laundry instructions of jerseys and pants. Some organizations charge a refundable fee for equipment. If you do not choose to do this, at least have the parents sign an agreement that the equipment be returned in good shape.

In some cases, equipment should be purchased in the off-season for better prices. This is a good, economical move and should be done during the winter months when special discounts may be in effect. Sometimes greater volume will drive vendors to provide discounts. Work with multiple teams and associations. You should consider the competitive bid process to purchase equipment. Prepare an exact list of the equipment purchases that will be made. Be sure to state specific brands and model numbers if required. Include the intended purchase date. Submit the list to three or more vendors. Request that they send you a sealed bid by a specific date.

In any case, you should consider comparative shopping for the best buys and contact AYF National Staff at [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com) to discover what special discounts our sponsors are able to offer you.

## **PLAYING SCHEDULE**

When making up playing schedules, keep in mind that the games may be played during the school year. With this in mind, avoid weekday games when drawing up the schedule. This means, with homework and extra school activities, there will be other demands on your players' time. A lengthy football schedule, plus practice time, can be difficult for your young athletes and parents.

Your volunteers will also be affected. A long-playing schedule deprives them of time with their families and other leisure activities. Both players and volunteers tire of long schedules because of the constant demand on their time. You may dampen their interest for football the following year. Stay within the game and practice schedules as explained in the Rules. Give yourself, your volunteers and your athletes' time to enjoy the football experience.

Once your playing schedule is set, one of your volunteers should be in charge of managing and implementing the schedule. The schedule keeper should contact all head coaches regularly. If games need to be rescheduled, this person will facilitate the rescheduling process. Organizations should have a rescheduling policy, particularly during bad weather months. Scheduling decisions should be based upon the scheduling policies of the organization.

## **THE FOOTBALL PLAYING RULES**

AYF supplies rulebooks for download at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) and the rulebooks are password protected. The AYF Football Rules are the high school rules (NFHS) of the state in which you play. AYF extends these rules with certain modifications. They are presented in the AYF Rules and Regulations. When local rules vary from AYF rules, they must be submitted to AYF Headquarters in writing, including a summary of the differences. Teams/associations/leagues/conferences that

are planning to participate in AYF regional and national competition must follow AYF Rules and Regulations as outlined in the Official AYF Rules and Regulations.

**In some cases, leagues/conferences adopt local rules. AYF will allow this only if the rules are more stringent than the AYF published rules. To avoid challenges and miscommunication, make sure all of your coaches and other volunteers are aware of your local, more stringent rules. Never assume that everyone knows the local rules. Have your rules meetings well before the season begins. Make sure everyone has a firm knowledge of both AYF rules and local rules.**

The Hearings and Appeals section of the manual may not cover your local rules. We advise you to set penalties for the violations of your own local rules.

## THE CHEERLEADING RULES - DURING GAMES AND COMPETITION

American Youth Cheer (AYC) supplies rulebooks for the cheer directors and head coaches of AYC Cheer Teams. They are presented in the AYC Rules and Regulations. During practice, games, and competitions, teams are encouraged to follow these rules for the sake of safety and consistency. However, local members that do not compete in inter-league AYC competitions may elect to follow previously established rules and guidelines providing the rules are more stringent than those of the United States All Star Federation (USASF)

When attending AYC Regional and National Cheerleading competitions, squads must follow the rules provided by AYC and the safety guidelines as outlined by the USASF and the AYC Rule Book. When cheer, dance and step teams from across the nation compete, there must be a standardized set of rules under which all teams comply. These standardized rules create an environment for fair competition and provide the safest environment and best practices for all youth cheer programs.

AYC provides competition divisions for all age levels and skill abilities. With a variety of ages and talent levels, distinctive competitive divisions exist. For example, highly skilled teams will not compete with novice teams. All divisions are outlined in the AYC Rules and Regulations.

View the AYC Rule Book and Competition Divisions at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com). Any rules that need further clarification may be discussed with the AYC National Cheer Director by emailing [cheer@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:cheer@americanyouthfootball.com).

## RECRUITMENT

### **Promotional Resources:**

Pre-designed images and promotional items can be accessed at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com). These files are intended for your use and may be downloaded and reproduced by a local printer. Images may be used for websites, emailing, presentations, posters, postcards, flyers etc.

### **Signage / Banners:**

Order AYF Banners/Signage: Write to [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com) to learn about the options.

Otherwise, AYF member organizations are permitted to use the AYF logo and AYF marks on locally designed and printed signage including posters and banners. The AYF logos can be downloaded at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com). Read and understand the Limited Use License so to avoid unauthorized use of AYF Trademarks.

See the [Logo Use](#) section in this manual for more details.

### **Recruitment/AYF Education Tools:**

There are a number of resources to help educate potential new members about AYF. The 'New Member Presentation' can be found at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com). This *Operations Manual* should also prove useful in educating potential members about the services and resources available to AYF members. The home site at [www.americanyouthfootball.com](http://www.americanyouthfootball.com) features past and current initiatives and should prove useful as a recruitment tool.

### **AYF National Recruitment Support:**

If you know of a local league/conference interested in joining AYF, it may be worthwhile to have an AYF national representative address the league's/conference's decision makers. Please contact Shannon Shy at [Shannon@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:Shannon@americanyouthfootball.com) to arrange a meeting either by phone, web conference, or in person.

#### **Recruitment Videos:**

Recruitment video playlist may serve valuable to show our top highlight videos. People like multimedia and may be able to relate to the experiences in the videos. [AYFs](#) Recruitment playlist can be found on the AYF YouTube Channel at [www.YouTube.com/ayftv](http://www.YouTube.com/ayftv).

### TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

American Youth Football, Inc. is a designated 501(c)(3) organization, which means that persons and companies who make donations or give gifts to the organization may claim a deduction in part of the value of their gift on their federal tax return. If you plan to solicit funds for your organization, we recommend that you get your letter of exemption from the U.S. Treasury Department indicating the tax-exempt status of your organization.

To do so, you have two alternatives. You may either:

- 1) File independently with the IRS and incur the cost and expense of individually seeking your own designation (it is recommended that you consult an attorney and an accountant to assist you in this process,) or
- 2) You may rely on AYF's designation as a central organization, by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Members of AYF are eligible to share in AYF's preferred tax-exempt designation as a Subordinate organization (also commonly referred to as the "tax exempt umbrella"). The process is simple and there are no additional fees. Visit [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) for more information.

**Individual organizations will still be responsible for filing their own tax return on Form 990 with the IRS.** Additionally, exemption from paying state sales taxes varies from state to state and is not automatically bestowed upon organizations that are exempt from federal tax. Your organization will need to apply with the proper state agency for exemption of state taxes.

Your organization must be established as a non-profit corporation to apply for federal tax-exempt designation. Consult with an attorney in setting up your corporation as a non-profit/ tax-exempt organization, or utilize this AYF service. Information can be found at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com).

### INSURANCE

AYF member organizations are obligated to protect their participants against injuries and the resulting medical bills. Insurance also helps defend volunteers against potentially devastating lawsuits. Having adequate insurance in place at the association and league/conference level helps to protect the Team, Association, League/Conference, and National organization, American Youth Football, Inc., in the event of a lawsuit arising from local play.

The AYF/AYC insurance requirements, which can be found in the Terms of Service Agreement, are as follows:

*I understand and agree that prior to the start of the season, our organization should purchase Accident and General Liability insurance either through the AYF insurance plan offered by Sadler Insurance via online or paper application or through a different provider that meets the minimum standards per the AYF/AYC Insurance Coverage Checklist that is incorporated by reference herein and can be found at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com). I also understand and agree that as a pre-condition of participation in the AYF/AYC regional or national championships, our organization must purchase Accident and General Liability insurance either through the AYF insurance plan offered by Sadler Insurance or through a different provider that meets the minimum standards per the AYF/AYC Insurance Coverage Checklist that is referenced above. Prospective members that purchase the AYF insurance plan through Sadler Insurance do not have to submit the completed and signed AYF/AYC Insurance Coverage Checklist*

Policy descriptions and minimum standards are provided for in the AYF/AYC Insurance Coverage.

#### **KEY ELEMENTS TO KEEP IN MIND**

**Accident Insurance:**

Pays covered medical bills on behalf of injured participants. Each organization must be covered by an Excess Accident policy with a medical limit of at least \$100,000 covering all players and staff members (ex: coaches, managers, umpires, scorekeepers, concession workers, field maintenance workers, etc.). It is not acceptable for each parent to provide individual evidence of health insurance for his or her child in lieu of an Accident policy.

**General Liability:**

Responds to covered lawsuits against the league/conference and its directors, officers, employees, and/or volunteers alleging that their negligence has resulted in bodily injury, property damage, personal injury (slander, libel, false imprisonment, invasion of privacy), or advertising injury to a spectator, participant, or other third party. This policy provides an attorney for legal defense and pays up to the policy limit in the event of settlement or adverse jury verdict.

