



**Parent and Player
Handbook 2026**



MISSION STATEMENT

The Lathrop Jr. Spartan Football & Cheer program is a non-profit, volunteer driven organization aimed at giving youth a chance to participate in an organized, competitive league.

Our focus is on helping our youth build character, sportsmanship, self-confidence and learn responsibility & teamwork in a competitive environment while gaining a strong sense of community. We provide a structured, safe, and secure environment for the children to learn these skills.

Our goal is to teach the fundamentals of football and cheerleading in an atmosphere where FUN is experienced through hard work, dedication, and attention to details, that is sure to result in success on game days. Success will be measured in terms of safety, personal and team improvement, personal physical fitness, teamwork, sportsmanship, and life lessons; NOT measured in terms of final scores or wins and losses.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Beau Grisham

Vice President:

Athletic Director:

Cheer Coordinator:

Cheer Director: Carissa Grisham

Interim Cheer Admin Assistant: Yvette Villavicencio

Community Outreach & Social Media Coordinator:

Snack Shack Coordinator: Andrea Wentworth

Team parent Coordinator: Chelsea Brown

Volunteer Coordinator: Justin Simmons

Secretary: Estella Arranga

Equipment Director: Spencer McCurdy Assistant Equipment Manager: Fred Ware

Fundraising Coordinator:

FOOTBALL AND CHEER DIVISIONS

The organization breakdown for Football Players and Cheerleaders is as follows:

Starts: 6-8 years of age

Rookies: 8-10 years of age

Junior Varsity: 10-12 years of age

Varsity: 12-14 years of age

Both football & Cheer athletes will be assigned to teams based on age.

All ages are based on participants' age as of August 15th of the current year. **Players that turn 15 during the season will be ineligible to participate.**



FOOTBALL AND CHEERLEADING COACHING STAFF

The LJS Board will approve Head Coaches. Assistant coaches will be selected by the Head Coaches, and approved by the LJS Board.

The approval process is as follows:

1. Applications will be filled out for anyone wishing to be head coach. The deadline for Head Coaches is March 31 of the current year.
2. Applications will also be filled out for anyone wishing to be an Assistant Coach. The deadline for Assistant Coaches will be 4 weeks prior to the beginning of practices. Applying as soon as possible will help for planning purposes, and may help your chances of being accepted as an Assistant Coach.
3. Applications will be completed by ALL coaches for the current year. In other words, returning coaches need to reapply each year.

Any coaching position (Head Coach OR Assistant Coach) is considered an appointed position. As such, no definite period of time is guaranteed and with the approval of the LJS Board, any coaching position may be terminated without prior notice for reasons the Board has investigated and found to be detrimental to our purpose as stated in our Mission Statement. Assistant coaches may be removed at any time for any reason by the Head Coach.

All Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches, and helpers will be required to submit to a criminal background check as mandated and administered by the Central Valley Youth Football & Cheer League (CVYFC). CVYFC also mandates that all coaches and helpers (Football AND Cheer) are certified.

Football coaches will be certified through USA Football and Cheer coaches will be certified in accordance with the Central Valley Youth Football & Cheer League requirements. The certification requires participation in an online program that specializes in various aspects of coaching youth athletics ages 5 through 14. Coaches are expected to pay for the certification out of pocket.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be a useful tool to communicate with teammates, fans, friends, coaches and more. Social media can also be dangerous if you are not careful. Every picture, link, quote, tweet, status, or post that you or your friends put online is forever part of your digital footprint. You never know when that will come back to hurt or help your reputation during the recruiting process, a new job, or other important areas of your life.

Failure to abide by this contract may result in removal of extracurricular activities including athletics.

Recognizing the above:

- I take responsibility for my online profile, including my posts and any photos, videos or other recordings posted by others in which I appear.
- I recognize Social Media platforms include Instagram, SnapChat, Facebook, Twitter, blogs and other programs that are or can become highly public and have permanent effects.
- I will not degrade my opponents before, during, or after games.
- I will post only positive things about my teammates, coaches, opponents and officials.
- I will use social media to purposefully promote abilities, team, community, and social values.
- I will consider "Is this the me I want you to see?" before I post anything online.
- I will ignore any negative comments about me and will not retaliate.



