

# Sykesville Raiders Football & Cheerleading Program Guide





The Sykesville Raiders Youth Football and Cheerleading Program participate in the CCFL Youth Football and Cheerleading League (CCYFCL) and as such, operate within the rules of the CCYFCL. The purpose of this guide is to explain the organization, general rules, and procedures of the Sykesville Raiders Youth Football and Cheer Program.

[www.sykesvilleraiders.org](http://www.sykesvilleraiders.org)

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## Administrative Items

Visit our Website, [www.sykesvilleraiders.org](http://www.sykesvilleraiders.org), for the following information:

### MVA ID

<http://www.mva.maryland.gov/drivers/apply/id-card.htm>, all players and cheerleaders must have this in order to validate age. ID cards will be required prior to Roster Certification in mid-August for Football. If a player or Cheerleader does not have a government issued ID they will NOT be placed on a roster and will NOT be eligible to participate in games or competitions. (Other options are available through the League)

#### New Identification Card

Please refer to [Sources of Proof](#) for required identity and residency documentation.

- If you are using a name other than your birth name, you must bring the documents that initiated the change of name, such as a marriage certificate(s), divorce decree(s) or court name change order.
- The ID card will be mailed to your Maryland residential address on file.
- Please pay close attention to the expiration date of your Maryland ID card. The MVA is not obligated to remind you when it is time to reapply for an ID card.

#### Sources of Proof:

1. Proof of age & identity (original or certified copy of US Birth Certificate); and
2. Proof of Social Security number or ineligibility for a Social Security number; and
3. Proof of Maryland residency (Parents Driver's License)

### Refund Policy

All requests for refunds MUST be made in WRITING to the Secretary- [Sykesville.Raiders@Outlook.com](mailto:Sykesville.Raiders@Outlook.com) with a postmark or email receipt date as listed below:

100% refund (minus jersey fee and \$20 admin fee) for requests dated on or before the Saturday prior to Football evaluations.

50% refund (minus jersey fee and \$20 admin fee) for requests dated on or before the Saturday of Football evaluations conclude.

NO REFUNDS will be issued for requests dated after evaluations are completed.

Refunds will not be paid out earlier than September 15.

**Season Calendar:** [SykesvilleRaiders.org/Events](http://SykesvilleRaiders.org/Events) Calendar

## A. CCFL Youth Football and Cheerleading League Divisions

CCYFCL has designated divisions of play based on age and weight for football and age for cheerleading. The age determination date for the season is August 1 of each year for football and August 31 for cheer. In football, a maximum of three (3) Older-But-Lighter (OBL or Playback) players per team is permissible as shown below. All players including fourteen (14) year old OBL players may have any birth date between August 2 of the current season and August 1 of the following year. In cheerleading, a maximum of 6 cheerleaders per squad may be outside of their age group. CCFL allows for unlimited 14 year olds who are in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and for (6) 14 year olds who are freshman in high school. However, they may not be on any high school roster.



## Football Divisions:

The current CCYFCL division structure is as follows:

- Division 1 or Freedom** Most competitive teams
- Division 2 or United** Less competitive teams

## FOOTBALL AGE and WEIGHT CHART

Division	Ages	Red Stripe Players	Max Weights	OBL
Pitbull	5-6 yrs. old	over 75lbs	N/A	N/A
8U	6-8 yrs. old	over 90 lbs.	max 115 lbs.	N/A
9U	7-9 yrs. old	over 105 lbs.	max 130 lbs.	10 yrs. old / max 70 lbs.
10U	8-10 yrs. old	over 115 lbs.	max 145 lbs.	11yrs old / max 80 lbs.
11U	9-11 yrs. old	over 130 lbs.	max 160 lbs.	12 yrs. old / max 95 lbs.
12U	10-12 yrs. old	over 145 lbs.	max 180 lbs.	13 yrs. old / max 110 lbs.
13U	11-13 yrs. old	over 165 lbs.	N/A	14 yrs. old / max 135 lbs.

## Cheer Divisions

Squad Selections are based on Age. The number of squads is based on the number of cheerleaders registered for the season. Generally we have about 14-25 girls on a squad.

