

Football Safety

The Lower Burrell Flyers, along with many other youth football organizations, understand that the safety of our players and cheerleaders is critical to the longevity of America's favorite sport. In order to do our best to provide our participants with the safest playing environment possible, the Flyers are a part of two organizations – USA Football and American Youth Football. This allows us to get the most up-to-date information on safety and other concerns that youth football and cheerleading organizations face. While much of the focus regarding football safety today relates to concussions, there are many other areas of player safety that also need to be addressed. They include:

- **Heat Preparedness**
Football season begins during the hottest part of the summer. Understanding the dangers of heat and what it can do is the first step in combating heat related issues.
- **Hydration**
Hydration not only helps with heat related issues, it is important to help you perform at your best throughout the season.
- **Safe equipment and proper fitting**
New and reconditioned equipment are important pieces in keeping players safe. It is also essential that equipment properly fits players, in order for it to protect them properly.
- **Conditioning**
Being physically fit allows you to play your best, and also helps to prevent injury.
- **Injury prevention**
Understanding how injuries can happen allows the ability to try and prevent as many as possible. Both USA Football and American Youth Football offer programs and information to help players and coaches understand how injuries can be prevented.
- **Proper Nutrition**
Proper nutrition is emerging as another important component in helping young athletes perform to the best of their ability.

The Lower Burrell Flyers Organization is committed to helping our young athletes prepare for the sport of football, and offer training opportunities throughout the year. We will also offer information on our website regarding safety and ways you can learn more to protect your child. Our board of directors has invested tens of thousands of dollars to provide our athletes with the latest helmets, should pads and other equipment necessary to put them in the safest environment they can play in.

If you have questions regarding safety in youth football, please don't be afraid to ask questions! We believe education is a key component in making the sport as safe as possible, and we want you to have the facts you need in order to make good decisions regarding your child's participation in youth football.

Here are some things we want you to know about what the Lower Burrell Flyers Organization offers:

- Four age levels, divided in two year increments, to assure your athlete competes against kids at similar developmental levels.
- Weight limits at each level to protect young players who are learning the fundamentals of the game from facing severe size/weight challenges in their competition. This allows the athlete to have up to eight years of development learning proper tackling, blocking and other skills without the worry of facing a much larger, oversized opponent. We believe that these important years of development and training prepare our young athletes to face the next level of competition, where size and weight restrictions no longer exist.
- Training and certification through USA Football, in partnership with the NFL, for coaches:
 - Delivers organization-wide coaching education and tracks the success of your coaches online.
 - Ensures coaches have a better understanding for concussion, heat emergency preparedness and equipment fitting.
 - Enhances the competitiveness of your organization with better trained coaches.
 - Improves a coach's ability to run more effective practices within a positive and safe environment.
 - Delivers techniques for working with parents and creating a positive team environment.
 - Certified coaches receive a certificate, and appear in the USA Football National Coaching Registry.

Some more information on player safety...

Two-year youth football player safety surveillance study to be completed and released in 2014

USA Football has released preliminary findings following the first year of a two-year study to examine player health and safety in organized youth tackle football.

USA Football, the sport's national governing body, commissioned the study in February 2012 with Indianapolis-based Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention. The independent scientific study, monitors 10 youth football leagues in six states and is believed to be the first of its scope in youth football's 80-plus year history.

The research documents player health and any sustained injuries during the course of the 2012 and 2013 seasons. Final results are expected in the first quarter of 2014. USA Football anticipates conducting ongoing research in future years to advance youth player safety.

Among the first-year findings, which included more than 60,000 individual athlete exposures (participation in a practice or game) for nearly 2,000 youth football players on more than 100 individual teams:

- More than 90 percent of the 1,913 youth players did not suffer an injury that restricted participation.
- Fewer than 10 percent of players incurred an injury, and of those injuries, 64 percent were minor where athletes returned to play on the same day.
- Contusions were the most common injuries (35 percent), followed by ligament sprains (15 percent).
- Fewer than 4 percent of the youth players sustained a concussion.
- Similar to other levels of football, youth football players were more likely to be injured during games than practices.
- No catastrophic head, neck or heat-related injuries were reported.

- See more at: <http://usafootball.com/health-safety/usa-football-releases-preliminary-data-study-examining-youth-football-player-health-an>