Each organization must be covered by a General Liability policy with an “Each Occurrence” limit of at least \$1,000,000 combined single limits for bodily injury and property damage. The policy form must be “Occurrence” instead of “Claims Made” and must NOT contain any of the following unacceptable exclusions: Athletic Participants Exclusion, Competitive Cheer/Stunt/Pyramiding Exclusion, Sexual Abuse/Molestation Exclusion, Collapse of Temporary Structure Exclusion, Punitive Damages Exclusion, Assault & Battery Exclusion, or Contractual Liability Limitation. Furthermore, such General Liability policy should name American Youth Football, Inc. as an “Additional Insured.”

Note: The above requirements are automatically satisfied without any additional action being taken if the organization purchases Accident and General Liability coverage through Sadler & Company Insurance, the AYF/AYC endorsed insurance plan.

In addition, the following insurance policies are strongly recommended:

1. **Directors & Officers Liability** - responds to certain types of lawsuits against the organization and its directors, officers, employees and volunteers that are not covered by a General Liability policy. Examples of such potentially covered lawsuits include discrimination based on race, sex, age, handicap; wrongful suspension or termination of league personnel or players; and failure to follow your own rules or bylaws when making an administrative decision. The recommended limit is \$1,000,000.
2. **Crime** - protects your organization against a monetary loss caused by theft of money, securities, or other property (equipment, machinery, concession supplies, etc.) by dishonest volunteers. This includes forgery by an identifiable officer or volunteers. Coverage should also be provided for theft of money or securities by outsiders.
3. **Equipment** - protects for loss or damage to your equipment due to fire, theft, vandalism, windstorm, or other specified causes of loss. Items that can be covered include sports equipment, field maintenance equipment, concession stand equipment, concession stock, and small storage sheds.
4. **Additional Coverage** - some programs may also need to purchase Property Coverage for their buildings, Business Auto for their vehicles, and Workers’ Compensation in the event they are required to do so under state law. A local insurance agent should be contacted for more information and clarification.

MyAyf.com has an “Insurance & Risk Management” section to further educate on these matters and link to the AYF endorsed insurance provider.

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

In today’s litigation conscious society, just carrying good insurance is not enough. Catastrophic losses must be prevented before they occur and the incidence rates of medium and small losses must be reduced. The elimination and reduction of injuries will help the officially endorsed insurance program to maintain affordable rates. In addition, even if insurance is in force, litigation is not in the best interests of anyone. It can cause your local program to receive a “black eye” in the media. Also, pretrial motions, depositions, meetings with attorneys, etc. can be an emotionally draining process.

Please visit MyAyf.com that contains informative articles and risk management programs for your implementation. The following reports and programs are included:

- Sample League Safety Program – keys in on safety in your supervision, instruction, facilities, equipment, sports injury care, use of autos, etc.
- Sample Waiver/Release Forms
- Waiver/Release Forms: Are they worth the paper they are written on?
- AYF/AYC position statement on child abuse/molestation
- Simplified Child Abuse/Molestation Protection Program—keys in on education, warning signs, policies that can be implemented to make an occurrence less likely, how to respond to allegations of child abuse/molestation, screening and background checks, disqualification criteria, and contains a sample “Volunteer Application.”
- What you need to know about criminal background checks

These easy to implement risk management programs can have a major impact on the elimination and reduction of injuries and claims in your local program.

## ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION, CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

### **Incorporation:**

American Youth Football, Inc. programs are not required to be incorporated. However, the advantages of being incorporated include having a formal structure, stability, financial control, and tax benefits. In addition, patrons and potential sponsors will feel more secure with the knowledge that an incorporated organization is controlling their donations.

Incorporated organizations can own real estate and property. These assets are not affected when people leave the program, as can happen in unincorporated programs. Furthermore, incorporation can shield officers, coaches and other volunteers from personal liability that is associated with accidents and injuries. However, individuals who are directly responsible for mishaps may still be held liable for their inaction and their actions. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the merits of incorporation be discussed with an attorney.

### **Articles of Incorporation:**

Leagues and Associations need Articles of Incorporation (for incorporated organizations) or a Constitution (for non incorporated organizations) and By-Laws to govern their organizations. You should, of course, incorporate as a non-profit organization. We strongly urge that you consult with an attorney and discuss your Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By-Laws, as well as the incorporation of your organization.

Laws differ from state to state and you should know what these laws are before you incorporate and adjust them in this document. The articles of incorporation/constitution should reflect a clause that your corporation will carry on a program of football and cheerleading in accordance with the rules and regulations of American Youth Football, a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the state of Ohio.

The articles of incorporation follow state statutory requirements, both this and a constitution will typically cover fundamental items and provisions while the by-laws provide for operational and organizational processes and how the association or league/conference and its rules are to be administered. For example, the articles of incorporation/constitution would specify the officers' positions to be filled, while the by-laws would reflect voting procedures and how the offices would be handled. Sometimes all articles are combined into the constitution. There are also organizations that use one (the constitution) or the other (the by-laws).

Once completed, a copy of the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By-laws of the League/Conference, (not Associations) shall be sent to AYF Headquarters to be placed on file and will be available to the League/Conference in the future. Through the years, when amendments and revisions are made, changes should be added to your file by submitting an up-dated copy of the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By-Laws.

## ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

### ARTICLE I NAME/REGISTERED OFFICE

The name of this corporation shall be: [\_\_\_\_\_]. The corporation's registered office is located at: [INSERT STREET ADDRESS, ALSO WITH ZIP CODE IF SAME IS APPROPRIATE FOR MAILING ADDRESS (MAILING ADDRESS -- INCLUDING THOSE WITH P.O. BOXES -- MAY BE SHOWN VIA PARENTHETICAL ADDITION)].

## **ARTICLE II PURPOSE**

This corporation is organized exclusively for PROMOTING AMATEUR ATHLETICS, within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now enacted or hereafter amended, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that also qualify as Section 501(c)(3) exempt organizations. To this end, the corporation shall subscribe to and operate as a subordinate and member of American Youth Football, an Ohio non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. All funds, whether income or principal, and whether acquired by gift or contribution or otherwise, shall be devoted to said purposes.

## **ARTICLE III LIMITATIONS**

At all times the following shall operate as conditions restricting the operations and activities of the corporation:

1. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to any member of the corporation not qualifying as exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now enacted or hereafter amended, nor to any Director or officer of the corporation, nor to any other private persons, excepting solely such reasonable compensation that the corporation shall pay for services actually rendered to the corporation, or allowed by the corporation as a reasonable allowance for authorized expenditures incurred on behalf of the corporation;
2. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall constitute the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, or any initiative or referendum before the public, and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including by publication or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office; and
3. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now enacted or hereafter amended.
4. The corporation shall not lend any of its assets to any officer or director of this corporation [unless such loan program is regularly conducted as part of the activities of the organization and the qualification of the individual to participate in same is determined by a panel comprised solely of non-Board members, or guarantee to any person the payment of a loan by an officer or director of this corporation.

## **ARTICLE IV DIRECTORS/MEMBERS**

The management and affairs of the corporation shall be at all times under the direction of a Board of Directors, whose operations in governing the corporation shall be defined by statute and by the corporation's by-laws. The corporation may (but need not) have voting members, and such membership, if any, and classes thereof, shall be as defined in the corporation's bylaws. No Director or member shall have any right, title, or interest in or to any property of the corporation. [OPTIONAL: The corporation's first Board of Directors shall be comprised of the following natural persons: {List Directors' Names, and optionally, Addresses}]

## **ARTICLE V DEBT OBLIGATIONS AND PERSONAL LIABILITY**

No member, officer or Director of this corporation shall be personally liable for the debts or obligations of this

corporation of any nature whatsoever, nor shall any of the property of the members, officers or Directors be subject to the payment of the debts or obligations of this corporation.

## ARTICLE VI DISSOLUTION

Upon the time of dissolution of the corporation, assets shall be distributed by the Board of Directors, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all debts, obligations, liabilities, costs and expenses of the corporation, for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

## ARTICLE VII INCORPORATOR

The incorporator(s) of this corporation is (are):

[insert name(s) and address(es) of individual(s) incorporating entity -- you only need one, but may have more if you wish!!]

The undersigned incorporator(s) certify(ies) both that she/he/they execute(s) these Articles for the purposes herein stated, and that by such execution, she/he/they affirm(s) the understanding that should any of the information in these Articles be intentionally or knowingly misstated, she/he/they is/are subject to the criminal penalties for perjury set forth in Minnesota Statutes 609.48 as if this document had been executed under oath.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>
---------------------

### ARTICLE I - NAME

This League/Conference (organization or corporation) shall be known as: \_\_\_\_\_

(Insert your organization name) hereinafter referred to as the "League/Conference" ("Organization" or "Corporation"), a member of AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, Inc.

### ARTICLE II - STATEMENT OF POLICY

*Section 1:* It shall be the policy of this program to conduct activities for the benefit of the physical health and moral welfare of the young people for whom it is organized. All matters of policy shall be determined on that basis.

*Section 2:* No person who is a volunteer or employed by this organization or connected to it in any way shall receive any personal financial benefit beyond the reasonable value of products and services rendered in carrying out the functions of this organization.

*Section 3:* It shall be the policy of the organization to prohibit any direct advertising of alcoholic beverages or tobacco products in connection with the organization or any of its programs.