Squad	Ages
Sparklers	Under 6
Junior Varsity	6-8
	7-9
Varsity	8-10
	9-11
Elite	10-12
	11-13

## B. Evaluation Week

All players should make every effort to be at evaluations so each player can be appropriately placed on a team. If you are going to miss evaluations, please notify the Football and/or Cheer Director the week before evaluations start.



## **FOOTBALL:**

Player evaluations are conducted the last full week in July and will be organized by age and weight class and led by the Football Director. All players will be evaluated by the coaches to determine their placement based on their skills and abilities in relation to their peers.

Players will have three days of evaluations. Players should come to evaluations each day as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> day – helmet, cleats, mouth guard, cup

2<sup>nd</sup> day – helmet, cleats, mouth guard, cup, shoulder pads

3<sup>rd</sup> day – full equipment to include helmet, cleats, mouth guard, cup, shoulder pads, padded pants

Coaches will begin with Non-contact drills before they engage in hitting drills. Once hitting drills start, this will be the coaches' focus.

## **CHEER:**

Cheer evaluations are conducted the last full week in July and will be organized by age class and led by the Cheer Director. All cheerleaders practice together during the evaluation week, and participate in round robin stations including jumps, cheers, and stunting. Cheerleaders will be placed on squads by the following week. Placement is determined primarily by age, though skill level will be considered.

## **B. Player Selection**

**General:** We conduct a draft at each age and weight class to place players in the most appropriate conference for their skill. It is best for the child to play at the highest level of competition that he or she is able and therefore requires that players play on the team to which they are drafted.

With the exception of Pitbull, the Division 1 Teams drafts their players first, and then Division 2 Teams. If there is more than one Division 1 and Division 2 at a level, these coaches will take turns drafting their players for an even draft.

**Pitbull Draft:** The Pitbull teams draft must ensure an equal balance of talent and abilities between teams. Therefore, an "equitable" draft is conducted.

## **C. Football & Cheer Area Directors**

### **Area Directors:**

The Football and Cheerleading Area Directors are the Lead Point of Contact for Evaluation Week and Player/Cheer Drafts. Prior to your team draft, you should direct all questions to the Football or Cheer Area Director (AD). The AD at each age/weight class provides direction and coordination of all other age/weight class coaches. Important responsibilities include:

- Primary communications link between Sykesville Raiders President and age/weight class coaches
- Initial communication with parents and keep them informed up until teams are drafted
- Determine practice site at fields
- Oversee player draft
- Coordinate equipment needs for coaches
- Determines proper placement of players for age/weight class



## Head Coach Responsibilities

The following are primary responsibilities of Division 1/2 Football and Cheer coaches:

- Recruit assistant coaches
- Complete USA Football Level 1 Coaches' Certification Course
- Complete background check
- Completion of Heads Up Training
- Assistance at various activities such as registration, equipment distribution, etc.
- Conduct player evaluations – Communicate results
- Conduct player draft
- Practice planning/scheduling
- Initial Parents' Meeting after teams are formed
- Prepare team for games
- Resolve issues through Football and Cheer Athletic Director if possible
- If not resolved, Football/Cheer Director will discuss with Sykesville Raiders President/Vice President
- Ensure players have proper equipment
- Demonstrate safe and proper techniques in tackling/blocking/running
- Communicate with parents and players
- Display and emphasize sportsmanship
- Have first aid plan for player injuries
- Be on time, prepared for practice!

## Assistant Coaches' Responsibilities

While the level of responsibility of Assistant Coaches is not as comprehensive as the Head Coach's, they still play an important role in team and player development. In addition, many Assistant Coaches are interested in the progression to become Head Coaches. Their ability to become effective Assistant Coaches is important in the consideration of going to the next level. Teams may have up to 5 Assistant Coaches. Responsibilities include:

- Complete USA Football Tackle Football Coaches' Certification Course
- Complete background check
- Assistance at various activities such as registration, equipment distribution, etc.
- Communication w/head coach each day on practice plan – all on "same page"
- Know your fundamentals – tackling, blocking
- Communication w/players – make it easy to understand/skill demonstration by you and them.

