

# **La Cañada Gladiators Football and Cheer**



*"In hoc signo vinces"*

## **2024 PARENT HANDBOOK & Team Rules**

## *Welcome & General Information*

Welcome to the La Canada Gladiators!

The purpose of this handbook is to provide all parents and participants, whether new or returning, with a guide to Gladiator policies and procedures. For those of you who are new to the program, the Gladiators organization is probably unlike any other youth sports organization with which you are familiar.

The Gladiator is a member of the San Gabriel Valley Jr. All American Football Conference. Conference's bylaws may be found on the conference web page. Our bylaws may be found on our webpage.

Conference consists of several other franchises. The number varies between seasons.

Many of our rules and procedures may seem a bit different, and one of the main purposes of this handbook is to give you a quick reference to these rules and help you better understand our organization.

I would encourage you to review this Handbook.

*Kevin S.  
Lacey,  
President*

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## *Introduction*

**OBJECTIVE:** The objectives of the La Canada Gladiator program are:

(1) to inspire youth to practice the ideals of health, citizenship and character; (2) to bring our youth closer together through the means of a common interest in sportsmanship, fair play and fellowship; (3) to impart to the game elements of safety, mindfulness and intelligent supervision; and (4) to keep the welfare of the player first, foremost and entirely free of adult lust for glory. Conspicuous by its absence is winning football games.

**ORGANIZATION:** The Gladiator organization is a tax-exempt 501(C)(3) organization founded in 1968. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. All donations should be sent to:

La Canada Gladiators  
Junior All American Football and Cheer  
P.O. Box 515  
La Canada, CA 91012

### **SAN GABRIEL VALLEY JR. ALL AMERICAN FOOTBALL**

**CONFERENCE:** The La Canada Gladiator organization is a proud founding member of the San Gabriel Valley Jr. All American Football Conference ("Conference"). The Conference website is: **[www.sgvjaafc.org](http://www.sgvjaafc.org)**. Conference is the sole governing body over the game of amateur football and cheer, as played under the rules and regulations of the San Gabriel Valley Junior All-American Football Conference and CIF.

**GLADIATOR WEBSITE:** The La Canada Gladiators website is located at **[www.lcgladiators.org](http://www.lcgladiators.org)**. The website contains the most current downloads, contacts, announcements and events. Over the past few years, the Gladiator organization has made increased use of its webpage for notifying parents and participants of upcoming events and other related issues. ***The website and email are our primary method of communication.*** Please check the webpage often and be sure to send us your new e-mail if you change it.

## *Board Members & Staff*

**BOARD MEMBERS:** The La Canada Gladiators Executive Board is a group of elected volunteers who meet monthly to govern the program. The members of the 2018 Executive Board are listed on our webpage along with their respective contact information. Parents are free to contact any of the Board members at any time with any questions, concerns, or comments.

**FOOTBALL COACHING STAFFS:** The Gladiators take the selection of Head Football Coaches very seriously. Beginning in January we begin to review applications and, if necessary, an interview process is conducted involving those who are interested in head coaching. After consideration of the applications the Executive Board discussed and approved the selection of the Head Coaches. The selection of assistant coaches is at the discretion of the head coaches subject to approval by the City President.

**ATHLETIC DIRECTORS:** Each football team and cheer squad is assigned a Team Athletic Director ("AD"). ***Your Team AD will be your primary point of contact for the team.*** The AD is responsible for all administrative matters relating to the team or squad, including grades, attendance, and any team related issues. Please contact them first with any concerns you might have related to the team or your child.

**BACKGROUND CHECKS:** *All* Board members, football and cheer coaches, and other staff are required to pass a "Live Scan" fingerprinting and background check by the Department of Justice. The results of such scans are sent to the Conference Treasurer. *No person is permitted to participate as a member of the Gladiator organization without passing a background check.*

**CARDS:** Following a successful background check, all Board members, football and cheer coaches, and other staff are issued a color-coded card that must be always displayed during practice and games. During practice sessions, football games, and cheer competitions only "carded" personnel are allowed on the field. All other persons must remain off the field.

## *Pre-Season*

**FOOTBALL LETTER OF INTENT:** Shortly after the end of each football season, the Executive Board coordinates the mailing of "letters of intent" ("LOI") to all football players who will be eligible to participate with the Gladiators in the following season. Complying with the terms and returning the LOI will guarantee a participant a spot on the appropriate roster for the upcoming season. *LOIs should be returned prior to March 7<sup>st</sup>* before open registration begins. Otherwise, positions will be available on a first come, first served basis.

**REGISTRATION:** The open registration process normally begins March 1<sup>st</sup>. Applications are then posted on the Gladiator web page. Rarely do we have public registrations. The public is *strongly encouraged* to download an application and register early to ensure a position on the roster and not to wait to enroll at a public signup at which time rosters may be full.