*Note: You may choose to add more sections to this article. Remember you may re-word or change any section or article to suit your purposes. This is just a guide to help you get started or reorganized.*

## **ARTICLE III - PURPOSE**

*Section 1:* The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and supervise the playing of football and cheerleading under specified rules and regulations.

*Section 2:* Its further purpose is to obtain suitable and adequate financial support for the organization and to own, lease or otherwise provide suitable playing facilities and equipment for these purposes.

## **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

*Section 1:* Requirements for membership in the program concerning volunteers, parents, team sponsors, coaches and other interested adults shall be specified.

## **ARTICLE V - ORGANIZATION DIRECTORS**

*Section 1:* The number of directors to be elected should be specified as well as the eligibility requirements, time of election and term of office and provisions for filling vacancies and recall of directors.

*Section 2:* Describe the responsibilities and duties of the Board of Directors and the financial regulations pertaining to purchasing power, bill and check signees, and any other activity needed to make your organization function properly.

## **ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS**

*Section 1:* The officers of the organization shall be President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer (others as you see fit or as needed such as 2nd Vice President, etc.). This article should also include the requirements, time of election and terms of office, as well as provisions for filling vacancies and recall (basically a repeat of Article V, Section 1).

*Note:* This article is one of the most important in your constitution. Make sure your officers are elected by the membership and not appointed for full terms by the Board itself. This is regarded as “self-perpetuating” and in the long run, could lead to problems in the future.

## **ARTICLE VII - GOVERNMENT**

*Section 1:* The governance of this organization shall be under the direct supervision of the officers and board of directors.

*Section 2:* All rules governing the playing of football or cheerleading, the legality of players and cheerleaders and related questions shall be in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, Inc., with such modifications adopted by the board of directors of the organization and approved by AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, Inc.

## **ARTICLE VIII - BY-LAWS**

*Section 1:* Any By-Laws, not consistent with this Constitution, embodying additional provisions for the governance of this organization, shall be adopted and may be amended by the membership of this organization.

## **ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS**

*Section 1:* This constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the organization membership at an annual meeting of the organization membership, or a special meeting of the organization called for that purpose.

Section 2: Proper notice of \_\_\_\_\_ days shall be given for special meetings to consider amendments.

## HEARINGS AND APPEALS

Your organization's By-Laws will generally govern your organization's Hearing and Appeals process. In the event that your By-Laws are silent on a Hearing and Appeals process your organization may choose to adopt a Hearing and Appeals process similar to the procedure that follows.

From time to time, your organization will be called on to resolve disputes between Associations, individual teams, coaches, and yes, those disputes that concern your players and cheerleaders. We cannot begin to point out the many incidents that you will have to handle, but we hope this will guide you in settling the issues.

Keep the words "DUE PROCESS" in mind as you read. In other words, everyone is "due his day in court." A proper Hearing guarantees this. If a person is not satisfied with results of a Hearing, he may Appeal those results. If you follow these guidelines as closely as possible, you may avoid problems later. It will save you time and money and above all that, could keep you out of a court of law. No matter the status of the individual seeking a hearing (e.g., board member, coach, other volunteer, or player), ensure that each person gets DUE PROCESS.

Most courts are reluctant to involve themselves in youth organization disputes. One way they get around the matter is simple: Did the complainant break the rules of the organization? If so, did that person get a fair hearing within the organization's Hearings and Appeals apparatus? Not always, but usually this settles the issue. So, you can see how important it is that a person "has his day in court" at your level. A court, if asked, will probably intervene if there is any evidence that problems were not handled properly in a fair manner.

## HOW A HEARING STARTS

Before anything takes place, a hearing board must be appointed. No one should serve on this board who may have an interest or advantage in the result of the hearing. Additionally, if the hearing is a first level appeal of a disciplinary action taken by an association or league/conference official who has conducted an investigation and determined that disciplinary action was appropriate, that official should not be in charge of conducting the hearing. The hearing board must have a minimum of three members and may have as many members as you deem necessary to conduct a hearing as long as the total is kept at an odd number. One person will be the chairperson.

A written notice will be delivered to the person(s) charged. It notifies them of the hearing, date and time, and a list of all the charges against them.

The notice must also advise that the charged person(s) has a right to be represented by an attorney or any person they choose. You may also want an attorney on hand for guidance for your board.

After the notice is served, the charged person(s) has seven days to respond. In the interest of time, the charged party may want to waive this seven-day period.

The charged parties may have witnesses and any documents to support their defense. They have the right to cross-examine any witness against them and review any evidence brought forth against them.

## CONDUCTING A HEARING

All hearings will be private. They may not be open to the public, and especially not the media.

Witnesses will not be present in the hearing room. They will be called in when their testimony is needed.

Proceedings must be recorded to ensure that testimony will be exact and not misconstrued.

## HEARING PROCEDURE

The charging party is the first to appear, along with their witnesses and any documentation pertinent to their case. Afterwards, cross-examination is allowed to take place.

Next, the charged party is heard with their witnesses along with any documentation pertinent to their case. The same procedures take place as described above.

After both parties have been heard, they make their summations in the same order that they were heard. The hearing board has the right to ask questions and examine documents and witnesses.

If attorneys are representing either side, instruct them that they are under the jurisdiction of the hearing board and will follow the same procedures you have explained. Do not let the hearing board be bullied by legal “mumbo jumbo.” You may note objections, but your board is in charge and you are bound by your own procedures as long as everyone is treated fairly.

When the hearing is finished and the hearing board feels that it can reach a decision, than do so. Make sure that your discussions and deliberations are done in private. The decision should be put in writing following your verbal decision. If an “on the spot” decision is not forthcoming, then a written decision must be done and delivered to each party no later than 10 days after the hearing.

## WHEN TO APPEAL A DECISION

If your hearing is conducted at the Association level, you may be able to appeal to the League/conference hearing board.

If you feel, and can prove, that you did not get due process at the association level, or that some of the members were a party of interest, or a written decision was never applied, or that new evidence has been found, or that you didn't receive proper notification, then you probably have basis for an appeal.

An appeal should be filed within two weeks following the hearing. There is no appeal to American Youth Football, Inc. AYF Headquarters, at its sole discretion, will only be involved if it is of national interest.

## OFFENSES THAT WARRANT HEARINGS

All offenses involving players and cheerleaders should be handled at the Association or team level. Prudence must be used in handling these types of offenses. Breaking team rules, fighting, breakdown of discipline and misuse of property or equipment are usually grounds for dismissal. These rules and penalties should be explained to the parents and guardians well before the season starts (in August). If the problem is more serious than these types of offenses, then, of course, the player or cheerleader is entitled to a hearing.

In all procedures of this type, the parent(s) or legal guardian must be present and the child has full rights of due process. In any case, and we repeat, **penalties for violations should be known by all participants (parents, players, etc.) beforehand.** All participants shall know what is expected.

Offenses by adults can be another matter. If the offense is criminal, the problem should be referred to the proper authorities. A party charged with this type of offense is temporarily suspended from the organization until proper resolution is done. If the person is found innocent, he or she can, and should, be reinstated.

Officers, coaches and any other adult personnel are considered hard working individuals who give much of their time. Nevertheless, things do happen and offenses take place. Examples include but are not limited to the following: running up scores, cheating, baiting crowds, verbal and physical threats, and failure to play all players within the parameters of AYF rules and regulations, fighting with other adults and, finally, setting a poor example for the children. These are considered teaching by instructing them in unsafe and bad football habits. There are probably a few more that you can come up with, but these are some standout offenses.

Set minimum and maximum penalties for each of the offenses and act accordingly. Describe these penalties at coaches' meetings so that there is a clear understanding of what is expected of everyone and what will happen if there are violations.

### SUMMARY ACTION

If there is a violation of rules, or any situation that needs to be terminated immediately, summary action takes place, and the offender is suspended until a hearing can take place. The highest-ranking officer (president or commissioner) should be the one to exercise summary action.

### IN SUMMATION

If you are ever in a situation whereby you feel that you need help in conducting a hearing, AYF will give you further advice. However, remember that AYF will not intervene in any hearing or appeal unless it is in its interest.

## FINANCE, FUNDRAISING AND BUDGETS

The common 'organization treasury,' is a financial principle that is vital for the success and stability of your organization. It should be a written policy that all moneys collected under the banner of, and on behalf of the organization, must be placed in the treasury of the organization. The source and amount of all income must be recorded. All expenses should be paid by the treasurer via check, when possible for good record keeping practices.

The oversight of finances must be in the hands of the board of directors or delegated to a finance committee under the direction of the organization's treasurer. A sensible budget and controlled spending are vital to the success of your organization. Below are some sample budgets and itemized costs to consider when planning your financial considerations.

### CONTROLLED SPENDING

Successful financing of your organization is determined by controlled spending, as well as the ability to raise funds. All purchases for the organization must be in the hands of two or three directors or a designated person in charge of purchasing. Notify your suppliers and vendors of your purchasing policies. An office supply store can furnish you with purchase order forms. Use these forms, properly numbered, when making purchases. These purchase order forms must accompany their appropriate invoice.