- If I see a teammate post something potentially negative online, I will have a conversation with that teammate. If I do not feel comfortable doing so, I will talk to the team captain, or a coach.
- I am aware that I represent my sport(s), school, team, family, and community at all times, and will do so in a positive manner.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent participation is one of the major keys to a successful season. What parents emulate in their participation and contributions manifest in the total outcome of the children's experience. Parents Participation is MANDATORY. Throughout the season, there will be many opportunities for fundraising. Fundraising is an excellent way to acquire funding for the organization and teach the kids the importance of contributing to a greater cause. This funding will help pay for events such as National Night Out, Homecoming, and end of season activities.

The net gains from our concession stand and entrance fee pay for game day costs such as field usage, referees, medics, security officers and custodial duties.

There is a \$100 deposit per child that will be collected at registration. In the early weeks of the season, there will be a game day volunteer schedule with instructions on how to sign up online. All parents **are REQUIRED to volunteer** at least 4 hours per child in our concessions stand, on the field moving the chains, or at other volunteer events.

If parents/guardians wish to change slots, it is their own responsibility to coordinate a swap. If a swap is worked out, both parties are expected to provide the information to the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. **Simply notifying the Director, Coach, or any other member of the organization of your wish or need to swap slots is NOT acceptable.** **Cheer parents only:** once all of your volunteer hours have been completed and verified with the volunteer coordinator, you can speak with Beau Grisham and you may receive your deposit back. To receive 100% deposit your volunteer hours have been met (4hrs per player) You'll receive partial deposit returned if hours have not been met (\$25 per hour not worked)

Football equipment/volunteer deposit: To receive 100% deposit you must return all equipment and uniform wash by due date and all volunteer hours have been met (4hrs per player) You'll receive partial deposit returned if hours have not been met (\$25 per hour not worked) and all equipment and uniform wash by due date You'll receive no deposit back if all equipment and uniform wash are not returned by due date and/or volunteer hours are not met

You can have anyone over the age of 18 work your volunteer hours any teenagers must be approve by the board



PARENT BEHAVIOR

The essential elements of character building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these six pillars of character. Therefore, all parents/guardians, by registering their children for this program shall:

1. Agree to not force their children to play sports.
- 2. All registration fees will be paid prior to the first day of practice.**
3. Inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of your child or the safety of others.
4. Will not engage in physical or verbal confrontations with players, coaches, officials, fans or opposing teams before, during or after practices or game competitions. Weapons of any kind are not permitted and would be grounds for immediate expulsion.
5. Ensure that you (and your guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting, or using profane language or gestures.
6. Band/Social Media: Is not an outlet to display negativity and complaints about the program or opposing teams. This behavior is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the program
7. I agree to remain alcohol, smoke and drug free at all LJS events.
8. Teach your child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
9. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion* from the program.
10. Will NOT be a sideline coach or referee, including refraining from making negative comments and/or using foul or offensive language. I will encourage positive reinforcement to my child, teammates and coaches.
11. Will lead by example in exhibiting sportsmanship and fair play at every practice and game competition. I will encourage this behavior from other coaches, players, officials, parents and supporters, including opposing teams.
- 12. Will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win, remembering that the game is for my child and their teammates.**
- 13. Will always be gracious in victory and dignified in defeat. Winning should be the result of preparation, hard work and discipline.**
- 14. I understand that playing time is not guaranteed, and may vary from week to week.**
15. If my child develops a behavior-related problem that repeatedly disrupts practice and/or games, I promise to work with my child's coach to resolve the problem and encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

CHILD PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR

The Lathrop Jr. Spartan Youth Football & Cheer Program takes tremendous pride in our reputation of placing sportsmanship, discipline, and character far ahead of win/loss records, statistics, etc. Therefore, all participants pledge to be positive about their youth football or cheer experience and accept responsibility for their participation by following the following codes of conduct.