**MEDICAL INSURANCE:** You must provide your complete medical insurance information and a copy of both sides of your insurance card to your Head A.D. each year. You are responsible for all medical claims for your child arising out of participation in the Gladiator organization. Conference group insurance is a "corridor excess" policy only. It will pay only the medical expenses not provided or reimbursable under your own coverage. This policy is subject to a \$250 deductible. All medical claims must be submitted to your own insurance first.

**EQUIPMENT HANDOUT:** Prior to the beginning of practice, usually in early June, the Gladiators will distribute "spirit packs" (shorts and tee shirts) as well as other necessary equipment. *Attendance is mandatory.* The exact date will be posted on our web site.

**PHYSICALS:** All football and cheer participants must attain and sustain sound physical condition. The physical examination must have been performed *no earlier* than June 1<sup>st</sup> of the football calendar year. *For a fee of \$30.00, the Gladiator organization will have a physician*

*present to conduct physicals during the Equipment Distribution* referenced above. Because of the rule changes regarding physicals, we highly recommend that participants avail themselves of the opportunity to have a physical at this time. The insurance covering our program is very strict and failure to obtain a proper physical on the correct form will preclude a player from participating.

**SCHOLASTIC REQUIREMENTS:** Each participant must attain and maintain a minimum grade average of 2.0 based on the last regular semester report card issued prior to certification (summer school make-ups in same subject is acceptable). A 2.0 must be maintained throughout the season. *Failure to maintain a 2.0 throughout the season renders a participant ineligible to continue in either the football or cheer programs, and no refund will be issued to any participant rendered ineligible due to academics. The Gladiators will not accept any form of "scholastic probation" for any participant in any division other than Midget football and cheer.*

All participants must submit a Conference Grade Report to their Head A.D. in October. (Your A.D. will give you the form). Reports must contain a minimum of five (5) grades and a verified teacher's signature. All academic grades, plus P.E., will count and must average a 2.0 or better. Each Head A.D. must verify these grades and submit them to Conference. Any participant not submitting a Conference Grade Report, or failing to maintain at least a 2.0 G.P.A., will be declared ineligible for the balance of the season, and no refund will be issued.

Parents and players need to get this information to their ADs in a timely manner. Obtaining cooperation from schools is like dealing with any governmental organization – agonizingly slow and full of frustration.

**SCHOLASTIC AWARDS:** Participants who have a 3.3 G.P.A. or better in October as evidenced by the Conference Grade Report will be awarded a Conference Scholar Patch at the end of the season. Winners must attend their division championship game in November to receive their patch. As this date approaches, you're A.D. will provide you with the appropriate information. Personal attendance is mandatory to receive your patch. The player with the highest

G.P.A. on each Gladiator football team and cheer squad will receive a recognition trophy at the end of the season.

**PICTURE DAY** Individual and Team/Squad pictures will be taken on a Saturday in late August. The precise date will be on our website and your Team AD will keep you updated on this. A basic photo package is included with the registration fee. Additional information will be provided by the Team ADs.

### *Practices*

**FOOTBALL AND CHEER PRACTICE COMMENCES:** Football and Cheer practices will commence on Monday *July 23, 2018*.

**PRACTICE TIME:** Football and Cheer practices will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Practices are mandatory and count towards eligibility for player Certification, as well as participation in scrimmages and games. This is discussed more fully below.

**FOOTBALL AND CHEER PRACTICE SCHEDULE:** From July 23<sup>rd</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>, all football teams and cheer squads we will be practicing at FIS. Beginning in September practices for all football teams and cheer squads will be at LCHS.

There are mandatory parking and other restrictions imposed on us by the City of La Canada and the LCUSD that are applicable at LCHS and FIS. Your AD will provide you with this information.

Initially, for tackle football practice will be from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Flag and cheer typically do not practice five days a week, but this is left to the discretion of the respective coaches. Your AD will notify you regarding flag and cheer schedules.

Conference rules permit all teams to practice two hours per night, five days per week, from the beginning of practice through August 10<sup>th</sup>. Beginning the week of August 13<sup>th</sup>, we will practice from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. three (3) days a week for football and cheer. Typically, all teams will practice Tuesday-Thursday, although this



sometimes varies, depending upon the schedule and other restrictions at LCHS.

**OUTSIDE PRACTICES:** Conference *expressly forbids* any unauthorized practice session. Conference mandates that any participant who participates in an unauthorized practice will be subject to a one game suspension, and any coach who conducts an unauthorized practice session will be suspended for a minimum of one week.

**CONDITIONING WEEK (TACKLE FOOTBALL ONLY):** The first week of summer practice is exclusively devoted to physical- conditioning. It is conducted for a maximum of six (6) calendar days per week not including Sundays. Each physical conditioning session shall be limited to two (2) hours per day. *All participants must have a minimum of ten (10) hours conditioning at an official practice before they may participate in practice with pads.* No participant will be issued pads until the required ten (10) hours of conditioning are met. Pads are issued to eligible players following the completion of the first week of practice at a time designated by your Team AD.

