**2019 MJRA Youth Football and Cheer Handbook**

Momence Junior Redskins Association (MJRA) is a volunteer, non-profit (501c3) organization, offering organized tackle football and competitive cheer for area youth grades 3rd thru 8th. A non-travel, non-competitive (Momence vs Momence), flag football and cheer level are offered to children in grades 1st and 2nd.

MJRA is a part of the Central Illinois Football League (CIFL) and abides by the standards of USA Football’s “Heads Up” Program. For more information on USA Football, visit [www.usafootball.com](http://www.usafootball.com)

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**MJRA Code of Conduct**

Football players, cheerleaders, their families and fans, coaching staff, and MJRA Board Members are expected to uphold the values of our organization, both on and off the field. We expect our players to work hard, focus on the team before themselves, act humbly and respectfully in all interactions, and display sportsmanship to our teammates and opponents at ALL times. *MJRA reserves the right to remove any of the above-named parties from our organization that display behavior outside of these expectations.*

**Attendance**: Attendance at practice is crucial and full attendance is expected. Many football plays and cheerleading stunts require participation of the whole team. Please notify coaches as soon as possible so they can plan for any future absences.

**Communication**: TeamManager mobile application will act as our main form of communication. It is the responsibility of MJRA to send out weekly communications on Sunday and any announcements or changes as necessary. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for checking the TeamManager mobile application to make sure they are informed and up to date.

**Volunteer Fee**: Each family will be able to sign up for a Volunteer Shift during our Equipment Days. Once the shift(s) have been completed, the $50 volunteer fee will be immediately returned. Families may choose to donate their volunteer fee if they are unable to or choose not to volunteer.

**Registration Fees**: Registration Fees must be paid in full prior to any player receiving equipment and/or participating in practice. We are dedicated to making our program affordable and offer the lowest registration fees in our league, payment plans, and discounts for families with multiple players. MJRA receives only HALF of our yearly expenses from player registrations. The rest is made up through concessions, fundraising, and generous community sponsors.

**Transportation**: MJRA is not able to provide transportation to and from practices or games. Travel arrangements are the responsibility of each player’s parent and/or guardian.

**Water/Restrooms:** Our practice field is not equipped with a water source and/or public bathroom. Please make sure players come to practice with their own water or sports beverage. Porta-Potties will be available on the field; however, coaches are not allowed to help players use the restroom, nor are they able to leave the rest of the team to accompany your child. If you feel your younger child may need assistance, please discuss a game plan with your child’s coach on the first day of practice.

**Parent Participation:** Parents/Guardians are welcome to observe practice from the sidelines but must refrain from participating/interfering with practice and/or games. Those observing practice with younger children should make sure they stay off all equipment and are closely monitored. In addition, coaches cannot be responsible for players outside of practice and game time. This includes dropping off your player early to practice and/or picking them up late.

**Participation Guidelines**

**Practice Cancellation:** Practices will rarely be cancelled in advance due to weather. Should we need to cancel or adapt our practice schedule, based on the guidelines below, we will communicate it as soon as possible through the TeamManager app.

*Rain or Inclement Weather:* Parents/guardians should remain with their players until their coach gives the all clear and/or be on call to quickly pick up their player if we must end practice early. Please do not allow your player to walk or ride their bike in inclement weather. Our equipment shed is our only form of shelter in an emergency and we need your help in making sure player safety is our number one priority.

*Excessive Heat:* If the heat index reaches the following during our practice time, we will adjust our schedule as follows.

Heat index of 90+: Walk-thru practice only, no equipment (t-shirts and shorts)

Heat index of 100+: No practice

**Player Eligibility:** To be eligible to participate in the MJRA program, our parent league, CIFL, requires we provide the following for each participant:

 Updated photo of child

Copy of birth certificate

FOOTBALL ONLY- Physician signed sports physical (must renew every season)

In addition, all players must attend and participate fully in *two practices per week* in order to play in the next game. Any child transported to a medical facility cannot resume practice or play in any game without written permission from a doctor.

**2019 Practice and Game Schedule**

Practice Schedule Game Schedule\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Aug 5th-Aug 7th: 6:00pm to 8:00pm Aug. 24th- Away vs Paxton-Buckley-Loda

Aug 12th-16th: 6:00pm to 8:00pm Aug. 31st- Home vs Gibson City

Aug 19th-Oct. 10th 5:30pm to 7:00pm Sept. 7th- Bye Week (No Game)

 Sept. 14th- Home vs Iroq. West

 Sept. 21st- Away vs Clifton Central

 Sept. 28th- Home vs Dwight

 Oct. 5th- Away vs Watseka

 Oct. 12th- Playoff Week (TBA)

 Oct. 20th- Cheerleading Competition

**Uniform and Equipment Policy**

MJRA will provide a majority of the equipment and uniforms needed for each football player and cheerleader. This helps keep costs low for our families and ensures our players are protected with the equipment that meets our safety standards. Players are responsible for returning equipment, as indicated below, at the end of the season during the designated Equipment Return day(s). Equipment should be properly washed after each use and kept in excellent condition. MJRA has the right to charge a fee to any player we feel has negligently lost or damaged our equipment.