1. I will exhibit sportsmanship and fair play at every practice, and game competition. I will also encourage this behavior from other teammates, coaches, officials, parents and supporters. I understand that I am representing the Lathrop Jr. Spartans Football and Cheer Organization. Poor behavior during practices or games may result in loss of playing time and disciplinary action.
2. I will treat all players and officials with the utmost respect and will abide by any decisions made by individuals in a position of authority.
3. I will make every reasonable effort to attend all practices and games, and I will notify my coach or team parent if I cannot attend, or will be late. **I understand that playing time is determined by my attendance, attitude, and performance at practices and is not guaranteed.** I will come to practices and games ready to listen, watch and learn from my coaches. I will play any position awarded to me and will always put the needs of the team above myself.
4. I will treat other players, coaches, officials and fans with respect, and I will expect to be treated accordingly. I will not engage in physical or verbal confrontations with players, coaches, officials or fans before, during or after practices and games.
5. **I understand that bullying of any kind in person, online or any social will not be tolerated.**
6. I will refrain from use of foul or offensive language or gestures.
7. I pledge that I will not damage or deface, in any way, any property, building or equipment.
8. I will not interfere with players, coaches or officials during games.
9. I will be gracious in victory and dignified in defeat.
10. All participants will treat his/her coaches, other players, officials, and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or abilities and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
11. Special Helmet Throwing Rule:
Any player seen throwing a helmet will have their helmet taken away for the game and the player will sit out for the remainder of the game. Should there be a second offense, the player is subject to being asked to turn in all equipment and be excused from the team. Such action will NOT result in a reimbursement of registration fees.

PARTICIPANT PREPARATION

1. No participant will be allowed to start practice until all registration paperwork is complete, and account is paid in full. This includes a player application, an original birth certificate, concussion form, and physical form dated before the first day of practice.
2. First practice will be announced at a later date and will be determined by the start date of the game schedule. If your child cannot make the first practice because of vacation plans, please notify their Head Coach. If your child can start with the first practice and your vacation falls at a later date in August through October, please notify the Head Coach **in writing** of the vacation dates at least 2 weeks prior to your planned vacation. For cheer vacations could affect All Star Eligibility
3. Physicals: All participants are required to have a physical exam and/or proof of a physical exam prior to the first day of practice of the current playing season and within the current year. No practice will be allowed for a child without proof of a physical exam on file. Your physician must complete the CVYFC physical exam form and be stamped by the doctor and must say the child is “clear for all full contact physical activities.”



4. The first week of practice for all players and cheerleaders will be required to complete TEN (10) hours of conditioning. Any hours missed during the first week of practice must be made up at the next available practice. **PLAYERS:** Pads are not worn during conditioning. Only the helmet, mouth guard, shorts, T-shirt and cleats. Players should bring their own water bottles. Equipment will be handed out but does not include cleats, mouth guard, protective cups or rib pads.
5. **EQUIPMENT THAT MUST BE RETURNED AT THE END OF THE SEASON INCLUDE: HELMET, SHOULDER PADS, BAG, PRACTICE PANTS, PRACTICE JERSEY, GAME PANTS.**
6. Practice will be up to 5 days/week until the first game. After the first game, it will be reduced to 3 days/week. If your child cannot attend practice, please notify the Head Coach.
7. We practice and play rain or shine, heat or cold. If there is lightning, practice will be canceled.

ATTENDANCE RULES

It is required that each participant (football and cheer) complete 10 hours of conditioning practices prior to starting contact drills and cheer stunts. Each team will document the dates and hours of practice to determine when football players can begin contact drills and cheerleaders can begin learning stunts. It is allowable for the head coach of the football teams to require players to wear helmets and/or shoulder pads during the initial conditioning period. All equipment is to be worn from that point on, unless directed by the Head Coach, and contact drills are not to take place.

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

The rules of the CVYFC League state that all players and cheerleaders participate in a minimum of FOUR (4) hours of practice time during the week immediately preceding a game. This is a division rule and must be adhered to. If a player / cheerleader has participated in LESS than 4 hours of practice during the week immediately preceding a game, the player / cheerleader MAY NOT be allowed to participate in the game that week. They will be expected to be on the sidelines in their uniform with their Coach.

Please have the courtesy to notify a coach prior to practice, if your child will not be able to attend. This helps our Coaches plan out their practices.

WEATHER POLICY

If practice is cancelled due to weather, families will be notified by **4:00 PM** through the official team communication app.

The Board of Directors will monitor conditions and make cancellation decisions based on safety. Practice may be cancelled if:



- The projected temperature is **105°F or higher at 6:00 PM** at the Lathrop High School practice field.
- Smoke conditions are present.
- Air quality is determined to be unsafe.
- Other weather conditions create an unsafe environment for athletes and staff.