## D. Equipment

Football Players will be provided with a helmet, shoulder pads, game day jersey, and chin strap. Football equipment does not include shoes, athletic supporter, mouth guard, practice pants, (black) game day pants or practice jersey. These can be purchased at Dick's Sporting Goods or any similar retailer.

Cheerleaders will be provided with their basic uniform (shell and skirt). Parents are responsible for the cost of the additional required uniform pieces: crop tops, bloomers, shoes, black leggings, no show white socks, and your season bows.



## Equipment Pickup

**Your child must be present** at equipment pick up in order to be fitted properly for equipment. **There are no exceptions to this as this is a safety issue.** Information on equipment pick up days will be posted on the home page at [www.sykesvilleraiders.org](http://www.sykesvilleraiders.org). We typically hold equipment pick up in June and one week prior to evaluation week. Check the website calendar for dates.

It is important that you make every effort to attend equipment pick up so that players have their equipment prior to the start of practice. This will ensure coaches do not have to take time and attention away from practice and evaluations in order to get the players their equipment. Please make every effort to make your assigned equipment pick up day, the make-up day, or contact the Football Director to arrange another day to get equipment if the first two options are not available. If no other arrangements are made, your child will get his equipment in the first week of evaluations.

## Uniforms

**Football Game Uniforms** will consist of black padded pants, black socks and game jersey. Jerseys will be distributed in mid-August after teams have been assigned.

**Cheer Uniforms** are distributed during equipment pick up. These uniforms are for games and may NOT be worn to practice unless specified to by your coach. Coaches will keep pom-poms and will hand them out at each practice and game. Cheerleaders may not take pom-poms home.

## Equipment Care and Maintenance

It is important to maintain clean equipment and gear not only to extend the life of the equipment but also to prevent infections. Please clean your uniforms and equipment regularly, especially your pads and helmets. You can wipe down the pads and inside of the helmets with cleaning wipes and Lysol.

***Jerseys, pants, and cheer uniforms should NOT go in the dryer.*** They should be air dried, and don't take long to dry. Alternatively you can place them in the dryer and use the **air dry cycle ONLY**. If you put these jerseys in the dryer the logo and numbers will begin to peel off. Spandex and other synthetic materials should be air dried as well. **This helps extend the life of the uniforms and keep costs down.**

## Equipment Return

All Raiders issued football equipment will be returned by the end of the season. Coaches will notify you of a drop off date. If any equipment is missing, you will be charged for those items. **A complete set of equipment costs \$200.**

Cheer Uniforms will be returned by the end of the season. Coaches will notify you of a drop off date. If any part of the uniform is missing, you will be charged for those items. **A complete set costs \$100.**



## E. Practices

### FOOTBALL:

- 5 days a week until School starts.
- Once school starts, a maximum of 6 hours per week for practice and a Friday or Saturday game. This schedule will be provided by your assigned coach. This is usually Tuesday and Thursdays from 6-8pm at Freedom Park.
- Please be aware that changes will occur if practice is canceled due to weather. We ask that parents are not more than 15 minutes away from their child's place of practice due to weather or other emergency situations. If you will not be close by, please make arrangements with another parent to pick up your child, and let your coach know who that will be before departing.

### CHEERLEADING

- 2-4 days a week until school starts. Each coach selects their own practice schedule including number of days per week, actual days of the week, and duration.
- All practices will be held outdoors until approximately the end of September. After that, all practices will be moved indoors (we use local elementary schools and Maryland Dance Energy gym space). Please be aware that your practice days may change depending on the days the schools have granted us use of their gyms.
- All squads go to camp at Maryland Dance Energy in August. Camp days and times will vary depending on the coach's decision. On average, camp ranges from 2-3 days, and from 4-6 hours per day. Camp is mandatory, and is an additional cost paid by the parents (\$65). Camp is where they begin to learn their competition routines.
- Additional practices may be scheduled in preparation for competition or other related activities.
- Please be aware that changes will occur if practice is cancelled due to weather. We ask that parents are not more than 15 minutes away from their child's place of practice due to weather or other emergency situations. If you will not be close by, please make arrangements with another parent to pick up your child, and let your coach know who that will be before departing.