**Football-MJRA Provided Football-Player Responsibility**

*Returnable Items* Long Sleeve Thermal Shirt for cold weather games

Helmet Football Shoes/Spikes (Non-metal only)

Shoulder Pads Protective Cup (Required)

Practice Jersey

Practice Pants

Game Jersey

Game Pants

*Non-Returnable Items*

Mouthguard

Black Game Socks

**Cheer-MJRA Provided Cheer-Player Responsibility**

*Returnable Items* Black leggings for cold weather games

Game Uniform Shell (Top) White Cheer/Tennis Shoes

Black Body Liner White ankle socks

Game Uniform Skirt

Game Jacket

*Non-Returnable Items*

Bow

Bloomers

**Football Rules and Regulations**

**Divisions of Play**

Mighty Mites: 3rd and 4th graders who are 8 to 10 years old on September 1st.

Juniors: 5th and 6th graders who are 10 to 12 years old on September 1st.

Seniors: 7th and 8th graders who are 12 to 14 years old on September 1st.

**Position Restrictions**

Player’s weighing greater than the determined levels below are considered “Stripers” and are restricted to certain plays and/or positions. This is to help ensure an extra level of safety by keeping players equally matched in game situations.

Mighty Mites: 100 lbs or greater

Juniors: 135 lbs or greater

Seniors: 155 lbs or greater

A striper’s helmet will clearly be marked with red tape down the center. Stripers are not allowed to be ball carriers and must start each play in a 3 or 4-point stance (Defensive or Offensive Line)

**Practice Rules**

The first week of practice is considered conditioning with the purpose of helping players safely readapt to the physical and mental demands of playing youth football. Teams are not allowed to hold practice prior to Aug 5th, 2019.

Players **must** complete 10 hours of physical conditioning practice time, according to the following schedule, before being eligible to participate in full-contact activities:

Practice 1-2: Helmets only

Practice 3-5: Helmets and Shoulder Pads

Practice 6+: Full pads unless otherwise notified

When school is in session, practices will be limited to 3 nights per week for 90 minutes

Players MUST bring their equipment to practice (water/drink included) or they will not be allowed to participate

**Football Rules and Regulations cont.**

**Game Rules and Regulations**

All football players must weigh-in with their team in order to be eligible to play in the game. It is very important players arrive on time for weigh-ins according to the schedules below. Players are required to weigh-in wearing their full uniform and game pads.

***Mighty Mites***

Report to Game Time: 12:00pm

Team Weigh-In: 12:30pm

Game Time Start: 1:00pm

Game Duration: Two 30-minute, running clock, halves (clock stops for a score,

timeout, injury and the last 2 minutes of the second half)

***Juniors***

Report to Game Time: 1:00pm

Team Weigh-In: Half-time of Mighty Mite Game

Game Start Time: 3:00pm

Game Duration: Four 10-minute quarters

***Seniors***

Report to Game Time: 3:00pm

Team Weigh-In: Half-time of Juniors Game

Game Start Time: 5:00pm

Game Duration: Four 10-minute quarters

**Cheerleading Rules and Regulations**

**Divisions of Play**

Mighty Mites: 3rd and 4th graders who are 8 to 10 years old on September 1st.

Juniors: 5th and 6th graders who are 10 to 12 years old on September 1st.

Seniors: 7th and 8th graders who are 12 to 14 years old on September 1st.

Cheerleaders will cheer side-lines during their divisions football game. They will also perform a half-time cheer or dance.

**Competition**

Cheerleaders must participate in regular season games to be eligible for cheer competition. Each year, a competition will be hosted either by CIFL or by invitation with local competitive cheer teams. Professional, un-biased judges will be hired and paid to judge the competition according to IHSA cheerleading guidelines.

**Coaches Code of Conduct**

**Certification**: All football coaches are required to obtain their USA Youth Football Coaching Certification and agree to coach and abide by the concepts and principles outlined in the Heads-Up USA Football program.

**Rules and Regulations:** Coaches are responsible for reviewing and abiding by all CIFL By-Laws.

**Player Development Focused**: Coaches will remember that players are young and have had full school days before arriving to practice. We will remember some of them may be hungry and overwhelmed with life outside of football. Our purpose is to develop not just football players and cheerleaders, but future leaders.

**Heat Acclimation:** Coaches will allow for heat acclimation the first week (10hrs) of practice, giving players time to adjust to running and conditioning in the summer heat.

**Planned Practices**: Coaches should pre-plan practice to get the most out of their time together. New concepts should be taught at the beginning of practice when minds are sharp, and conditioning reserved for the end of practice.

**Winning:** All coaches must remember the spirit of the game. Winning will not be at all costs, but rather the result of developing players to the best of their abilities. In compliance with CIFL rules, a coach must do everything in his power not to run up the score on an opposing team. Any head coach in violation of this rule will be suspended from the next game and any practice that week. For a second violation the head coach will be suspended for the rest of the season and be considered “not in good standing” with the league.

**Equal Opportunity**: Player positions will not be pre-determined prior to the first week of practice. All players, unless otherwise restricted by “striper” guidelines, will have the opportunity to try out for available positions. Coaching staff will work together to unbiasedly determine the best position for each player.