Player safety will always be the top priority.

GAME DAYS

Games will typically be played on Saturday. The league will produce a game schedule well in advance of the beginning of the season.

The typical game day schedule is as follows, but is subject to change:

Saturdays:

Starts will play at 10:00 AM

Rookies will play at 12:00 Noon

Junior Varsity will play at 2:00 PM

Varsity will play at 4:00 PM

Players should arrive at the field ready to warm up/play 2 hours prior to game start time, or **at the discretion of the Head Coach.**

48-Hour Cool Down Period:

The 48-hour rule is used as a “cool down period” after any incident. Communication of any means with team staff will not take place within a 48-hour window following an incident, unless safety is of concern. Concerns about safety, officiating and/or coaching during a game/practice must be directed to a Board Member. I also understand that inappropriate behavior during practices and/or games, may result in disciplinary action and/or expulsion. Infractions from previous years will be taken into consideration.

1. **Communication:** All suggestions, complaints and grievances will be acknowledged within 48 hours. An email should be sent by the parent to: President@LathropJrSpartans.com.

Grievances: a meeting will be scheduled to include the coach, parent(s) and a board member.

2. If I or my guests fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, I understand that the Board of Directors will review the infraction and determine the appropriate level of disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may include a verbal warning, written warning, suspension, or expulsion from the organization.



TACKLE FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT

The following equipment will be distributed to players and collected at the end of the season: a.

- Helmets
- b. Shoulder Pads
- c. Game Pants
- d. Practice Pants
- e. Practice Jersey
- f. Bag

The following equipment is to be provided by parents/guardians:

- a. Mouth guard (do not cut the tail off the mouthpiece)

THE MOUTH GUARDS MUST BE COLORED AND BE TETHERED TO THE FACEMASK.

- b. Rib Pads
- c. Cleats NO metal cleats, molded plastic only
- d. Protective Cup (optional)
- e. Face shields must be clear with no tint or color.

If face shields become too scratched or becomes a distraction, they will be removed.

All gear that is checked out to the above player will be returned to LJS at the end of the season, no later than **November 30th** of the same football year. Failure to return all assigned returnable gear, will result in total loss of the deposit including the remaining cost of the equipment (including taxes and shipping costs). Failure to pay will result in your account being reported to a collection agency to collect outstanding balances. If outstanding balances are not paid in full, the above-mentioned player will not be allowed to participate in future LJS events or register for future football seasons, until the outstanding balance is paid. **If a member of the organization needs to pick up the equipment from you after November 30th, you will forfeit the deposit.**

We understand that there will be normal wear and tear of items. Please return all above items regardless of damage to avoid being charged for the replacement. All of the above items will need to be washed and allowed to dry completely, prior to returning. Please do not cut or alter any pieces of the uniform or equipment, doing so, I will be charged the above replacement cost of the item(s).

During the season, it is the responsibility of the registrants to properly care for all borrowed equipment. Care for all pants and jerseys are outlined on the tags. Helmets can be wiped with warm water. **DO NOT** use abrasives and/or cleaners. Doing so will remove the paint from the helmet.

CHEERLEADING, RULES AND EQUIPMENT

Each squad will learn a number of sideline cheers, including a 2–3-minute half- time routine. Every season we participate in a League Cheer Competition. All Cheerleaders must participate in this event. At this competition, the Cheerleaders will perform a routine specific for competition. As this event approaches, more details will be provided by the coach/team parent and posted on the website.



Cheerleaders are expected to bring their entire uniform to all events. If Poms are lost during the season, you will be responsible for purchasing a new set at the full price.

Parents are responsible to provide the following: large towel or yoga mat, water bottle, practice shoes.

NO JEWELRY including earrings and body jewelry (i.e. belly ring, nose or eyebrow jewelry, etc.), shall be worn. The only exception will be if you are required to wear a Medical Alert bracelet or necklace. Please be advised, that if you are getting your ears, or any other body part, newly pierced, you **MUST** have the piercing done **NOT LESS THAN 12 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FIRST PRACTICE**. You will not be allowed to practice with earrings (or any other piercing jewelry) in, even if you have just had them pierced. Using tape or Band-Aids to cover earrings/piercing jewelry is **NOT** an option. This is a division level rule and **CANNOT** be deviated from. This rule applies during practices and at all games.