### Inclement Weather

We do practice and play in the rain, although coaches will exercise judgment in severe weather, including heat. Poor field conditions may cause us to cancel practice. Indoor practice facilities may be obtained by individual coaches. Decisions are not made on field status until after 3 PM.

If practices/games are canceled, information will be posted on our website, [www.sykesvilleraiders.org](http://www.sykesvilleraiders.org) and emails and texts will be sent as soon as possible. Individual coaches will have their preference, but it is important to make sure your contact information and preferences are current in your profile on our website.

Additionally, due to sudden changes in weather we ask that all parents remain on site during practice or designate someone to take responsibility of their child in case practices end early.





## F. Player Participation

Sykesville Raiders follows the CCYFCL Mandatory Play rule. This can vary from 6-13 plays per game based on division and number of players on the team. Pitbull do not have a mandatory play rule. Cheerleaders are required to cheer at least 70% of their games during the season to be eligible to go to competition. Each squad will be scheduled for one game per week for the duration of the season.

## G. Games

Parents should keep their weekends available from the middle of August through early November. Prior to the regular season, scrimmages will be scheduled and sometimes at the last minute. The **regular season begins the last weekend in August**. Game schedules are NOT finalized until after the last weigh-in so the schedule may not be available until that weekend. The League needs to first understand how many teams are participating before a schedule can be completed. Please try to keep your weekends open until the schedule is finalized.

Directions to all fields can be found on the CCYFCL website and the Raiders website under Fields

Game schedules are designed by the CCYFCL, in which Sykesville Raiders and other organizations participate. It takes a great deal of effort and planning to come up with a game schedule to ensure that teams play 10 games and also have some flexibility for makeup games in the event there are cancellations due to weather or other circumstances. Following are some key points in developing the game schedule:

- 1) Approximately 80% of CCYFCL games are scheduled on Saturdays.
- 2) Approximately 20% of CCYFCL games are scheduled on Fridays.
- 3) For fans of pro sports teams, such as the Baltimore Ravens, game scheduling unfortunately isn't predicated on the team's home or away schedule.
- 4) All game scheduling is done with the available field space provided by the individual member organizations. It is recognized that there will be conflicts at times between player availability and the schedule. Please advise your head coach of these conflicts as soon as possible.
- 5) When games are postponed, they must be made up as soon as possible because of limited facilities available, unpredictability of weather, and limited availability of dates/times. This means games could be rescheduled as quickly as the day after a postponement.
- 6) The availability of game officials and the weather are the primary reasons for the initial schedule and schedule changes.
- 7) CCYFCL tries to look at weekly match-ups, time and location of games when schedules are developed. However, the availability of lighted fields significantly impacts "convenient" geographical scheduling that is sometimes challenging. We are cognizant that traffic, early morning, and late night games can be challenging. In many cases, there is often no other scheduling alternative, so players and parents should be aware of these participation conditions.



## H. Volunteers

Our league relies heavily on volunteers. Please volunteer to help throughout the season. If you cannot make a season long commitment like coaching or team parent, you will be required to help out at games or fundraising events. Below are some of the volunteer roles:

- **Coaches – Head and Assistant.** If you are interested, contact either the Football or Cheer AD.
- **Team Parents** – These parents help with administrative items and communication so that the coaches can focus on coaching. The Sykesville Raiders Secretary is the team parent coordinator who will be a resource to team parents and provide you with template emails and all the information you need to disseminate. These parents also help collect and/or distribute items to the parents on their team, such as fundraising packets. Let your coach know of your interest.
- **Chain Gang** – We must have 3 people to hold the chains and the down marker for all home games. This role gives you the best seat in the house to see all the action.
- **Spotters** – We are required to provide 2 spotters at every game. The parents help to ensure each child has their number of plays and that the Mandatory Play Rules are being followed.
- Other volunteer roles include fundraising, field maintenance, and snack bar. Your team parent will have more information on each of these as they are needed.