Conditioning sessions may include calisthenics and isometrics. Helmets, football shoes, and footballs will be the *only* equipment allowed. Footballs can be used for passing drills, handing off, kicking or techniques in the use of the ball handling during the second hour of conditioning only.

Physical conditioning sessions may not include football equipment (such as blocking pads or tackling dummies) unless used solely as obstacles. There shall be no tackling, blocking, or running or contact plays during conditioning week. Following conditioning, each tackle participant must participate in an additional ten (10) hours of contact drill wearing pads before being eligible to participate in a scrimmage.

**HYDRATION & FOOD:** *Parents should make sure to provide players and cheerleaders with PLENTY of water both prior to and during practice sessions.* If the bottle is not disposable, the child's name should be on it. GATORADE AND SPORTS DRINKS ARE NOT RECOMMENDED DURING PRACTICE AS THEY CAN CAUSE CRAMPING. Energy

drinks, such as *Red Bull*, are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**. Players should begin drinking water 2 hours prior to the beginning of practice, so that they are hydrated properly. Players should eat healthy and regular meals but should never consume large meals (or any junk food) within an hour before practice – unless, of course, they would like to see it again during practice.

#### **MOVEMENT OF FOOTBALL PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN**

**TEAMS:** Participation on a team is governed by age and weight. Age is predictable – weight is not. Sometimes, participants are enrolled on a team, but gain or lose weight and are rendered ineligible for the team on which they previously enrolled. Prior to Certification, players may find that they need to move up or down a division based upon their weight. The Gladiators will make every effort to accommodate this movement ***if space allows***. Movement between teams will be made at the sole discretion of the Gladiator organization.

## WEIGHT CHART

AGE	JR. GREMLIN	GREMLIN	JR. PEE WEE	PEE WEE	JR. MIDGET
6	85 MAX				
7	85 MAX				
8	85 MAX	85 (min) 120			
9		115	130		
10		1000	120	145	
11			110	135	200
12				130	190
13				120	180
14					160

**WEIGHT NOTE:** Pursuant to our rules, we always round weight *down*. If a participant tips the scale at 110.9999999 pounds, the participant's "official" weight is 110 pounds.

**ADDITIONAL FOOTBALL WEIGHT ALLOWANCES:** Starting September 1st, additional weight allowed for player growth in all football divisions is: One (1) pound on: Sept. 1, Sept. 15, Oct. 1, Oct. 15, Nov. 1, Nov. 15, Dec. 1, and Dec. 15. If the 1st or 15th is a Sunday, the increase will be allowed on the preceding day.

**FIELD MANNERS:** In early September we return to LCHS. In addition to multiple tackle teams, and one flag team we share the LCHS facilities with several soccer organizations, and other community user groups. The Executive Board, along with the La Canada Sports Coalition, the La Canada Parks and Recreation Commission, AYSO, and other user groups have allocated specific areas to specific groups at specific times. Space is at a premium. A multitude of children participating at the same time in the same general area has been known to generate some friction (among the

coaches and parents – the children seem to be fine with it). Please be considerate. Any issues with other user groups should be referred to a member of the Gladiator Executive Board. Self-help is discouraged.

**LCHS FIELD USAGE:** Gladiator participants are not to take the field until 5:30 when the LCHS football practice has ended *and* all LCHS athletes have left the field.

**PICK-UP:** Our volunteers need to get home to their own families. Please pick up your child on time, as Gladiators cannot be held responsible for their safety after the official end of any event. If, for whatever reason, you fail to arrive within 30 minutes after the end of a scheduled practice session and have not made prior arrangements with, nor contacted, your Team AD, your child will be taken to the La Crescenta Sheriff's Station on Briggs Avenue in La Crescenta. (Yes, unfortunately, this *has* happened in the past).

### *Attendance & Illness*

**ATTENDANCE AT PRACTICES:** All practice and game sessions are mandatory.

Roll call is taken shortly after each practice begins. Any participant who is absent at roll call is considered "tardy". A participant who accumulates more than one tardy in a week is considered absent for one day. As discussed below, absenteeism *may affect scrimmage and game playing time!*

**ABSENCES:** A participant is considered absent if: (1) the participant misses a scheduled practice; or (2) the participant is tardy more than once in any single week.

If a participant is ill or injured, *and the Head AD is notified BEFORE practice that the participant will not be in attendance*, this WILL NOT count as an absence for purposes of determining playing time.

(Common sense dictates that a participant who is too ill or injured to participate in more than one practice during the week is also likely to be ill or injured at game time. If your child is ill or injured and claims

a semi-miraculously recovered at game time, we may request a doctor's note or validation from an appropriate religious authority.)

**MISSING PRACTICE:** Prior to Certification, any player who is "absent", as defined above, for two (2) scheduled practices the week prior to a scheduled scrimmage may, at the discretion of the Head Coach and Team AD, be prohibited from participating in that scrimmage. After September 15th, any participant who misses two (2) scheduled practices the week prior to a scheduled game may, at the discretion of the Head Coach and Team AD, be prohibited from participating in that game. If any coach or Team AD enforces this rule, it shall be enforced as to the *entire team*.

**CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM:** This is a rarity. Most participants who enroll in the program *want* to be here, *want* to practice, and *want* to play in the scrimmages and games. Nevertheless, there are a few participants that, for whatever reason, chronically miss practices. Any participant who is absent, as that term is defined above, more than seven (7) days prior to certification; more than five (5) days in September; or five (5) days in October may, at the discretion of the coach and with the approval of the Executive Board, be dropped from the team.

**INTENT OF ATTENDANCE RULES:** Attendance rules are *not* intended to punish those who do not attend practice. Football and cheer are *team* sports and good preparation before a scrimmage or a game is critical to the performance of the team. Moreover, it is grossly unfair to allow those who routinely miss practice to supplant those participants who regularly attend and who are prepared to play.

**ILLNESS:** A participant who is "ill" has a temporary and usually contagious condition should not attend practice. To ensure good health for the entire team, please consider the following guidelines:

- **STREP THROAT:** A participant may NOT return to practice until 24-48 hours after the first dose of antibiotics was given and the child is fever-free.

- **VOMITING & DIARRHEA:** A participant should be symptom-free for 24 hours and be able to hold down food and fluids before returning to practice.
- **FEVER:** A participant may return to practice when the temperature has been normal for at least 24 hours (without taking Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, etc.).
- **COLD/COUGH:** A participant should remain at home if too uncomfortable to participate in practice.

**MEDICATION:** Our insurance does not allow our staff to give participants prescription or over-the-counter medications of any kind; nor should participants take their own medications. If a participant requires medication, such as inhalers or other meds during practice or games, ***a parent must be present*** to dispense it.

**HOMEWORK:** Missing practice for homework assignments is ***never*** considered an excused absence. Participants are expected to complete such assignments prior to practice. A large part of any participant's experience in the Gladiator program is to learn academic responsibility and to balance sports with school obligations.

**PARENTAL REPRIMANDS & DISCIPLINE:** While it is probably too much to expect that every participant will complete a stint with the Gladiators without running afoul of something outside of football, we respectfully ask that you do not punish your child by holding them out of games or practices. To do this punishes the rest of the team as well. If, for whatever reason, you believe that some sports-related discipline is appropriate, ***please confer with your Team AD beforehand regarding any concern you may have in this area; our staffs will work with you on appropriate remedy strategy for disciplinary action.***

## *Injuries, Returning to Participate & Doctor's Notes*

Tackle football, at any level, is a collision sport. Bumps, dings, bruises, cuts, and abrasions are to be expected. **THESE ARE NOT INJURIES.** These are part of the game. An "injury" is something that, by its nature, prevents a participant from competing.

The Gladiator organization is aware of the current concern over injuries, particularly concussions, and all out coaches and A.D.s have some training in recognizing these types of injuries. Our general rule of thumb is to err always on the side of caution, and any participant who exhibits any indication of a concussion or other similar injury will be immediately removed from further participation and, if we deem it appropriate, we will call an ambulance to transport the participant to a medical facility.

To ensure that all our participants are healthy enough to engage in contact football, any participant who is removed from practice under the suspicion of sustaining a concussion will be **required** to have a physician's note before returning to the field and abide by Concussion Protocol. (Parents will be provided with Concussion Protocol Information prior to the commencement of practice.)

**DOCTOR'S NOTE:** If a participant is injured in any manner, including a suspected concussion, and cannot practice, an **ORIGINAL** (not a copy) doctor's note is required before the participant will be allowed to resume practice. If the participant is seen by a doctor who recommends that he not practice, a copy of that note should be provided to the AD. ***Please be advised that a parent's assurance that the child is health and may return is never accepted.*** This is a liability concern, and not intended to cast aspersions on the integrity of any of our parents.

An injured participant *will not* be allowed to return to the field without an **original** doctor's note. Moreover, any such note **must** contain the following specific language:

**For Flag:** The note must specifically state that the participant is "cleared to participate in flag football."

**For Tackle:** The note must specifically state that the participant is “cleared to participate in full contact tackle football.”

*If the note does not contain the required language, the participant will not be permitted to return to practice. NO EXCEPTIONS. This is an insurance-related issue and cannot be waived, modified, adjusted, reformed or tampered-with by the Head Coach or AD.*

## *Equipment*

**PRACTICE EQUIPMENT:** Players and cheerleaders are responsible for the maintenance and care of the equipment issued by the Gladiators. Participants must bring all required equipment to each practice. Any participant who fails to bring and wear the appropriate equipment will be required to sit out during practice and will be considered absent. Again, this is not meant as a form of punishment, but rather to teach and encourage personal responsibility.

**TACKLE EQUIPMENT:** As part of your football registration fee, Gladiators provides practice and game uniforms, all required pads, belt, socks, girdle, nameplate and helmet. You will receive instructions from your Head AD on how uniforms are to be cleaned, worn, and returned at the end of the season.

