

BISMARCK LIONS YOUTH ATHLETICS (BLYA)

HANDBOOK

For Athletes, Parents, and Coaches



HOME OF THE LIONS

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BISMARCK LIONS YOUTH ATHLETICS (BLYA)

BLYA Philosophy

Bismarck Lions Youth Athletics (BLYA) supports Football, Cheerleading, and Basketball for athletes in grades 3-6. BLYA believes that building strong character is critical to the success of our athletes on and off the field/court. Our athletic programs are designed to promote teamwork, sportsmanship, competitiveness, academic excellence, fitness and fun while teaching students the fundamentals of each sport. BLYA believes that each of our programs should uphold honor and respect in every situation. The BLYA Board of Directors, volunteer coaches, athletes, and parent/guardians are expected to do so as well.

BLYA Goals

The goals of BLYA include providing a safe, fun, and successful learning environment for all of our youth athletes. It is our hope to provide each athlete the best possible opportunities and environment for experiencing growth in each of the sports programs provided by BLYA.

BLYA Organizational Information

BLYA hopes that all participants in Bismarck youth athletics will have a positive and rewarding experience for years to come. BLYA is committed to providing the best experience possible for our athletes, parents, coaches and everyone involved with Bismarck Lions Youth Athletics.

BLYA believes in the rights of all athletes. BLYA's goal is to give equal opportunity to all youth athletes. No person connected with BLYA shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any BLYA activity.

BLYA is an independent organization from the Bismarck School District, Bismarck Administration, and the Bismarck School Board. A volunteer Executive Board of Directors oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Coaching Requirements and Expectations

All persons who wish to become a volunteer coach (head coaches and assistants) for BLYA must first contact BLYA. Prior to approval, the volunteer coach must complete a background check. Coaches shall not be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, shall not use tobacco in any fashion, and shall refrain from profanity while coaching athletes. All coaching terms are determined on a year-to-year basis. However, once approved, coaches from the previous year may be offered coaching positions for the following year.

Coaches are expected to:

- ❖ Promote positive relationships with all athletes (both Bismarck Lions and opponents)
- ❖ Effectively communicate all team information
- ❖ Demonstrate a strong commitment to the team, making practice a priority for themselves, and utilizing resources for the best interest of the team
- ❖ Be an exemplary model of sportsmanship
- ❖ Teach skills, knowledge, and appropriate attitudes
- ❖ Place the health and welfare of the athletes as their primary concern
- ❖ Promote a drug/alcohol/tobacco-free lifestyle
- ❖ Encourage and respect all athletes (build up our athletes do not tear them down)
- ❖ Operate within the rules and guidelines of the Arkansas Activities Association and the policies/rules of BLYA

Athlete Eligibility and Expectations

Athletes of legal age and grade in the Bismarck School District may sign up to participate in Bismarck Lions Youth Athletics. In order to be eligible for competition or practice, certain requirements must be met. Eligibility requirements are:

- ❖ Age requirements
 - 3rd grade: Maximum age of 9 on or before August 1st
 - 4th grade: Maximum age of 10 on or before August 1st
 - 5th grade: Maximum age of 11 on or before August 1st
 - 6th grade: Maximum age of 12 on or before August 1st
- ❖ Completed registration form
- ❖ Paid mandatory registration fee
- ❖ Parent/Guardian/Athlete Agreement & Emergency Medical Release – valid for one calendar year across all BLYA activities (Including acknowledgement that your child is medically cleared to participate in athletics and agreement that you will provide a valid physical upon request - physicals can be obtained through your family doctor, or through most medical clinics -physicals are valid for one calendar year across all BLYA activities)

Homeschool students and students attending other school districts that do not provide a particular sport/activity will be able to participate in BLYA. BLYA will use requirements specified in the league rules to determine eligibility for these athletes.

*Note: Athletes who do not meet all of the eligibility requirements above **will not** be allowed to participate. ALL requirements must be complete BEFORE final registration.*

Coaches should be made aware (by a child's parent/guardian) of any medical condition a player has that may keep the player from full participation in youth athletics.