## I. Fundraising

Successful fundraising is what helps keep registration fees lower allowing as many kids as possible to participate in our program. Monies raised help us offset the cost of equipment and uniforms, insurance, field maintenance, referees and scholarships for low income families and much more.

Participation in fundraising is voluntary, but strongly encouraged. Other programs in the area require not only fundraising but also require volunteer hours from every family. Our program **encourages** volunteering and participation in fundraising and provides a number of ways in which you can contribute to fundraising efforts in a way you feel most comfortable.

Throughout the season we will have a number of different fundraising opportunities and families are encouraged to participate, but not expected to participate in all activities. If you prefer to avoid fundraising events you can choose an option during registration to opt-out of fundraising. This costs \$50 and is optional but also encouraged. See listing of activities below. Information on fundraisers will be kept up to date on our Website.

If you have suggestions for fundraisers, please email the Sykesville Raiders at [Sykesville.Raiders@outlook.com](mailto:Sykesville.Raiders@outlook.com).



## **J. Codes of Conduct**

\*Please note that the Code of Conduct is acknowledged during registration.

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

As a parent of a child participating in the Sykesville Raider Football & Cheerleading Program, your conduct is seen not only by your child, but also by all those who participate in the program. Therefore, the Board of Directors has outlined the following rules and standards of conduct to which all parents and fans must adhere.

1. Parent, guardian or designee is requested to be present at all events. Especially in the event of bad weather, lightning, injury, or any other emergency, it is extremely important for parents to take part in their children's activities.
2. Alcohol and drugs are strictly prohibited. At no time shall any person be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during any practice, game, or special function (i.e. Homecoming) while on the Obrecht Field Complex, Freedom Park Complex or any opponents fields.
3. I understand that the Raiders organization will place my child on a team which is appropriate for his/her age, size, abilities, and the needs of the organization. I further understand that this evaluation period and need of the organization can change up until the completion of the first game of the season.
4. NO SMOKING at or around fields.
5. No pets are allowed on the Obrecht Field Complex at any time. While at Freedom Field pets are allowed on walking paths but must be kept at a safe distance from players or other spectators at any time.
6. Parents and fans will refrain from criticizing, belittling, antagonizing, berating, or otherwise inciting referees, parents/fans, coaches, participants or opposing parents/fans, coaches, and participants by word of mouth or by gesture.
7. Profanity is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.
8. I will participate in volunteer activities as assigned by my team during the season.
9. Volunteers represent the organization in an official capacity and their conduct reflects directly upon the individual as well as the organization. Volunteers should be aware of their behavior at all times and it should reflect positively towards the program, officials, and all participants.
10. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of any personal desire to win. Including, insisting that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
11. I will provide support for coaches and officials working with my child to provide a positive, enjoyable experience for all, including ensuring my child treats other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect.
12. I will always address any issues with my child's coach in private.



As a parent/guardian of the Sykesville Raider Football & Cheerleading Program, I/we agree to abide by the rules and standards set forth above. I/We understand that I/we will be responsible for my family and friends conduct. Further I/we understand that failure to do so will result in removal from the field area to include the concession area. I also realize not cooperating could result in my child being removed from the Sykesville Raider program.

I/We understand the Sykesville Raiders program reserves the right to suspend any parent for a length of time that the Sykesville Raiders program deems appropriate for violations of the Parent Code of Conduct.

## **Risk & Responsibility Agreement**

### Liability Release

As a parent or guardian, I assume all risk and hazards incidental to the conduct of the league games, activities, and transportation to same; and do hereby release, absolve, and acquit the Carroll County Department of Recreation and Parks, as well as the Sykesville Raiders Program, its officers, members, organizers, managers, coaches, and sponsors of the Program from any liability whatsoever in regard to same, and from any claim for damage arising out of activities conducted, including (but not limited to) injuries received at games, practices, or while being transported to or from these activities.

Additionally, Permission is granted for any coach, assistant coach, manager, leader, or league official to authorize first aid as related to medical illness or injury occurred or sustained while engaged in Sykesville Raider Program activities.