### PLANNED SPENDING

The first step is establishing a budget. In an effort to curb spending, stay within the parameters of a planned budget. Spending should be planned, controlled and authorized only after the needs have been determined for your organization for a long-range period. Unforeseen circumstances could arise that may require additional fund raising. The goal is to control spending internally and NOT through an outside source.

### SAMPLE BUDGETS

Sample Team, Association and League/Conference Budgets can be found at MyAyf.com and at the end of this manual. Items for consideration when creating your budgets, include insurance, uniforms, equipment for football and cheer, coaches training, background checks, field equipment, facility rental, travel fees, advertising and officials. Budgets depend on which level of organization is responsible for what fees and equipment. For example, many leagues/conferences collect fees to provide referees while associations are responsible for purchasing individual player and field equipment.

Organizations cannot exist nor thrive without funds. Logically, you must raise funds to reach your spending needs. "Passing the hat" is not going to do it; neither are the players and cheerleaders' sign-up fees, nor concession stand revenue. These sources of revenue will certainly help, but they will not cover the needs of the organization over a period of time.

What steps will you need to take to expand your financial situation? Fund-raising, of course!

**Chairman:** Identify a dependable action person, not a follower, to lead each fundraiser. This person should not be burdened by other duties. The chief assistant can be a leader-in-training who can assume responsibility for another project, or become the chairman the following year. Leadership can become a rotating duty and will ultimately lead to fresh ideas.

**Financial Record Keeper:** Identify a dependable record keeper who can maintain accurate financial records, particularly monies collected. This person must know what records the Treasurer needs and have, and how the records should be organized and recorded.

**Objectives:** It should be made clear in all promotional efforts why your fundraising effort is being conducted. Let the community know that the funds are to be used for operating expenses, new equipment, concession stand renovations, the purchase of property, or field house construction. This may find its way into the hands of people who could become major patrons or benefactors.

**Goal:** Establish a financial goal, a starting time and a finishing deadline. A drawn-out effort causes volunteers to lose motivation and their sense of purpose. The financial goal and time are key points around which people can focus their efforts.

**Publicity:** A publicity person informs the participants in your organization of all events with eye-catching flyers that can be distributed by the coaches, parents and players. Whether the flyers are posted around town or placed under car windshield wipers at games, they should communicate the details of the fundraising drive: who, what, when, where, why, how, and how much.

**Public service announcements:** (PSAs) should be delivered to the local media close to the date of the fundraising event. PSAs should be on your organization's letterhead, double-spaced, one page, and concise. Each one should include: (1) all basic information regarding that event, (2) purpose of the event, (3) how funds will be used, (4) a short line about the organization, and (5) name of the contact person with telephone number, e-mail and contact time.

**Progress Reports:** Keep everyone informed about the progress of the drive. One of the best incentives is to post a chart detailing the progress; for example, a giant "thermometer."

**Management:** The job of each fundraising chairperson is to identify jobs to be done, to assign or delegate responsibilities, to keep all workers on task and on time and to be prepared to step in when unexpected issues arise. In the case of larger projects, it is important to keep a calendar so that everyone is aware of the timetable and deadlines. Meetings may be called as needed.

**Rewards:** Some fundraising companies provide product or financial rewards for top "sales" people, whether they are youngsters or adults. These are particularly good incentives for youngsters or teams. Consider hosting a special event such as a picnic or flag football game for adult volunteers.

**Suggested Fundraisers:** There are many ways to raise funds. There are tag sale days, house-to-house collection, car washes, ad books, yearbooks, coupon books, dinners, pancake breakfasts, product sales and of course, the old reliable concession stand. There are also bake sales, barbecues, team decals, candy sales and raffles. Individual and team photos are a popular annual event for which your organization receives a percentage of revenue generated. Team up with other local associations to organize a kick-off football jamboree where all members agree to split the ticket revenue. This is usually held a week before the regular season starts. Bumper Stickers and organization stickers are also good items. These can be sold all through the football season and available at the concession stand.

Successful fundraisers involve many people, either as organizers or contributors. They include the athletes, their parents, coaches, organization officers, volunteers, sponsors and the community.

## AYF FUNDRAISING RESOURCES

AYF has partnered with extremely reputable fundraising companies to assist our members in fundraising campaigns. Visit [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) for more information.

## SPONSORSHIPS

This represents sources of funding that can be applied to individual teams, associations and leagues/conferences, even AYF Regions and the National body. Businesses generally like to have their name associated with youth activities, especially organized teams with credibility in the community. Sponsorship works simply by a business paying a flat fee that covers a percentage of the operating expenses of the property/unit.

Sponsorships with alcohol, tobacco and sex-related businesses are prohibited for youth activities. Form a committee that can investigate and negotiate sponsorship opportunities for your organization; this should be a year round pursuit.

Business sponsors like their names in print, both on the field, on-line and especially on the sports pages of your local newspapers. They like to see their ads in your souvenir program and they may sponsor your scoreboard with their name or logo on it. They want people to know that they support a youth football or cheer organization that helps the boys and girls in the community. To become a more attractive option for sponsors, suggest that the sponsor create a 'special offer' or for your participants and/or parents, so you can directly drive business back to them. Find more resources, customizable presentations, solicitation letters, advice and helpful hints for acquiring and managing sponsorships at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com).

AYF's National sponsors are also committed to supporting your organization by offering Giving Back programs, scholarships, and the lowest available price on their products (rarely by cash sponsorship).

## PLAYER SIGN UP FEES

Most youth organizations charge players and cheerleaders fees for annual registration. Fees range from \$10 to \$350 per child. However, it is FORBIDDEN TO DENY A CHILD THE RIGHT TO SIGN UP AND PLAY BECAUSE OF THE INABILITY TO PAY THE FEE. Aside from violating the mission of AYF, you could develop a legal problem.

Many organizations run ticket raffles that are equal to the fees. This offsets the problem of who can or cannot pay. It is fair and equitable and, of course, it is another fundraiser for your organization.

## AYF INITIATIVES

### GIVING BACK

Giving Back is the mission of AYF

"The Circle of Giving Back" represents spreading the AYF mission to the entire national AYF family so the giving 'goes-round between members', and ultimately completed by professional athletes giving back to their youth football communities. AYF proudly recognizes these individuals on The AYF Wall of Honor.

**Support Network:** AYF collaborates to create a network of giving back and a support system for the football communities to lean on. With the help of sponsors and partners, AYF has distributed over \$15 million in grants, scholarship money, athletic equipment and apparel to deserving member communities. When donations/grants programs become available, AYF works with conference administrators, regional representatives and state diplomats to distribute donations. When grants are available, applications will be posted at [MyAYF.com](http://MyAYF.com) and details communicated via the E-Huddle.

**Sponsors:** All AYF sponsors are required to participate in AYF Giving Back Initiatives to keep the mission of AYF strong. Among the largest initiatives was the collaboration with Food banks across the nation to help Kraft Foods with the largest nationwide program to Fight Hunger and help donate 25 million meals to those in need.

**Community Outreach:** AYF strongly encourages associations to reach out to local NFL community teams. NFL players, both former and current, continue to do great things for AYF communities. To promote positive football role models, AYF celebrates these players and their contributions to the community. If a player is helping out your program, notify AYF so that we can give credit where credit is due! AYF awards an NFL Player of the Year and the supporter of your organization may be a great candidate for this recognition. Find local NFL community outreach affiliates at MyAyf.com

**AYF family unites:** When disaster strikes in the US or its territories, when an AYF organization has been affected - the AYF family comes together. Leagues have quickly responded by coordinating clothing and water drives, donating equipment, and collecting funds. This is truly symbolic of the AYF mission of Giving Back and the connectedness of the AYF family.

**Contact/Help:** Contact AYF if and when you are able to help. Every day there are hundreds of programs in dire need of equipment and uniforms, if your organization has any old football or cheer items, donate it to an AYF organization in need, contact AYF at [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com) and our Giving Back Coordinator will do the rest.

If you are looking for donations or equipment aids, you may apply at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com)

## GRANT PROGRAMS

Granting agencies occasionally offer grant programs for youth football organizations. When these opportunities become available, AYF will post information and application forms at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com).

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is an organization that annually accepts Grant proposals from AYF organizations and awards matching grants to provide financing to improve the quality and accessibility of local football fields.

All AYF members are encouraged to approach local municipalities and even state representatives for grant opportunities. All youth football organizations are inherently succeeding in important government initiatives, for example: fighting obesity, anti-gang, community betterment (through giving-back), anti-drug, positive adult role-models and many more. You can find useful solicitation letters, presentations at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) that will help you appeal to granting agencies or individual donors.

## AWARDS & RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

### **The AYF Hall of Fame:**

Each year, AYF inducts a class of special individuals into the AYF Volunteer Hall Of Fame. Inductees have served their youth football communities for more than 25 years. This is the highest honor that AYF bestows on an individual and is one of AYF's most prized initiatives.

### **The Alumni Ring of Honor:**

Participants in AYF programs who go on to play football in the college or the professional ranks are celebrated and added to our Alumni Ring of Honor. This program is also meant to celebrate their youth coaches and the programs that instilled in them the drive to make it to the next level.