Athletes are expected to:

- ❖ Place the interests of the team before individual interests
- ❖ Display the highest level of sportsmanship in all circumstances
- ❖ Demonstrate a positive attitude regardless of circumstances
- ❖ Communicate with and respect all coaches and teammates
- ❖ Cooperate with coaches
- ❖ Follow all team rules
- ❖ Attend all scheduled games and practices
- ❖ Be ON-TIME for all scheduled games and practices (ON-TIME is a time designated by the coach that is before STARTING TIME)
- ❖ Strive for academic excellence

Parent/Guardian Roles and Expectations

BLYA believes our program is not complete without the support of great parents/guardians. Parents/guardians play many important roles in BLYA programs: time-managers, encouragers, volunteers, and biggest fans. Parents/guardians are the greatest asset a successful sports program can have, and without their involvement our programs cannot succeed. BLYA has expectations for our coaches, athletes, and parents/guardians as well.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- ❖ Complete and provide all necessary paperwork for athlete registration
- ❖ Provide adequate transportation to and from practices and games
- ❖ Ensure that athletes are ON-TIME for all scheduled games and practices (ON-TIME is a time designated by the coach that is before STARTING TIME)
- ❖ Make sure athletes are dressed out appropriately for all practices and games
- ❖ Serve as role models for great attitudes and sportsmanship
- ❖ Communicate effectively
- ❖ Provide positive encouragement for your athlete and the team

BLYA Rules and Regulations

1. Athletes must be properly equipped with BLYA-approved uniforms and/or equipment.

2. Anyone (for example: parents/guardians and family members) who is not required to be on the field/court must remain off the field/court (including sidelines) at all times during practice and games. Anyone not following this rule will be warned the first time, and removed from the stadium/gymnasium on the second offense.
3. Any athlete who does not meet the responsibilities outlined in this handbook, exemplifies poor sportsmanship, uses profanity, shows disrespect, or does not uphold a high standard of behavior (at or away from BLYA activities) will be disciplined at the coach's/BLYA's discretion.
4. Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and firearms are strictly prohibited from all BLYA functions. Anyone that is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, using tobacco, using profanity, possessing a firearm, or acting in such a manner that is inappropriate, will be asked to leave. **ANYONE FOUND POSSESSING A FIREARM AT ANY BLYA FUNCTION WILL BE BANNED FROM ALL BLYA ACTIVITIES.**
5. Any fan ejected by an official must leave. If they do not, that fan's team will be forced to forfeit. (league rule)
6. All league rules for each sport/activity will be followed by BLYA.

BLYA will enforce a zero tolerance policy regarding unacceptable behavior. Anyone asked to leave a sporting event (whether by the officials or BLYA) will not be allowed to return to any BLYA sporting event or practice unless or until approved by the BLYA Board of Directors.

Appeals/questions regarding discipline, removal, and banning decisions must be submitted, in writing, to the BLYA Board of Directors within 24 hours of said decision.

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship is a display of respect for the rules and for all others: coaches, participants, officials, and fans. It also involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity.

BLYA expects that everyone in the BLYA community (athletes, coaches, board members, parents/guardians, fans) will conform to and demonstrate good sportsmanship during all BLYA activities. More specifically, all should serve as a role model and demonstrate good sportsmanship. This means:

- ❖ Vulgar or inappropriate language is not tolerated
- ❖ Taunting or 'trash talk' with opponents or their fans is not permitted
- ❖ Cheering should be done for our team, not against our opponent
- ❖ Do not harass or taunt game officials

Youth athletics should be a fun learning experience for all participants. Everyone should always remember that our athletes are always watching. Please exhibit good sportsmanship even if you do not agree with the coaches or officials. Please let the players play, the coaches coach, the officials officiate, and the spectators cheer and support their prospective team.

Communication/Conflict Resolution

Communication is key in any relationship. BLYA is dedicated to providing effective communication for all Bismarck Lions Youth Athletic Programs. BLYA asks our athletes, parents and coaches to commit to effective, positive communication as well.

Guidelines for Athlete/Parent/Coach communication:

- ❖ Athletes: Always communicate with your parents/guardians and coaches. Talk to your coaches. They want and need to know what's going on with you. Always ask questions if you don't understand. Please don't assume that a coach knows how you think or feel. Coaches are here to help you!
- ❖ Parents/Guardians: Always communicate with your kids and coaches. If there is ever any concern, let's take care of it. If there is a problem, please make an effort to talk directly to the individual involved. Please give them an opportunity to make any adjustments or corrections necessary. Parents can have a profound effect upon the important and delicate balance in the athlete/coach relationship. While you as a parent may not agree with all decisions that a coach may make, how and when you express your feelings can have a decided effect upon your athlete. If you express negative opinions in front of your athlete, you need to remember that he or she may carry your convictions to the next activity, practice or game. Coaches are here by choice – they are unpaid volunteers. Being a positive example when handling conflict is one of the ways we can ALL help our athletes build character. Coaches are here to help you, by helping your Athlete!

If you have questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately before or after a game. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and it may be a very emotional moment.

- ❖ Coaches: Always communicate with your athletes and parents/guardians. Effective communication is key. If an athlete or parent communicates a problem, please make every effort to handle the situation in a calm, mature, positive manner. Listen to your athletes/parents and consider their point of view. Coaches can use any differences of opinion as an opportunity to demonstrate excellent character. Coaches are here to help

each other and parents/guardians, but most importantly they are here to help our athletes!