No sculptured nails of any kind are permitted. No coating, including polish, on your nails, of any kind. Turn your hands so your palms are facing up. If you can see the tips of your fingernails with your hands in this position (palms up) your nails are TOO LONG and must be clipped. This is for your safety as well as the cheerleaders you may be in a stunt with.

We ask all parents/Guardians to read, initial and sign the following code of conduct. The signed copy of this code of conduct will be collected at the Mandatory Meet and Greet parent/guardian meeting. Failure to sign will prohibit your child from participating.

INSURANCE AND INJURY

Football and cheerleading are rigorous physical sports and therefore there is a risk of injury for all participants.

Please promptly report every injury, regardless of how minor, to the Head Coach. For insurance purposes, it is necessary for the LJS Organization to complete and file an Injury Report form.

In case of injury your personal insurance is PRIMARY and the CVYFC has a secondary insurance.

REFUND POLICY

On occasion, there may become a need to discontinue participating for any number of reasons. No refunds will be given once the child has been fitted for their Football and/or Cheer uniform. If they decide not to participate before fittings, parents may request a refund of the registration fee, however the registration deposit is not refundable.

Refunds are not given for injured players. Injured players are still considered part of the team, and are encouraged to be present and to participate at a level that is in agreement with his or her physician. Refunds are not given for players that have violated rules that have resulted in excusal from the team.



initial next to each line after reading:

CHEER ONLY

_____ I understand that my cheerleaders' fingernails must be cut short enough that the fingernail cannot be seen from the palm side of your hand. Cheerleaders will not be allowed to perform or practice until this is corrected.

_____ I understand that Cheer is a team sport and there are no subs so practice and games are mandatory, as absences affect the team as a whole.

_____ **ACRYLIC OR PAINTED FINGERNAILS ARE NOT ALLOWED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.** If a cheerleader shows up with nails, they will not be allowed to participate for that day until they are removed. Not only can acrylic and long fingernails cause injury, but the fingernail is also used by medical staff to access circulation and obtain oxygen levels in case of emergency.

_____ Coaches make the decisions on stunting based on safety for ALL cheerleaders (bases and flyers). Even if I feel my child should be on top, there may be a specific reason they are not.

ALL ATHLETES

_____ I will enforce that my child treats other athletes, players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.

_____ I will never publicly ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition as it is a team sport.

_____ I will emphasize skill development and how it benefits my child, teaching them that doing their best is the most important thing.

_____ I will remember that coaches are volunteers who care deeply about all the cheerleaders and if I have a particular complaint, I will discuss it with the Cheer Director, or Cheer Coordinator for cheer or Head coach for football privately.

_____ I will make sure my Athlete is on time and attends all practices, games, competitions, and events. I understand there are consequences for absences and tardiness.



_____ If my Athlete will be late or absent, I will contact the Cheer director, Cheer coordinator or Head Coach for as soon as I am aware.

_____ I will use the communication platform as requested by the LJS Organization, as a means for receiving information, updates, and schedules.

_____ **Practices and games are mandatory.** They should not be missed due to competing activities, such as birthday parties, other sports programs, camping, etc.

_____ I will enforce that my child treats other athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.

_____ Coaches make the decisions on Playtime based on safety for Athletes. Even if I feel my child should be on the field, **play time is earned not guaranteed.**

_____ I understand that my Athlete may not wear any jewelry during practice, or games. Jewelry can cause injury to your child or others. For the safety of all, they will not be allowed to participate until it has been removed.

_____ I understand that parents are not allowed on the field. I will remain in the designated area. This is for the safety of the Athletes, coaches, and staff.

_____ I have read and acknowledged the 48-hour cooling off period. In this handbook. Cool Off period. Starts at the End of the game and Ends at the end of practice following the game.

_____ I understand that IF I DO NOT COLLECT MY BIRTH CERTIFICATE FROM THE TEAM PARENT BACK BY THE END OF THE SEASON IT WILL BE SHREDDED.

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE HANDBOOK IN ITS ENTIRETY AND AGREE TO ALL RULES AND CODES OF CONDUCT.

SIGNATURE

DATE

PRINT NAME

PRINT ATHLETES NAME