**GAME UNIFORMS** The game uniforms are only to be worn to games and not to practice or school.

**FACEMASKS:** For some odd reason, many participants (and even some parents) seem to think that a style of facemask makes a statement to the world about a participant’s skill level. Still others believe certain facemasks are only appropriate for certain positions on a team. These are urban football myths. *Facemasks on helmets are part of the original equipment issued and are not to be removed, tampered with, substituted, or replaced* by anyone other than an authorized Gladiator coach subject to approval by a knowledgeable member of the Gladiator Executive Board. *Visors are not allowed on Gladiator helmets* without the express permission of the Executive Board.



**CLEATS & OTHER NECESSITIES:** Parents of tackle participants should supply appropriate football shoes that have all-purpose rubber, ***NON-DETACHABLE*** cleats (this means the cleats don't unscrew and come off), athletic supporters, non-clear or white mouth guards, and protective cups for their children. Parents of flag players should supply appropriate football shoes that have all-purpose rubber, ***NON-DETACHABLE*** cleats, and black volleyball-type kneepads and mouth guard.

**ANCILLARY FOOTBALL GEAR:** Currently, there is a myriad of football related gear on the market. These include gloves, padded body suits, arm pads, neck pads, and rib pads. ***None*** of these are required, ***few*** are ever really needed, and ***some*** are deleterious. We highly recommend that you discuss any such additional equipment with your Coaching Staff prior to purchasing it. Personal helmets and shoulder pads must be "NOCSAE" approved and meet ***current*** "NOCSAE" safety standards. ***As such, player-owned equipment will not be allowed for use without authorization from a knowledgeable member of the Gladiator Executive Board.*** The Gladiators will be happy to direct interested parties to approved equipment choice and vendors for purchase.

**FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT RETURN:** All pads, helmet, football game uniforms and belts remain the property of the Gladiators and ***should not be altered in any way.*** Parents are expected to return the equipment at the end of the season (or earlier if a child leaves the program). The equipment supplied is expensive - it costs the Gladiators approximately \$400.00 to outfit one tackle player. One of our largest expenses from year-to-year is replacing equipment that is not returned or is returned damaged. ***Any player who fails to return their equipment on time as scheduled and in good condition will not be permitted to submit a LOI for the following season.***

### ***Cuts – (Tackle Football Only)***

All tackle football teams are limited to 33 players on the final team roster as of Certification Day. Each team is permitted by Conference to recruit up to a total of forty (40) participants on each roster. All Gladiator tackle rosters ***except*** the Jr. Midget roster are, however,

limited to a maximum of 35 participants. We do this to minimize the possibility of any player being “cut” to reduce the roster to thirty- three (33) by Certification Day. In any typical season, each squad can expect to lose two or more players who voluntarily withdraw for a variety of personal reasons.

Nevertheless, even with all our precautions, there remains the possibility that cuts will be required to reduce a tackle team roster to 33 players prior to Certification Day. The decision to cut any player rests at the sole discretion of the team’s coaching staff and the Gladiator Executive Board, but the following factors are considered critical in determining cuts: (1) safety issues; (2) attendance at all practice sessions; (3) attitude and respect toward the coaching staff and other players; and (4) following instructions. *Good football skills are not a determining factor for cuts.*

### *Scrimmages*

A scrimmage is not a game (despite how some coaches seem to approach it). It is intended to be a form of *practice* and an opportunity to work as many players as possible. Each tackle team is allowed five (5) scrimmages in the preseason.

A scrimmage may be no longer than two (2) hours (like a practice). Teams do not keep score (like a practice). The ball is not moved downfield but is always returned to the spot where the play originated (like a practice). Coaches are allowed on the field and in the huddle (like a practice).

Typically, each team gets 10 plays on offense, and then 10 plays on defense. This goes on until the scrimmage is concluded.

Because of field availability issues, most of our scrimmages will be played at other locations.

Your Head A.D. will notify you of the scheduled scrimmages and their locations as soon as they are set.

**SCRIMMAGE 5-PLAY RULE:** Every player who qualifies to participate in a scrimmage must have a minimum of five (5) plays per scrimmage.

**NO INTER DIVISION SCRIMMAGES:** No inter-division scrimmages are permitted. (For example, the Gremlin could not scrimmage the Pee Wee team).

### *Certification Day*

**HISTORY:** In the past, Certification Day has been an ordeal and the consequences of missing it were severe. In 2018, however, the process is being revised. Precisely how it will function this year remains a closely guarded secret, but it appears that the process will not involve all the teams tramping to some inconvenient location for half a Saturday and may be limited to processing paperwork. By the beginning of the season, we will have a better handle on it. But for now, and assuming nothing changes, this is how it will go:

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is *mandatory* at Certification Day for all tackle and flag football players. *No exceptions.*

**PROCESS:** On Certification Day, every team from every franchise participating in Jr. All American football is processed by Conference personnel. Paperwork is checked. Birth certificates examined. Grades are certified. *In addition, Conference representatives weigh each football player to make sure they meet the weight requirements.* Following Certification Day, all birth certificates and report cards will be returned to the parents as soon as cards are issued. It is, typically, a tedious and long process lasting several hours.