### **Academic Achievement Alliance:**

The Academic Achievement Alliance is AYF's scholastic recognition program. AYF offers this program to all players and cheerleaders. The class of the team is unimportant. What is important is the ability of the child to have a 98 percent or better academic average and be a good participant in school as well as on the field and in the community.

AYF accepts nominations on behalf of member organizations to celebrate the top scholar athletes from across the country. Each association/league/conference is expected to qualify and nominate their top scholar athletes and then submit the qualified applicants to AYF using the AAA nomination form found at MyAyf.com. League/Conference/Association selections must be submitted to AYF by November 30 following the nomination season. Every selected AAA All-American will be sent a certificate (or it will be sent to an organizational representative for presentation), winners names will be posted at [www.americanyouthfootball.com](http://www.americanyouthfootball.com), and outstanding All-Americans will be awarded scholarship funds ranging from \$250-\$1,500.

Can you imagine one of your players or cheerleaders being named to an All-American Team? Imagine the impact it would have on your community? Wouldn't this perk up potential supporters and sponsors for your organization? We cannot imagine any higher reward to youth football organizations than to have one or more of its children named to the AYF All-American Football or Cheerleading Squad.

#### **Academic Team of the Year:**

The Academic Team of the Year is an award reserved for the AYF/AYC team with the highest cumulative GPA. This team is sent an award and celebrated throughout the AYF community.

#### **Volunteer of the Year:**

The Volunteer of the Year award is reserved for an individual who has gone above and beyond in exemplifying the mission of AYF; "Giving Back to their community on and off the field and providing an outstanding role model for AYF participants in their community and nationwide."

#### **Giving Back Organization of the Year:**

The Giving Back Organization of the Year is an award for the youth football organization that displays the most outstanding act of Giving Back to their community or to another AYF community in need.

#### **Coach of the Year: Football and Cheer:**

The AYF and AYC Coaches of the year are those who display the highest degree of commitment and encouragement to their teams and players. These are also outstanding members of the AYF community.

All nomination forms are available at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com).

## EQUIPMENT & FOOTBALLS

AYF has teamed up with national sponsorship partners who put together annual packages for AYF and AYC members. The following is a basic description of what these packages entail.

#### **Helmets and Shoulder Pads:**

Riddell has the most advanced line of helmets and shoulder pads for youth football. Riddell also is a premier outlet for field equipment and has discount packages for youth organizations. Riddell representatives are available to meet with you or attend your organizational meetings. Reps can help you, take your equipment inventory, and fill your equipment needs within your budget.

#### **Equipment Reconditioning:**

A local Riddell representative is also the source for equipment reconditioning. Reconditioning is crucially important to the longevity and protective quality of football equipment. AYF recommends reconditioning helmets every year. To schedule a meeting with a representative please contact [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com).

#### **Footballs:**

The AYF Sanctioned football manufacturer is Wilson®. AYF strongly recommends using an AYF Wilson football (leather or composite) during the regular season games. As the exclusive ball of the postseason, AYF requires the use of an AYF logoed Wilson football during all AYF-sanctioned tournament and postseason play. This includes regional tournaments and the American Youth Football and Cheer National Championships. A team can play with their own game ball ONLY if it is an AYF Wilson Football; if teams do not bring their own AYF Wilson Game Ball, one will provided at game time.

The following is the recommended size breakdown per team level. To order official AYF Wilson Footballs - visit [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com).

Division	Ball Size
Instructional	Wilson K2
Cadet	Wilson K2
Jr. PeeWee - PeeWee	Wilson TDJ
Jr. Midgets	Wilson TDY
10U	Wilson TDJ
11-12U	Wilson TDJ
13-14U	Wilson TDY
15U	Wilson TDS

**Donations:**

If your organization has any old equipment please consider, donating it to an AYF/AYC league/conference in need. Contact us at [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com) and we will find a deserving recipient for your generous donation! Or, if your league/conference is in dire need of an equipment donation, please let us know.

**FOOTBALL & CHEER UNIFORMS**

**Football Uniforms:**

AYF works with various brands/dealers to create the most competitive priced youth uniforms available for AYF organizations. AYF partners offer organizations both custom and non-custom uniforms options at competitive pricing. Contact [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com) for details.

**Cheer Uniforms:**

TeamLeader Uniforms is the Official Cheer Uniform Company of American Youth Cheer. TeamLeader was founded in 1999 and remains #1 with the largest selection of Uniform Packages in the cheer industry. TeamLeader is a leading supplier to youth leagues, schools and colleges across the nation. Exceptional Quality, Service & Delivery is what makes TeamLeader a great partner for AYF. TeamLeader is committed to partnering with AYF by featuring exclusive AYF Uniform Packages to all AYF cheer teams providing the BEST VALUE for members. They will even place AYF patches directly on your uniforms. Call: 1-877-365-7555 - (be sure to mention you are with AYF).

**APPAREL PROGRAMS**

ShopAYF.com: To order AYF personalized and customized team wear, fan wear, practice gear, coaches gear, or Official licensed AYF and AYF apparel for individuals or for teams, visit [ShopAYF.com](http://ShopAYF.com). Here you will find the ONLY AUTHORIZED AYF LICENSED apparel available. Any other apparel bearing the AYF logo has been illegally manufactured.

**PERFORMANCE TRAINING**

**Football Players: CAMP AYF XPerience - Xtreme Procision**

AYF has partnered with Xtreme Procision the concept of Former NFL ALL Pro Lavar Arrington. AYF XPerience camps will be help in various AYF Cities each year as well as XP training sessions at the AYF National Championships each year. For more information go to [www.ayfxp.com](http://www.ayfxp.com) where you can find discounts on Under Armour Apparel, Uniforms, and XP Training Equipment is for Sale.

**Cheerleaders: AYF Cheer Camps**

AYF is partnered withEDGE to give AYF girls and coaches the safest training available. EDGE instructors will come to your community and facilitate the nation’s best cheer camps for your organization. EDGE camps foster a teambuilding environment where squad bonds are formed and memories are made. These camps are specially priced for AYF members and AYF organizations can use the camps as a fundraiser. Contact [cheer@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:cheer@americanyouthfootball.com) to schedule a camp!

## PERMITTED AYF LOGO USAGE

AYF grants member organizations a Limited Use License, this license allows AYF organizations to use the AYF Marks on paper goods and online only; only on office supplies, business cards, identification cards, marketing materials, including: posters, banners, pamphlets, flyers and web-sites etc. Members may also use the AYF Marks on awards and banners to be displayed at games, meetings and competitions. The AYF Marks may not be used in any other way by your organization or any of your agents and/or affiliates.

The Limited Use License and downloadable AYF logos and images can be accessed at MyAyf.com.

## PROHIBITED AYF LOGO USAGE

AYF Marks may NOT be used on any apparel, including but not limited to: t-shirts, sweatshirts, jerseys, hats, bags, pants, shorts, football and cheer uniforms. Any apparel embellished with an AYF or AYC logo or name that is not supplied directly from SHOPAYF.com and/or retail partners are a violation of AYF Trademark. (Find AYF partners on AYF websites).

Any unauthorized use of the Marks or violation of the Limited Use License shall result in cancellation of membership and shall require the immediate forfeiture of the item bearing the Mark in addition to any and all value received for the item bearing the Marks. AYF vigorously defends its trademarks and will prosecute any violation of its intellectual property.

Members can refer to the AYF Members Terms of Service Agreement to read about their rights and obligations pertaining to the use of AYF Marks.

### BEWARE! AYF Marks Restriction

No AYF/AYC organization, ie: region/league/conference/association/team, nor any sporting goods dealer/retailer is permitted to sell, print, and/or embellish any kind of apparel with the AYF Marks including AYF or AYC Logos or the name American Youth Football™ (unless expressly permitted in writing by President, Joe Galat). Apparel with AYF Marks can ONLY be bought via shopayf.com, direct from American Youth Football. Other apparel with AYF Marks has been produced illegally and should not be supported by any AYF members. There are plenty of ways to get AYF and league/conference customized apparel; any unauthorized printing, selling, or distributing of AYF branded apparel will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

## AYF & AYC PATCHES

AYF patches are affixed to the AYF apparel available for purchase at www.ShopAYF.com. Members should request the addition of AYF/AYC patches on uniforms or apparel when ordered directly from AYF and AYC partners. They are the only vendors that are licensed to produce AYF patches and permitted to affix them to apparel and/or uniforms.

Annually, AYF and AYC patches are distributed to all participant teams/squads of the National Championships.

AYF Patches are available for purchase at Shopayf.com. Producing AYF logo patches is not permitted by any AYF member organization.

## EVENTS

### Regional Meetings

AYF regional chairman will conduct regional meetings. The frequency of these meetings differs by region. AYF league/conference level leaders are strongly encouraged to sit on their regional committee and have a representative attend all regional meetings to ensure that they have representation in the region. Regional representatives contact information can be found at MyAyf.com.

## Regional Championships

Regional championships are played in the weeks leading up to and/or on Thanksgiving weekend. Each region is responsible for scheduling their regional championship; and therefore, dates vary accordingly. The top ranked team/s in each division from each regional championship will qualify to play in the American Youth Football & Cheer National Championships. Contact your regional representative to find out more about regional events. Once event details are confirmed, they will be posted at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) and announced in the *E-Huddle* Newsletter.