### Protective Equipment

Protective equipment is integral part of the game to reduce injury and head trauma; most notable concussions. It is important that players are using equipment that can provide them adequate protection during play. Helmets are certified by the manufacturer for 3 year during normal use, after which they should be recertified and/or inspected for defects. All equipment and uniforms should be inspected regularly for tears, holes, or other defects. Equipment and uniforms can be reviewed by your Area Director.

As a parent or guardian, I assume responsibility for the reasonable care and return of all equipment and uniforms loaned to the registrant and agree to pay the Sykesville Raider Program the sum of \$200.00 if the equipment and/or uniforms loaned by the Sykesville Raider Program is not returned by December 1st of the current season.

If equipment or uniforms are not being loaned by the Sykesville Raiders Program, I certify that my child's protective equipment is in good condition, or I will have the equipment inspected before the season commences.



### Parent/Guardian Responsibility

As a parent or guardian I understand that the Sykesville Raiders Program is run by volunteers and therefore I will be asked to volunteer approximately 8 hours during the season. This can be during games, practices, and other times assigned by my team.

Additionally, I agree that all financial balances must be paid in full prior to the last week of the regular season. If my financial obligations have not been met than I understand that my child(ren) may not be allowed to participate in post season activities, including playoffs and competitions. Furthermore, I understand that there may be additional costs outside of registration and will be responsible for these costs. This can be for additional required equipment such as cleats and mouth guards, or cheer shoes and bloomers.

Finally, as a parent or guardian I understand that it is my responsibility to be present or designate someone to be responsible for my child at all events. This is especially important during times of severe weather that can cause last minute practice/game cancellations.

## **Football/Cheer Athlete-Coach-Parent Communication**

### **Parent-Coach Relationship:**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult roles. By establishing an understanding of each role, we are better able to accept the actions of each other and provide a greater benefit to our children. Parents, when your child becomes involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations will be placed on your child. This begins with clear communications from the coach of your team.

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### **Communications to expect from your child's coach:**

1. Team/Squad requirements (i.e. special equipment/uniform).
  2. Game/practice schedule and updates.
  3. Team/Squad rules, guidelines and consequences for any infractions.
  4. Team/Squad selection process.
  5. Injuries occurring at practice/games.
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### **Communications coaches expect from athletes/parents:**

1. Any concerns are expressed DIRECTLY to the coach.
2. Advanced notification of any schedule conflicts.
3. Advanced notification of any illness or injury – when possible.

It is the goal of everyone that each athlete will experience some rewarding moments in these growing years. It is important to understand that there may be times when things do not go the way you and/or your child wish. When this occurs, discussion with the coach is encouraged. It is the first and most integral step to understanding and resolution.

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### **Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches:**

1. Treatment of your child.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

Coaches are professionals. They make decisions based on what they believe to be in the best interest for the team/squad and for all the athletes involved. Certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other concerns must be left to the discretion of the coach.

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### **Inappropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches:**

1. Playing Time.
2. Team/Squad Strategy and Plays/Stunts.
3. Football team/Cheer selection.
4. Other athletes.

**WE ARE THEIR ROLES MODELS!** The critical factor in determining whether your child has a positive experience is the quality of their adult leaders – their parents and coaches.

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### **If you have a concern with a coach, here are the procedures and order to be followed:**

1. Call the coach to discuss or discuss after practice.
  2. Please do not attempt to confront the coach before or after a game. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature usually do not promote positive resolution.
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### **The Next Step....What can a parent or coach do if the discussion did not provide a satisfactory resolution:**

1. Call and discuss the situation with either one of the Football/Cheer AD, if the Football/Cheer AD is the coach then contact the Sykesville Raiders President or Vice President.
  2. The appropriate next step can then be determined.
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## **CONTACT & RESOURCE INFORMATION**

Website: [www.SykesvilleRaiders.org](http://www.SykesvilleRaiders.org)

Questions or Feedback: [Sykesville.Raiders@outlook.com](mailto:Sykesville.Raiders@outlook.com)