**FAILURE TO ATTEND:** After Certification Day, only participants who have been certified by Conference may participate in practices. If a participant, for whatever reason, fails to attend Certification Day, *that participant will not be permitted to wear pads at practice or to participate in scrimmages or games.*

**POST CERTIFICATION:** Conference usually schedules a “Make-up Certification Day” for those unfortunate players who did not heed the warning in this Handbook and who failed to attend the scheduled Certification Day. The scheduling of a Make-up Certification Day is exclusively at the discretion of Conference. Moreover, Make-up Certification Days are invariably scheduled at inconvenient times and locations. (Like, for example, at 5:15 p.m. on a weekday in Bell Gardens.) Bottom line: **DON'T MISS THE SCHEDULED CERTIFICATION OR YOU MAY MISS THE SEASON!**

### *Game Day & Playing Time*

**SCHEDULES:** Game schedules are posted a few weeks after Certification Day.

**BEGINNING OF THE SEASON:** The season will officially begin the weekend of *September 8th*.

**SEASON AND GAME DAYS:** Be prepared to participate in one game per weekend through early-to-mid-November (depending on playoffs). In the recent past, each Gladiator team typically has half its games on Saturdays and half on Sundays. The scheduling of games on Sundays has much to do with limited field availability and referees. Game times are generally, but not always, set with the younger teams playing first. That is Jr. Gremlins play first, then Gremlins, Jr. Pee Wee, Pee Wee, and then Jr. Midget. The first game usually starts about 8:30 a.m. and the last game about 6:00 p.m. This can vary.

**ADMISSION:** Regular season games are free of charge. Playoffs require a small donation fee and parking charge. Due to parking restrictions, some cities will now charge for parking on game days.

**GAME DAY ARRIVAL:** Players MUST be at the playing field no less than 1 hour and 15 minutes prior to game time. Players must weigh in 1 hour before game time. This allows the players time to line up for weigh-in and gives them time to stretch and warm up before the game. Players missing the pregame weigh-in will not be allowed to play until the second half.

**THE 10-PLAY RULE:** Every player who weighs-in and suits-up up for a game must participate in that game for a minimum of ten (10) plays per game. Players are to receive a minimum of 5 plays in the first half. No exceptions.

**WHAT IS “A PLAY”:** *For purposes of this rule, a “play” occurs every time the ball is put into play, except when a dead ball penalty is assessed.*

On its face, this may seem rather simple, but making sure every participant on a roster of 30 or more players has ten plays during the heat of a 40-minute football game is a **very** difficult skill to master.

At every game, at least one (and usually two) members of the coaching staff are required to keep an accurate record of every participant’s plays. At the end of the game, these records are submitted to Conference. Like all human endeavors, mistakes are sometimes made. If a parent believes that his participant did not have 10 plays during a game, the parent should discuss this later – **not during or immediately after a game** – with the AD.

**PLAYING TIME AND POSITIONS:** Some of the most difficult and sensitive coaching decisions involve which positions players will play, and how much playing time each player will receive. (On a roster of 25+ players, you rarely find 19 quarterbacks.) Coaches consider a variety of factors when assigning a child to a position.

Remember that football is a **team** sport, and each participant must play where it most benefits the team. *The Head Coach determines where each participant will play, not the player or his/her parents.* A coach’s main motivation is safety, fun, success, and placing the participants where they fit and can best contribute to the team. The position a participant plays **is the exclusive domain of the coaching staff.** The Executive Board will not interfere with a Head Coach’s decision where to position a participant.

Please be assured that the coaches have the best interest of the team and player in mind when making decisions about positions and playing time. If you have an issue or concern involving playing time for your child, please feel free to contact the **Head A.D first, who can arrange a meeting with the coach.**

### *A Few Unique Game-Related Rules*

**GAME CLOCK:** Gladiator tackle football games consist of four (4) ten (10) minute quarters (12 for flag), with a fifteen (15) minute halftime between the 2nd and 3rd period.

**EIGHTEEN POINT RULE:** After either team scores, the team behind by eighteen (18) points or more will be given the choice of receiving a kick-off or taking possession of the ball on the fifty (50) yard line doing the same at the start of the second half of play.

**THIRTY POINT RULE:** Any time a team leads by 30+ points the officials **MUST** go to a running clock. When this rule is in effect, the clock will not stop for anything except time outs.

**MERCY RULE:** If one team gets a 48+ point lead, the Officials **MUST** end the game.

**CONVERSION SCORING:** All tackle squads except Jr. Midgets will receive one (1) point for passing or running and two (2) points for kicking. Junior Midget conform to C.I.F. Rules – one (1) point for kicking and two (2) points for running or passing.

**PLAYING FIELD ACCESS:** Excluding on-field volunteers such as members of the chain gang or security, spectators are not allowed on the playing field, track or on the sidelines during games for any reason.