Please note all tournament leagues/conferences that wish to participate in regional competition, must first be approved by the National commissioners.

## National Leadership Meetings

AYF holds an annual national meeting for both football and cheer so that league/conference presidents and regional representatives alike can review the season and discuss the season ahead and the direction of AYF and its regions. This is an important forum where regions are invited to voice their opinions for the betterment of the national community. League/conference administrators will be emailed an invitation to these meetings.

## National Championships

AYF's premier annual event is the American Youth Football and Cheer National Championship. The championships are held in early December. Teams/squads in all of AYF and AYC divisions compete for national titles, making this the largest football event in the world. AYF also hosts an Invitational Tournament in the National Mitey Mite Division and 8 9 year old All American Division. AYF and AYC hosts the contender division, the conference all-star divisions and international division at the championships. Details on the championships can be found at [ayfchampionships.com](http://ayfchampionships.com).

The AYF National Championships are more affordable than other youth football and cheer tournaments. AYF works hard to keep the associated costs low for event participants and reserves specially priced hotel room blocks, offers discounts on rental cars, attraction tickets, and local restaurants. AYF also has a travel grant program to assist travelling teams. Tournament league/conferences are recommended to start fundraising in the pre-season and set up a travel fund. It is also advised that league/conferences book flights early to accommodate late qualifying teams. Groups can make arrangements with airlines to assign passenger names close to the travel date; this is usually the best way to cut the cost of travelling to the national championships.

## The Conference All-Star Division at the National Championships

The conference all-star teams are built in the post-season by AYF conferences. These teams are made up of exemplary players whose regular season teams did not qualify to compete at the National Championships. The conference all-star division is an opportunity to give top athletes in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the opportunity to compete on a national level and experience the excitement of the championship event. Conferences should contact [football@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:football@americanyouthfootball.com) for information on participation.

## National All-Star Game/All-Star Weekend

The AYF ALL-Star game is run in the post season to highlight model athletes in the final year of their AYF/AYC program. Following the AYF post-season, 60 football players and up to 30 cheerleaders are invited to compete in a major stadium in the AYF ALL STAR GAME. AYF and AYC All-Stars are selected by coaches and administrators based on their on-field and classroom performance.

The goal of All-Star weekend is to reward a group of exemplary student athletes and give them a glimpse of the opportunities ahead; it is also an occasion to celebrate a group of outstanding coaches from across the nation. The weekend is packed full of great experiences for the selected coaches, players, and cheerleaders. Footage from past All-Star games can be viewed at [Youtube.com/ayftv](http://Youtube.com/ayftv) and details from past and future events are posted on [our](#) websites.

### All-Star Selection

Conferences must nominate their outstanding athletes and coaches. The nomination procedure can be found at [ayfchampionships.com](http://ayfchampionships.com). Nominating organizations must be a National/Tournament member of AYF. The All Star Selection committee will review all nominations.

### Special AYF/AYC Events

AYF runs special events throughout the year. For example, the Future Bowl was played as part of the Super bowl festivities and features an AYF team taking on another team coached by a celebrity or professional athlete. Some of these events are high profile, others are low-key, but all offer a once in a lifetime experience. As AYF/AYC plans events, they will be announced in our *E-Huddle* newsletter as well as other means of communication.

### Bowl Games

Some of your teams have had a good season. You would like to reward them and show them how much you appreciate their hard-won efforts. Why not consider letting them play a bowl game? You can travel to another town or city to play or you may host a team from another town or city.

AYF notes, "Bowl games shall be considered a reward for a good season." A good season is better than a .500 win-loss season. Leagues/conferences must approve all games played in post-season. Bowl games are played in the post season to avoid conflicts with the league/conference championships. The league/conference administrators must approve bowl game logistics.

Bowl games are best scheduled in November and no later than Thanksgiving weekend. Teams going beyond this could jeopardize those kids who participate in winter sports.

### Partner Events and Promotion

Frequently, AYF partners such as the NCAA and its schools, professional teams, among other sponsors will host (one-off) youth programs around their large events, bowl games etc. These invitations will be extended to AYF membership via the *E-Huddle* newsletter, or via localized email campaigns or phone calls. AYF members should take advantage of whichever opportunities appeal to them.

### Local Cheer Event Support

Cheer events can be overwhelming to plan and organize. AYF has event planning guides and tips at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com). For more support in finding resources, please email: [cheer@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:cheer@americanyouthfootball.com)

### Unsanctioned AYF Events

AYF league/conference, or association members may single-handedly organize AYF & AYC Inter-league/conference events, i.e. tournaments, bowl games, jamborees etc. The responsibility of these events from a liability and a logistical standpoint is in the hands of the organizations that plan and participate in them. Organizers must first and foremost ensure that these events and the participating teams and individuals are properly insured.

*Event hosts are asked to inform AYF of unsanctioned events at least 3 weeks prior to the event, please email [ebray@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:ebray@americanyouthfootball.com).*

### Event Invitations

If your organization is hosting an event and would like to extend an invitation to AYF, its sponsors and partners, please contact [ebray@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:ebray@americanyouthfootball.com).

## COACHES TRAINING

### SELECTION OF COACHES

One way to choose your coaches is to establish a Coaches Selection Committee. If you are a new program, you can advertise in the sports pages or call for volunteers. Coaches will come. Many are parents with children in the program; others may not have a child in the program, but are knowledgeable about football or cheerleading and could make good coaches. The selection of head coaches and their assistants can be a major challenge for your organization but with the right coaching staff, your organization will flourish.

A coach must have genuine interest in working with kids. He/she must deal directly with the players and help them to develop into better athletes and to become better citizens. A coach is a living hero to his young charges and his influence establishes their ideals and aspirations.

A coach must have the respect of his organization and also that of the community. If he/she is a “win at all cost” individual, his/her knowledge of what AYF is about is wasted and his/her influence on children could eventually bring on a negative reaction within your organization and the community as a whole. If he/she is inclined to heavily favor some players and ignore others, then he/she has lost another great cornerstone of AYF, teamwork. If he/she teaches tactics detrimental to the game of football argues with officials and baits the fans, then he/she is not a good fit for your organization. You may like his/her accomplishments with a great won-lost record, but to lose the respect of some of his/her kids and other conscientious volunteers, the record is meaningless.

AYF Rules & Regulations state that, “Coaching assignments are for one year only. Coaches must reapply for the position annually.” We suggest that you make sure all of your coaches understand this. A good coach knows his or her responsibility, but must also understand that he does not have a license for a permanent coaching position. His/her annual acceptance by your organization is proof of his/her competence.

Coaches must realize that they are not working with professionals. AYF players or cheerleaders may never reach another level of play after their AYF days are over. Therefore, it is important that the experience they have with AYF is positive and they will always have fond memories of those days. Many players will, however, advance to higher levels. The right football and cheerleading coach will help them develop the skills needed to play at these next levels.

Much more can be said about the responsibilities of the Coaches Selection Committee. If you are an Association, you will have your own selection committee. The final approval of coaches is in the hands of your association’s board of directors.

### COACHES TRAINING

Do not confuse coaches training with player or cheerleader training. Most national sports groups, if not all, require training for their coaches. Although your volunteers and coaches are outstanding at what they do, sometimes it is not enough. It is best that these fine folks arm themselves with certain knowledge and credibility that can only enhance their performance in working with kids. AYF has created the best Coaches Training/Certification program available. Not only will coaches get the training they need, but they receive \$2 million in personal liability protection. Coaches who complete the course will also be listed in a National Coaches Database. Learn more at [ayfcoaching.com](http://ayfcoaching.com).

AYF Rules & Regulations state: “Head coaches may be required to be trained through a program selected by their League. The League may also make this a requirement of assistant coaches.” We are not speaking of X’s and O’s here. We are speaking of going beyond blocking and tackling or specific cheerleading skills. This does not negate the worth of the great coaching clinics of fundamental football or cheer. Many youth coaches gain the knowledge of basics that improve their coaching skills for the benefit of their players. The training that we recommend goes beyond this; it includes that ALL Coaches, Flag/Tackle and Cheer, must take a course on Concussion and pass the course, AYF/AYC endorses the CDC concussion course and test available on the CDC website.

All AYF and AYC coaches and training resources can be found at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) and at [AYFCoaching.com](http://AYFCoaching.com).

## AYFCOACHING.COM - COACHES CERTIFICATION, THE ONLINE COURSE

With the AYFCoaching.com online course, coaches learn tried-and-true tips and techniques on being a better communicator and coach, administering sport first aid, planning your season and practices, and teaching safe fundamentals. Is this still valid?

Due to safety concerns for our youth, all AYF football and cheer coaches are asked to complete the online course for the sport they coach. The course includes \$2 million extra liability coverage—twice the protection that other online courses offer.

All national tournament team head coaches should be aware that a course completion certificate is one of the required items on the registration paperwork checklist for the AYF and AYC National Championships. The only coaches training course accepted at AYF National Championships is the course found at [AYFCoaching.com](http://AYFCoaching.com).