If an athlete or parent has any issue or conflict, that issue must be addressed in a calm, mature, and positive manner. The following Steps are recommended, when possible, for resolving conflict while maintaining positive relationships:

Step 1 – speak directly to the person involved in a calm, positive, mature manner. If the conflict cannot be resolved, Step 2 may be necessary.

Step 2 – set up an appointment to meet with the coach and/or coaches. Any meeting needs to take place by appointment and be conducted in a mature, calm, and positive manner. If the athlete, parents, and coaches are unable to come to a resolution, Step 3 may be necessary.

Step 3 – set up a meeting with the BLYA Board of Directors. Step 3 is serious and will provide a resolution. This meeting will be conducted in a calm, mature, and positive manner. This is the last step, and one that BLYA hopes will not need to be used.

Insurance

BLYA does **NOT** provide insurance for any student involved in Bismarck Lions Youth Athletics. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for payment of any medical services their child may receive as a result of any injury that occurs during practice or game competition. An Emergency Medical Release Form must be signed by the parent/legal guardian of the athlete prior to participation in practice or games. The Parent/Guardian/Athlete Agreement, which acknowledges risk and agrees to parent/guardian payment responsibility, must also be signed prior to participation.

BLYA FOOTBALL

Additional Coaching Regulations for Football

No more than 3 coaches can be on the sideline, and no more than 2 coaches can be on the playing field during games (5 coaches total). Up to 5 coaches may be allowed for practice.

Football Registration

BLYA Football Registration will be held on a date(s) set by the BLYA Board. BLYA will communicate necessary information to all eligible athletes. Once final registration has occurred, no further athletes will be able to register for football. The only exception will be for those athletes not enrolled at the time of registration. Special consideration will be given to try to accommodate any new athlete who was not present during the registration process. These circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis by BLYA.

Football Fees

A registration fee will be required for BLYA Football. The BLYA Board will communicate exact fees, dates and deadlines.

Football Equipment/Uniforms

All participants in the BLYA Program must wear BLYA approved equipment and uniforms. At season's end, any BLYA-issued equipment must be returned to your head coach immediately. Equipment that is damaged or not returned will result in a fine for the amount to replace the equipment.

Playing Time Specifications for Football

Every eligible player in uniform on the sidelines will play in the game. Playing time will be determined by the coaches. Specific playing time is at the discretion of the coaching staff. The coaches will also determine player positions. The coach's decisions are **final**. League rules will be enforced. BLYA expects each athlete to attend all scheduled practices, demonstrate good sportsmanship, show respect, be a team player, and listen to and follow each coach's instructions. Again, league rules for playing time will be enforced for each sport and every eligible athlete will participate in practice and games.

BLYA BASKETBALL

Basketball Registration

BLYA Basketball Registration will be held on a date(s) set by the BLYA Board. BLYA will communicate necessary information to all eligible athletes. Once final registration has occurred, no further athletes will be able to register for basketball. Special consideration will be given to try to accommodate any new athlete who was not present during the registration process. These circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis by BLYA.

Basketball Fees

A registration fee will be required for BLYA Basketball. The BLYA Board will communicate exact fees, dates and deadlines.

Basketball Uniforms

All participants in the BLYA Program must wear BLYA approved uniforms.

Playing Time Specifications for Basketball

Every player in uniform on the sidelines will play in the game (either the 4 quarters of regulation or the 5th sub quarter). Specific playing time is at the discretion of the coaching staff. The coaches will also determine player positions. The coach's decisions are **final**. League rules will be enforced. Again, league rules for playing time will be enforced for each sport and every eligible athlete will participate in practice and games.

BLYA CHEERLEADING

Additional Coaching Regulations for Cheerleading

NO stunting in BLYA Cheer below 6th grade, unless AAA (Arkansas Athletics Association) guidelines are met and approved, and the cheer coach is AAA certified.

Cheerleading Registration

BLYA Cheerleading Registration will be held on a date(s) set by the BLYA Board. BLYA will communicate necessary information to all eligible athletes. Once the registration cutoff date has been set and communicated, no further athletes will be able to register for cheerleading. Special consideration will be given to try to accommodate any new athlete who was not present during the registration process. These circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis by BLYA.

Cheerleading Fees

A registration fee will be required for BLYA Cheerleading. The BLYA Board will communicate exact fees, dates and deadlines.

Cheerleading Uniforms

All participants in the BLYA Program must wear BLYA approved uniforms.

Cheer Participation

All cheerleaders present and dressed out will be permitted to cheer. Specific cheer time will be determined by cheer coaches. Coach's decisions are **final**.