**SECURITY:** Professional security guards hired by SGVJAAFC will attend most games.

**FIRST AID:** Please note that all A.D.s are trained in basic First Aid and some in CPR. Every home team must have a qualified medical attendant on the field always on game days. We also have a medic at all our home games. The medic's primary concern is the health and wellbeing of our participants.

**VIDEOTAPING:** No scouting, filming, or videotaping is allowed from the end zones. Scouting other teams' practices or scrimmages is prohibited. No filming or videotaping is allowed from inside the team box. A team representative, team member, team official or parent shall not take motion pictures or videotapes of a scrimmage, unless his or her team is one of the participants.

**NOISEMAKERS:** Apart from a healthy set of vocal chords – that we encourage you to use - spectators may not use noisemakers of any kind during game play, including but not limited to, horns, bells, whistles, victory bells, sirens, fireworks, chimes, or musical instruments.

### *Sportsmanship*

Sportsmanship occupies a unique position in Jr. All American Football. During every game, the officials score the players, coaches, and the fans (i.e., the parents) on sportsmanship. These scores are tallied each week. **At the end of the season, sportsmanship scores are used as the exclusive tiebreaker for determining play-off slots.**

This rule has been in place for many years, but for some odd reason everyone always seems to forget it – until it's too late. Every year a handful of teams are eliminated from the playoffs because of poor sportsmanship.

To put this in simple terms – good sportsmanship is the median. It is expected. You do not get brownie points for being a “good sport”. You get points for going *beyond* what is expected and you lose points for behaving *below* what is expected.

We expect all our players and coaches to do more than simply toe- the-line. This means:

- All persons are required to conduct themselves in a manner that sets a positive example for our children, whether you are in the stands or on the sidelines, and regardless of whether you are at our field or at another city's field.

- Use of profane or vulgar language will result in immediate ejection from the stadium and could lead to expulsion of your child from the program.
- Cheering is highly encouraged. Coaching from the stands is not. If you want to coach, contact the Board and we will see what we can do. The coaches on the field are doing their best. They need your support, but not your help.
- No parent shall, before, during or after a game approach or confront an official about *anything*. Like all of us, officials do this for love of the game (and a small stipend). They are paid a very small amount for officiating games - which does not begin to compensate them for the work they do or the abuse they take. They sometimes make mistakes. That's life. Dealing with disappointments and learning how to properly react in adverse circumstances is an important life lesson for all our participants. We expect parents to help them learn it.
- It is an unfortunate reality of our times that adults misbehave during youth sporting events. *Don't be one of them*. The Gladiator organization has a zero-tolerance policy regarding adult misconduct. This includes not only your attitude toward other teams, parents, and officials, but also your attitude toward coaches and other members of the Gladiator organization.
- If you are in the stands and a carded member of the Gladiator organization requests that you modify your behavior, please do so. This is for a reason. You could be inadvertently costing your team sportsmanship points and be responsible for the team not making playoffs. If, after such a request is made, you continue to behave in a manner inconsistent with our rules and guidelines, you will be asked to leave. If such behavior becomes endemic, you will be ejected from the program. We take this *seriously*.



## *Parental Volunteers & Fundraising*

In our culture, the word “volunteer” resonates with overtones of charity and uncompensated self-sacrifice; a selfless willingness to help others without pay and possibly in the face of personal danger. (In football terms, think Mother Teresa with a whistle.) However, this is youth sports and here a more accurate definition would be:

*“Vol-un-teeer” – **noun**: A parent or guardian of a participant in a youth sports organization who is coerced, cajoled, shamed, or otherwise compelled by threats or bribes into providing uncompensated services for the exclusive benefit of that organization.*

(Hey, at least we are honest about it).

The fact is that without significant parental participation the Gladiators would cease to function. To be as equitable as possible, we have implemented the following guidelines:

**VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS: Each family will be required to work one (3) three-hour shift on a Home Game Day per season per enrolled player or cheerleader.** (E.g., if you have two participants, then you will have two three-hour stints. If you have three or more participants, well, you should see the President about arranging for sleeping accommodations in the Snack Bar). We will *never* schedule or ask you to volunteer for anything during your child’s game. (If, for some odd reason, you would prefer to volunteer during your child’s game, let us know and we will accommodate such requests.) Please notify your Head A.D. if you have children on other teams so we can make sure your volunteer time does not interfere with any of your children’s games.

Each Head A.D. is responsible for coordinating volunteer schedules. Please advise your A.D. concerning time constraints or conflicts at the beginning of the season. If you cannot make your assigned shift, it is your obligation to notify the A.D. at least one week prior to the assigned game and to arrange a substitute AND make-up work. Failure to do so may result in fines, reduced playing time, or both.

**ESCAPING VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS:** As part of your registration process, you deposited a \$75.00 check with us. Once you complete your volunteer obligations, you get it back. If you don't, we keep it. You play, or you pay.