***All HEAD CHEER and FOOTBALL COACHES participating in the AYF or AYC National Championships, are required to complete the AYF/ AYC Online Coaches Course (that includes 2 million dollars in liability coverage) found at [www.ayfcoaching.com](http://www.ayfcoaching.com).***

## COACHES CLINICS

There are a number of online football clinics and on-site clinics that may come to your area. Details and scholarships to select clinics can be found at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com)

If an AYF partner coaches clinic is not visiting your area, your town may be blessed with the kind of high school football program that supports youth football and the high school staff may be a great resource. Also, if there is a college nearby, why not make a request to their coaching staff to see if they might have someone interested in participating in a clinic?

For cheer coaches training, AYC has trained EDGE to deliver the nation's best coaching clinics to your hometown. Simply pick a date and place and contact [cheer@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:cheer@americanyouthfootball.com) to schedule hosting your own clinic and let AYC and EDGE take care of the rest..

## PLANNING YOUR OWN COACHES CLINICS

Coaches clinics should be held on Saturday in the off-season; preferably in the summer before the August practices begin.

Open the doors for registration, exhibits, and of course coffee and doughnuts. This is a great way to relax everyone, and for coaches and administrators to meet people on an informal basis.

Consider discussing the following topics:

Fundamental Football is, of course, one of the main attractions.

Coaches' Motivation is another. Many great high schools and college coaches are noted for giving inspirational talks on motivation. Make sure the speaker gives the positives along with any negatives of motivation.

Psychology of Youth Football: How to get into the nature and mind set of your football players is one of the most important issues here. Know how to deal with the problems in developing your young charges. Administrators need to know how to build the self-esteem of football players and make them believe in themselves and their football teams. Check with your local colleges and around your local area for someone who is involved in sports psychology and who would be interested in giving a speech to your coaches.

Sports Medicine: Knowing the importance of first aid is crucial. You may find a doctor in your community who is well versed in sports medicine that could come in and speak and possibly show a film covering what your coaches should know about this valuable subject. Concussion recognition and the medical treatment of concussion must be included,

**ALL COACHES Flag/Tackle and Cheer**, must take a course/class/seminar on concussion and pass the accompanied test. AYF/AYC endorses the Free CDC “Heads Up” online concussion course, The CDC has several free programs and kits that you can download or send for go to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). We also suggest using the “American Academy of Neurology” website for valuable information and additional tools, the AAN website has a **FREE iTunes app** that can be downloaded to an iPhone and may be a helpful tool on the field, AAN is a participating organization with the CDC, go to [www.aan.com/concussion](http://www.aan.com/concussion). In addition the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) has free online information and a concussion course along with a test, [www.nfhs.com](http://www.nfhs.com). **\*Documentation of the coaches successful testing must be kept in the team book.**

**Equipment:** A local Riddell representative can give this lecture. For example, he will cover the fundamentals of helmet and shoulder pad fitting. He can emphasize the positives and the negatives of each, and will also cover how to care for and store equipment.

**Rules:** Coaches need to know how to improve their understanding of the rules of youth football or cheer. You can have a head football official come in for this lecture. You can also have your own rules committee members come to help with interpretations. Rules discussions can be volatile at times, so limit the time of this session and additionally, limit the time for questions and answers. Beforehand, explain that this is not a forum to air personal gripes about the year before. Just make sure that everyone comes away with a general knowledge of the national and local rules. Remember coaches’ follow the rules; they do not make the rules.

**Legal Aspects:** Coaches and volunteers are sometimes afraid of being sued. Have a local attorney come in and discuss this. The emphasis should be on negligence and how it applies to the coach. Your organization will want to take particular notice of this subject because of the use of fields, concession stands and equipment that could cause accident or injury.

**Certification:** Take the time to educate your coaches about the benefits of completing the online course at [www.ayfcoaching.com](http://www.ayfcoaching.com) and make sure that they understand that in order to coach a regional or national tournament team, completion of the course is a requirement.

The typical Coaches Clinic is six hours in duration. It can be held on a Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or two-week nights from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. or in another desirable time frame. It depends, in part, upon what will produce the best turnout, works best for your group and available facilities.

The meeting facility should include a classroom or auditorium plus gymnasium or field. A gymnasium is needed in case of rain.

If the area you are holding your clinic in is large enough, you may want to invite exhibitors to set up booths in an area away from the where the clinic lectures are taking place. This would be a great way to offset costs of your clinic and maybe put some funds into your organization’s treasury.

If possible, design a clinic patch and/or a certificate for each coaching participant who attends the clinic. Also, contact AYF several weeks in advance so we can help and arrange for support, resources or giveaways.

## CHEERLEADING COACHES CLINIC

AYC’s encourages for each association and league to provide cheer coach training clinics for your local league/conference head coaches, assistant coaches and junior demonstrators. For assistance to plan a clinic please contact AYC at [cheer@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:cheer@americanyouthfootball.com).

If your league/conference runs their own clinic, consider discussing the following topics:

**Fundamental Cheerleading:** What is new in the youth cheerleading industry? Where do you fit? What are your association’s goals for the season?

**Coach Motivation:** Your coaches deserve an inspirational message before starting the season. Find someone who is excited about the sport of cheerleading because their energy will be contagious. Ask them to address your coaching staff.

**Running an Effective 2 Hour Practice:** Identify the core elements of a nightly practice: Conditioning, warm-up, skill drills, stunt instruction, dance instruction, pyramid building and spirit meeting. By fully understanding and incorporating *each* of these elements in *every* practice, your coaches will run effective practice sessions.

**Sports Medicine:** Knowledge of first aid is important. Ask a doctor in your community who is well-versed in sports medicine to speak and possibly show a film covering what your coaches should know. This session can be shared with the football/cheer coaches. Concussion recognition and the medical treatment of concussion must be included.

**Stunt Training:** Make this a ‘hands on’ session. Ensure that each coach fully understands the proper building techniques required for safe stunting. Since stunting holds the greatest possibility of danger for your teams, it’s imperative that you find an *expert* lead this session. We also recommend having an experienced stunt group and instructor demonstrating stunt progression.

**Youth Cheerleading Rules:** the chairperson of your rules committee should lead this session. Coaches need to know how to improve their understanding of cheerleading rules. In a *prior* meeting with your internal rules committee, come to consensus on rule interpretations. Rules discussions can be volatile at times, so make certain that you present a ‘unified front’ based on the *prior* meeting with your associations rules committee. Limit the time of this session, as well as the time allowed for questions and answers. Explain beforehand that this is not a forum to air personal gripes about the year before. Make certain that everyone comes away with a general knowledge of the national and local rules.

**Creating an Excellent Competition or Half-Time Routine:** Most of our coaches are moms. While there are excellent videos and DVDs that offer professional choreography, it is even better to have a choreographer who knows youth teams. The most effective training tool is hands on experience. Invite every coach onto the gym floor. Teach them the elements of a great routine. Talk about formation changes, level changes, roll-offs, music choices, tumbling, jumps, use of space and of course stunting and pyramids during the performance.

**Competition / Local, Regional & National:** Not all cheerleading teams elect to compete. Competitions and tournaments are often looked forward to with the same anticipation that football players have for the play-offs or other post-season competition. Pass out detailed information about all of the competitions available to teams during this season. Encourage them to attend and answer any registration questions they may have.

**Certification:** Take the time to educate your coaches about the benefits of completing the online course at [www.ayfcoaching.com](http://www.ayfcoaching.com) and make sure that they understand that in order to coach a regional or national tournament team, completion of the course is a requirement.

## AYF TOOLS EXPLAINED

AYF has a number of websites, social communities and tools to help you stay connected and get the most out of your AYF membership. Below we will explain some of these resources.

## THE E-HUDDLE NEWSLETTER

This is the official newsletter of AYF. National happenings, upcoming deadlines, special offers, grant information, event details, human-interest stories and other news of general interest are presented monthly. The E-Huddle is emailed to all participants who have email addresses submitted to AYF via JoinAYF.com or MyAyf.com or to those that have subscribed via the link at [americanyouthfootball.com](http://americanyouthfootball.com).

[www.JoinAYF.com](http://www.JoinAYF.com)

Use this website to register for annual AYF membership. Once you have registered, you and your administrators will receive, via email, personalized passwords to gain access to MyAYF.com.

[www.MyAyf.com](http://www.MyAyf.com)

As soon as annual registration at JoinAYF.com is complete, passwords to access MyAyf.com will be emailed to all the administrators' whose e-mail addresses were entered during the registration process.

MyAyf.com is the private members-only website with access to AYF services, rulebooks, manuals, services, initiatives and the ability to manage member profiles, including rosters. Members are free to enter as many users to the site as they desire, AYF recommends that all administrators and coaches have access to the system so they can download rule books, forms, sponsor benefits and more.

There is a number of different permission levels that administrators can set so only designated users can modify organizational settings and manage rosters. Permission levels and instructions for designating users in MyAyf.com can be found in the MyAyf.com User Manual. It is the organizations administrators' responsibility to add users to MyAyf.com.

