

 **2025 PARENT & PLAYER FOOTBALL TRYOUT**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*These questions and answers are provided as a courtesy from coaches who are parents themselves to other parents. The sole intention is to inform those new to the sport, school, and program. They are not up for debate or discussion. Those who may possibly disagree or be displeased should strongly consider their future participation choices as these will be in place until the administration sees fit to make any change in the program.*

**LOGISTICAL QUESTIONS**

**Why are we not in full pads the first 3 days?**

The State of Florida & Leon County Schools require 3 days at the start of the football season be held with only helmets, progressing to shoulder pads and no pants. This rule is in place to ensure that during the hottest part of the year, students are given an opportunity to acclimate to the heat and humidity as well as for coaches to instruct safe technique prior to pads going on.

**Why are we trying out at night?**

Leon County Schools partners with WeatherSTEM weather service to monitor for safety. When the heat index reaches 100 degrees, all sports coaches are alerted via text message of a time frame where outdoor activities are prohibited. Additionally, lightning strikes within 10 miles of campus bring the same prohibition. In our area and at this point on the calendar, afternoons bring these two scenarios almost daily.

With approval of the County Athletic Director, beginning at 6pm will reduce heat & weather issues, giving all involved the most schedule stability and reduced interruptions. This also gives parents who work more of an opportunity to bring their child without missing work.

**Why are there two groups for tryouts?**

With tryout numbers increasing annually and an expectation they enter triple digits, breaking the players into two groups, “perimeter skill” and “in the box” players, allow for each group to minimize wasted time while the other is being evaluated. Two groups allow for more repetitions, with all 6 members of the coaching staff being able to evaluate in multiple skill specific drills to give the clearest picture of each player’s abilities.

**Why does this not look like a regular football practice? Why are they not “coaching” a lot?**

Tryouts are to evaluate potential players for the fall roster. Shorts do not give the whole picture on any one player as blocking, tackling, and physical contact cannot be seen. The tryout week will be structured around seeing what physical, emotional and mental traits, characteristics, and abilities each player have. Coaches will be teaching technique, but no schemes will be installed during this week. Each day will be vital but the two days in pads will be of utmost importance for players to prove their mettle. Football is hard. Football is tough. Everything changes when pads go on.

**Can my student use their own equipment?**

Yes, this is encouraged. Students may use personal mouthpieces, girdles, white pants & shoulder pads as long as they have been cleared before use by the coaching staff who is responsible for safety.

*All helmets will be issued by Leon County and Montford Middle school.*

**ROSTER SELECTION**

**What are we looking for in selecting players?**

**Physical abilities:**

* Strength
* Size
* Speed
* Footwork
* Handwork
* Body control
* Agility
* Toughness.

**Mental abilities:**

* Does the player have to be told the same thing over and over?
* Can the player apply instruction to their play quickly and consistently?
* Can the player focus regularly?
* Does the player have discipline on the field?
* Can the player absorb technique/scheme concepts and apply them to their play?
* Can the player handle being coached?

**Emotional Ability:**

* Is this player someone we want representing all involved in our program?
* Is this player more focused on themselves or the larger group?
* Is this player interested in being held to a standard of behavior?
* Can this player speak for themselves or are they reliant on others to “do it for them”?
* Is this player interested in being developed on and off the field or are they more of a showcase mindset?
* Does this player demonstrate work ethic and a willingness to be coached?
* Does this player demonstrate manners and a willingness to serve others or do they feel that they are owed and demonstrate a mindset of entitlement?
* Is this player personally responsible for what they say and do or do they finger point?
* How does this player handle the “highs” and the “lows” that come?
* Players that fully buy into the culture we have.

**What are we not considering?**

* Previous athletic accomplishments, awards, honors, or participation in any sport.
* Name, familiarity, or previous knowledge of anyone in the program.
* Players or families that are focused on individual goals only or who prove to be disruptive or not represent the program well at all times, in all ways.
* Those who believe the program should work for them and their needs and not that they are a part of something larger than themselves.
* People who are worried about personal stats and recognition.
* The opinion of anyone not on staff or outside the program, regardless of “expertise” level.

**What is the difference in building a roster versus keeping the best athletes?**

Leon County Schools places a maximum number of 50 players that any middle school can keep on their roster. For context, college football has 85 scholarship players and 30 walk-ons. Coaching staffs can keep *any* number, up to that 50 limit. At a 2:1 ratio, there will be more “skill” players than “lineman” tryout. With 11 on offense & defense we start with 22 and backups for each immediately put us at 44 before specialists are placed on a roster. Versatility of a player becomes a premium attribute immediately. The inevitability of injuries, suspensions, etc. must be considered when building this depth. The final roster will not be the best athletes with which to build a team. The final roster will be compromised of the players that give the team the best chance to have depth and versatility at each position.

**My child only wants to tryout for X position, why are they being moved around during tryouts?**

With the above-mentioned versatility being paramount, players who can productively play multiple positions are of the highest value to a small roster team. At no time will a single skill set be the determinant of making the roster. For example, “my son has a strong arm, he should play quarterback”. Far, far more goes into playing that position that ability to throw a football. “My son can really run fast; he should be a wide receiver” is not a valid ideology for team strategy. To steal from baseball, “nobody cares how hard you throw ball four, you have to be able to *pitch*.”

If a coach sees that a player does not have the requisite talent to play a position they wish to try out for, that player will be moved to evaluate them at other position to meet the stated goal of the best football players.

**PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS**

**“6th graders probably don’t get kept, that’s what I’ve heard online and I think that will happen. My player won’t get a fair shake.”**

It is always best to believe only what you have heard from the program, directly. There is no set number of players from each grade level that will be rostered. There is an equal eye to the future as there is for fielding the best team possible today. The factors listed above will be the same for all players.

**“Why will the coaching staff not respond to me until they speak with my son first?”**

There is no desire to “hide” from a parent. The level of experience both playing and coaching for this staff brings with it the ability to not be intimidated by a parent. The policy of speaking with a player first on any issue related to tryouts is for the personal skill development of the student. Shaking hands, looking adults in the eye, and being able to hold a conversation with an adult are skills that are required in life and we are in education as a career, this is what we do daily. Secondarily, we coach kids and work with kids. We will speak with a parent after we have spoken to the player first for these reasons.

Final roster decisions are not up for discussion and are the total purview of the coaching staff as a whole.

**What do you mean we can’t miss tryouts/practice to come and go as we want? We are on 3 travel teams at the same time!**

Part of team sports in the school environment is teaching the bigger picture lessons of life. Commitment to something larger than oneself is a key cornerstone of football and the program we are building. This is not travel ball, recreational ball, or any other type of “pay for play”. Each player is to be at tryouts, for their own full opportunity to compete, but more so to show commitment and that the team comes first, not their own priorities.

**How is this NOT like pay for play travel teams?**

In school ball, there is no fee to participate. The coaches receive no financial compensation from families to give of their time and experience to help our students. Roster status and time on the field is not in any way purchased or influenced. No player or parent “has their hooks into a coach”.

All are equal, in all ways. Everything is earned. By all. There is no other team to quit and jump to if one family doesn’t see their own dreams realized. This is not a “come and go as we please” situation.

Families expect full commitment from the program. The program expects the same from families.