**FUNDRAISING & PANCAKE BREAKFAST:** We recognize that many families are drained due to fundraising efforts in multiple activities for their children. We attempt to keep fundraising events to a *minimum*. However, this is a non-profit organization and we need extra funds to pay for equipment, uniforms, facilities, lights, conference fees, trophies, etc.

Each year we typically host a "Pancake Breakfast" the same day as Team Picture Day. Participation in the Pancake Breakfast is *mandatory* for two reasons. First, if we have broad participation in this event we will not need any other fundraisers – and that makes everyone happy. Second, our Conference bylaws encourage "strong effort on the part of each team to promote parent participation" and this function serves to satisfy that concern. It is both a fundraiser and a social event.

Each participant will be required to sell or purchase a certain number of Pancake Breakfast tickets. A prize will be awarded to the Gladiator who sells the most tickets. We also encourage each family to attend the Pancake Breakfast.

***How else can you help support us?***

- Buy La Canada Gladiators merchandise ("Gladiator Gear"), which will be on sale at various times in August and at every home game.
- Support the snack bar, which will be open during most practices and at all home games.
- Advertise your business in our yearbook.

**PROHIBITED USE OF GLADIATOR LOGO:** While we always try and accommodate anyone who desires to support our program *no one* is permitted to supply, manufacture, or give to the participants anything relating to the Gladiators (such as tee shirts or jerseys) that serves to advertise any business or enterprise without the prior written consent of the Executive Board. Furthermore, no one can use the Gladiator logo for *any* purpose without the written consent of the Executive Board.

Complete information about these opportunities will be sent to parents during the season.

### *Post-Season*

**TEAM PARTY:** After the season (usually in early December) each team has its own party, which is typically held at a private home. It is up to the parents to honor the coaches and ADs for their efforts.

### *Grievance Process*

Although we do our best, we have found that on occasion conflicts arise. If you find yourself in a situation where you feel that special attention is warranted, we have established a process to address your concerns. Please be advised that adherence to this process is necessary for the smooth administration of the program.

**Team AD:** Your first point of contact to discuss any issue is your team's Head AD. This should be done at an appropriate time – like after or before practice. Game days are not the appropriate times to approach the AD. Discussions should not be in the presence of the participants.

**City AD:** If, for whatever reason, a parent considers the response of the team AD to be inadequate, you should contact the City AD for any football related issue or the City Cheer Coordinator for any cheerleading related issue. The City Athletic Director or City Cheer Coordinator will investigate the matter, set up a meeting with the appropriate staff, and will provide you with a response. If the City Athletic Director or City Cheer Coordinator deems a meeting with

the appropriate coach or staff to be appropriate, the City Athletic Director or City Cheer Coordinator will conduct such a meeting and act as arbitrator.

**Filing a Formal Complaint:** If after the team and City AD have become involved you are still dissatisfied, you may submit a formal written complaint with the Executive Board by contacting the President or any Vice President. The formal complaint *must* be in writing (email is acceptable) and contain sufficient information about the issue involved. The process is outlined in our bylaws. The President shall review the complaint with the Board, who will investigate the circumstances associated with the matter. You will be advised in writing of the Board's decision and any actions the Board takes in regard to your complaint.

### *Prohibited Conduct*

The Gladiator organization insists that all participants, parents, and fans always maintain self-control.

1. Physical or verbal abuse of anyone at anytime during a Gladiator function will not be permitted.
2. Removing your child from a game or practice because you are "unhappy" with what is going on is not permitted.
3. If a parent must air some grievance, do so within the confines of the Grievance Process described above. No parent should directly approach a coach, AD, or any "carded" Gladiator volunteer in an offensive or disrespectful manner – especially in front of any participant.
4. Disrespectful conduct toward an official or opponent, or boisterous and improper behavior in the stands is not permitted.

Any parent who violates these rules will be asked to leave the program.

## *Gladiator Refund Policy*

The policy is set forth in your registration packet. However, a summary is as follows:

Prior to the first football or cheer practice of any season, if you withdraw your child from the Gladiator program, you are entitled to a full refund upon timely return of all Gladiator-owned equipment previously issued to the participant. On or after the first day of practice, you are entitled to a refund only if specifically provided for below:

1. If your child is *injured* and cannot continue with the program *prior* to Certification Day, or fails to meet the appropriate weight or certification requirements, you are entitled to a full refund upon timely return of all Gladiator-owned equipment previously issued to the participant.
2. If your child is cut to reduce the roster to 33 players prior to Certification Day, you are entitled to a full refund upon timely return of any Gladiator-owned equipment previously issued to the participant.
3. If your child is *injured* or withdraws for any reason from the program *after* Certification Day, you are not entitled to a refund. However, we would strongly encourage any participant so injured to remain with his team and participate on the sidelines. Regardless, that participant and family are still responsible for the return of all Gladiator-owned equipment in good condition.
4. If your child fails to maintain a 2.0 average and is no longer eligible for the program, you are not entitled to any refund.
5. If you are asked to leave the organization due to parental misconduct, improper behavior, or failure to provide requested documentation (such as grades), you are not entitled to any refund.