The AYF membership year is April 1- March 31; therefore on March 31 all usernames and passwords will expire and no longer grant access to MyAyf.com. Members will be required to renew their membership with AYF for the current season to regain access to MyAyf.com after March 31. Services and publications at MyAyf.com will be updated on April 1 or soon after.

## MAILING LIST and MyAYF Subscribers

All officers, coaches, directors and parents, may be added to the mailing list to receive the AYF newsletter, *The E-Huddle* by visiting [americanyouthfootball.com](http://americanyouthfootball.com) and selecting 'subscribe to the monthly newsletter.' This is strongly encouraged to be aware of all AYF promotions, events and activities.

Only users of MyAyf.com will receive e-mails with special offers and have access to many of the programs listed in *The E-Huddle*. Administrators are responsible for adding members from their organization for use of MyAyf.com. Once contact information and a valid email is entered, the user will be emailed a password to access system with the permission level that you have designated them. Administrative personnel will have administrative authority, which will allow them to access the organizations member profile, while volunteers and coaches only have access to a view publications and services.

[www.americanyouthfootball.com](http://www.americanyouthfootball.com)

The AYF home website is where basic information on AYF is available to the public. Information on upcoming events, past events, special programs and initiatives, editorial content, sponsors programs and announcements, awards, hall of fame, members highlights, map of AYF locations, "Today in AYF", Giving Back details, presidents message and staff descriptions, general philosophies and goals, member resources and links to all other AYF websites, communication platforms, and partners.

This website is dedicated to AYF post-season play. It houses all of the information that nationally qualifying teams need for their trip to National Championships, including, paperwork, hotel booking links, mandatory procedures, schedules, ticket sales, maps, discounted rental cars and attraction tickets and more. During the National Championships, brackets and scores are updated live.

## SOCIAL NETWORKS

### Twitter:

AYF has a Twitter feed, to follow AYF go to: [www.twitter.com/ayf](http://www.twitter.com/ayf).

### Facebook:

“LIKE US” on facebook. Check our Facebook page for daily updates, and news.

## MEMBER CALENDAR

The AYF Member calendar is posted at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) and at [americanyouthfootball.com](http://americanyouthfootball.com). This calendar will provide an overview of the annual membership year complete with events and member due dates.

## OFFICIAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Official Rule Books must be strictly followed in order for your organization to be considered and be eligible to participate in AYF/AYC regional and national tournaments.

AYF rules are based on National Federation of State High Schools Rules with few adaptations. All AYF organizations should utilize the NFHS Rule Books as a complement to the AYF Rules. Please see the NFHS website for details [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

AYC rules are based on United States All Star Federation Rules with few adaptations. All AYC organizations should utilize the USASF Rule Books as a complement to the AYC Rules. Please see the USASF website for details [www.usasfrules.com/](http://www.usasfrules.com/).

AYF and AYC Rules and Regulations are available for download at [MyAyf.com](http://MyAyf.com) for all members, hard copies can also be purchased thru [ShopAYF.com](http://ShopAYF.com)

## NEW MEMBER PRESENTATION

The New Member presentation is updated annually and available for download. The presentation provides an overview of AYF for those interested in learning about AYF. The New Member presentation is a helpful recruitment tool and can be found in the “JOIN” section of [americanyouthfootball.com](http://americanyouthfootball.com)

If recruitment support is required, AYFs Membership Director is happy to assist. Contact Shannon Shy at [Shannon@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:Shannon@americanyouthfootball.com).

## OFF-SEASON CALLS

Beginning in the spring, AYF staff calls member organization presidents to learn how AYF can assist in preparing for the new season.

If your administration is changing, please provide the AYF contact with the new contact’s information so we can help with a smooth transition.

The AYF team will be ready with exclusive offers from AYF and its partners specifically on items that our members request most often. If you would like to connect with us in advance to gain more timely support, please email [services@americanyouthfootball.com](mailto:services@americanyouthfootball.com).

### AYF on YouTube

AYF regularly posts video clips and highlights from national events like the all-star game, future bowl, National Championship highlight TV Shows and more. Visit [www.YouTube.com/AYFTV](http://www.YouTube.com/AYFTV) to view the AYF Channel. We encourage you to take the 'embed' code from YouTube and add any video to your organizations website.

### PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND GAME FOOTAGE

#### AYC Championship Videos:

AYC National Championship Cheer/Dance/Step performances can be watched on demand or DVD. Go to [ayfchampionships.com](http://ayfchampionships.com) and visit the MEDIA page.

#### National Championship Photos and Videos:

At AYF National Championships, all games are photographed and videotaped. Go to [ayfchampionships.com](http://ayfchampionships.com) and visit the MEDIA page for details.

### SAMPLE BUDGET

Below you will find a worksheet to help you budget for your organization! Please note the following: There are many ranges in numbers based on quantity of participants, amount of money raised via fundraisers, and range of quality and needs of equipment and uniforms. Please consider that these numbers may not be reflective of your exact numbers.

The below budgeting allows for a lot of advertising to be done on a local level. Advertising is not a NECESSITY, however, it will always help to enhance the organizations.

Please always look out for deals, promotions, and donated gifts. These will be promoted through AYF when made available to members.

#### **RUN A TEAM (25 PLAYERS) :**

AYF rate for team insurance: (age dependent) \$130.00- \$382.00  
AYF rate for team uniforms & equipment FOOTBALL: \$3,500.00  
AYF rate for team uniforms & equipment CHEER: \$1,500.00  
AYF required coaches training: \$20.00/ coach (X 4 coaches) \$80.00  
AYF required coaches background checks: \$20.00  
Field equipment: \$500.00  
Facilities rental: \$1,000.00  
Travel fees: \$4.00 Per child  
Advertising: \$1,500  
Officials: 3 per game: \$50/ ref. 8 games/ season: \$1,200

TOTAL APPROX: \$10,000  
(INCLUDES FOOTBALL & CHEER)

#### **RUN AN ASSOCIATION (8 teams, 400 PLAYERS):**

- AYF rate for team uniforms & equipment FOOTBALL= RANGE: \$3500 - \$10,000
- AYF rate for team uniforms & equipment CHEER= \$3,000- \$6,000
- AYF rate for team insurance= \$2,200.00
- Advertising= \$ 3,000.00
- AYF Fees= \$ 200.00
- Field Equipment = \$ 2,000
- Facilities/ Field Rental= RANGE \$3,200- \$ 8,000

- Helmet reconditioning= **\$1500.00**
- Regional Championships= **\$150.00/ team (AVERAGE)**
- National Championships= **\$350.00/ Squad- team**

TOTAL APPROX range: \$18,600- \$31,000  
(INCLUDES FOOTBALL & CHEER)

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**RUN A CONFERENCE: (1,600 PLAYERS 32 teams):**

- AYF rate for team uniforms & equipment FOOTBALL= RANGE **\$14,000- \$40,000**
- AYF rate for team uniforms & equipment CHEER= RANGE: **\$12,000.00- \$24,000**
- Advertising= **\$ 12,000.**
- AYF Fees= **\$ 800.**
- Field Equipment= **\$ 8,000**
- Facilities Rental= RANGE= **\$12,800 - \$32,000**

TOTAL APPROX range: \$59,000- \$115,000  
(INCLUDES FOOTBALL & CHEER)

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

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**NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:**

**GENERAL:**

**Hotel:** Through AYF Sanctioned hotels rate range:

- Nightly rates (range): **\$60 - \$120 per night**
- Average number of people per room: **4 people**
- Average rate per person per night (range): **\$15.00- \$25.00**
  - **\$15 per night = \$105 per person for 7 nights**
  - **\$25 per night = \$175 per person for 7 nights**
  - **Total for 30 kids \$3150 - \$5250 (Range)**

**FLIGHTS:**

AYF does not have special rates for flights, however we suggest **RESERVE** tickets **EARLY** (According to several travel websites flights are the least expensive 54 days out and ask the airline if they have a group travel agent to work with) and to allow you to send names of participants, as the event gets closer. This is to avoid steep costs.

- Average per participant: **\$185- \$500 (Range)**
- Average for 30 Participants= **\$5,550 - \$15,000**

**NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS TOURNAMENT FEE:**

- Average per squad or team= **\$400.00**
- Average per participant= **\$15**

**GROUND TRANSPORT:**

- 7 passenger van = **Approx. \$260**
- Gas= **Average \$3.00/ Gallon**
- Tolls= **\$100**

**FOOD:**

- Per person per day= **Approx. \$35**
- For 30 participants= **Approx \$1050 per day**
- **TOTAL PER WEEK FOR 30 Participants= \$7350**

**MISC/ UNIVERSAL TICKETS**

Total= **\$1,500**

MISC/ SPORTS SUPPLIES: Socks, etc.  
Total= \$200.00

**TOTAL RANGE: 18,000- 25,000**

Range Per Child=  
\$600.00 - \$830.00  
Round up to \$900.00/ Week

#### A BRIEF SUMMARY

This is a guideline for running your organization. It would be foolish for us to say we have covered all bases. However, we are sure that we have highlighted the outline of what you will need to know and you can add anything to help your individual program's needs. Have a great season and we encourage you to take advantage of all of AYF's great resources!

Feel free to reach out to any of the National Staff Members for questions or comments.