

INTRODUCTION

The information contained in this handbook will provide both parents and participants with a general outline of the rules by which the program is structured. The Natomas Jr. Nighthawks (NJN) is a volunteer-ran non-profit youth sports organization with membership in the Sierra Youth Football & Cheer league.

Our goal is to develop well rounded young men and women who learn not only the fundamentals of Football & Cheerleading, but also the importance of education, sportsmanship, respect, and cooperation. We offer an environment where competition is a team effort and not for the personal glorification of any one individual. We encourage players and help them develop a positive character by fostering and encouraging good sportsmanship, community involvement, and academic achievement.

Our primary concern is safety. Many of the exercises, drills and team rules are put into place to ensure your child is physically and mentally fit for Football & Cheerleading. Each child is unique and will develop at his/her own pace. We hope this season will help develop new skills and confidence for your child.

With the 2009 season upon us, you may at one time or another have questions regarding a variety of different issues. Please feel free to contact a board member at www.jrnighthawks.org or leave a message on our hotline at (916) 557-8787.

PHILOSOPHY

The Natomas Jr. Nighthawks (NJN) program is committed to excellence. Success will be defined by the satisfaction of each football player and cheerleader in knowing they have done their best. NJN utilizes football, cheerleading, and academics to develop strong, smart, responsible, healthy young men and women. We strive to provide experiences that build appreciation for and understanding of leadership, teamwork, and discipline.

ACADEMIC GOALS

The Jr. Nighthawks support an academic policy requiring the student/athletes to perform in the classroom as well as on the field. Each participant must maintain an acceptable grade point average (minimum 2.0 or C) and complete all assigned homework to be eligible to play in the game. **In an effort to monitor this requirement, coaches will provide a form to the participant to take to school in order to allow teachers to provide a grade check or will request a Progress Report from parents.** We expect support from all families in this effort.

TEAM D.E.S.T.I.N.Y

Natomas Jr. Nighthawks Team D.E.S.T.I.N.Y.'s mission is to encourage young men and women to be leaders and positive role models at home, in school, on their teams, and in their community.

The Team D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. program is designed to produce well-rounded, influential young men and women by providing opportunities for young men and women to be actively engaged in home, school, team, and community. Team D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. members consist of Natomas Jr. Nighthawk football players, cheerleaders, and alumni. The components of Team D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. are as follows:

Domestic accountability: One's home is the most important place to be a positive influence. Members of Team D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. are expected to display respect to all in the household, and will commit to performing at least one chore around the house on a regular basis. The athlete will sign an agreement with his/her parent(s) committing to completing this chore. First and foremost, our youth should be positive role models at home and among their families.

Educational Success: Team D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. members are expected to be exemplary students in their schools. The educational objective of Team D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. is to have NONE of our members have below average citizenship grades, detentions, or suspensions and have ALL of our members either attain a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) or increase their GPA every quarter/semester while working their way towards a 3.0 GPA. Educational success in elementary, middle, and high schools leads to endless options for higher education and employment.

Team Involvement: A team is a group of people assembled to reach a goal as one unit. Team D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. members will be expected to fully participate in practices and games, inspire teammates with positive words and actions, and help their teams achieve their goal. Our young men and women will learn interpersonal, communication, and cooperative skills that are cultivated in a positive team environment and will be able to apply these skills in every aspect of their lives.

Neighborhood engaged Youth: Team D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. will participate in at least one community service activity per month. These activities will include serving at a local homeless shelter, participating in a neighborhood clean-up, attending community fairs. Keeping team members engaged in the community will result in instilling in our young men and women an appreciation of life and respect of community, as well as develop our next generation of community leaders.

*Watch your Thoughts, for they become your Words...
Watch your Words, for they become your Actions.....
Watch your Actions, for they become your Habits.....
Watch your Habits, for they become you Character....
Watch your Character, for it becomes your DESTINY*

PLAYER/CHEERLEADER REGISTRATION

In order to participate, each child must have the following completed and turned into the Board of Directors:

- Registration payment paid in full.
- Physical Exam Form signed & stamped by a physician (dated 4/15/09 or later)**
- SYFC Parent/Player Contract
- SYFC Code of Conduct
- First year participants must provide a copy of the player's birth certificate.
- SYFC/NJN Release of Liability agreement.
- NJN Player Information Form
- NJN Parent/Cheerleader Contract (For Cheer Participants Only)
- NJN Equipment Receipt Form
- NJN Parent Handbook Receipt.

*****Completed Physical Exam Forms must be submitted in person during any scheduled registration or mailed to: PO Box 340164/Sacramento, CA 95834. Children cannot practice until this requirement has been met. Practice will begin on July 27, 2009*****

FOOTBALL & CHEER TRYOUTS

Football: Each football squad is limited to a maximum of 35 players. If there is more than the allotted amount of players on any given roster at the end of the second week it will be necessary to cut down to the player limit. **In addition, NJN reserves the right to remove any player due to his/her ability to meet the physical demands of the sport and/or misconduct.** This decision will be made jointly by the coaching staff and the Board of Directors. NJN will make every effort to place each child on a team within the safety guidelines of SYFC and youth football. Being on a football squad during the 2008 season does not guarantee placement on a squad.

Cheer: Each cheer squad is limited to a maximum to 20 cheerleaders. If there is more than the allotted amount of cheerleaders on any given roster at the end of the second week, it will be necessary to cut the squad down to the play limit. Being on a cheer squad during the 2008 season doesn't guarantee placement on the squad. In addition to ability, each girl's cooperation, effort, attitude, behavior, and attendance will be considered. **NJN reserves the right to remove any cheerleader from her squad due to her ability to meet the physical demands of the sport and/or misconduct.**

Registration fees are not refunded if/when a participant is removed from his/her squad due to misconduct.

REFUNDS

Partial refunds for participants that have been cut will be issued after October 1, 2009 pending the return of all NJN issued equipment. Please remember that \$75.00 of the

registration fees is non-refundable. **Parents of children who quit will not be entitled to a refund (full nor partial).** Registration fees are not refunded if/when a participant is removed from his/her squad due to misconduct.

FOOTBALL & CHEER PRACTICE

The practice field is reserved for coaches, participants and instructors only. It is asked that parents, friends and siblings remain off the practice/game field at all times. Practice time is limited, so it is important that coaches have the opportunity to make the best use of time allotted. If you must speak with a coach, please contact him/her before or after practice. **Siblings should not be left at the field without adult supervision and the Natomas Jr. Nighthawks cannot assume responsibility for their safety. The Natomas High School (NHS) administration has also asked that we not allow dogs or any other pets onto the field during practice or during game days.** An exemption is granted to trained and clearly marked guide dogs.

Practice Hours: Football and Cheer practice begins Monday, July 27, 2009 at NHS. **Practice is no more than 2.5 hours long, no more than 10 hours per week, and ends at 8:00 p.m. All children must be picked up on time. The attempt to contact a parent or guardian will be made until 8:15 p.m.; thereafter, the proper authorities will be contacted.**

Practice Snack Bar: A small snack bar will be available during practice throughout the season. **We ask families to please not sell any snack food/drink (candy, water, etc.) during our practices.** This affects the snack bar proceeds which are, in turn, invested back into our organization. All fundraisers benefiting our organization must be pre-approved by the Board of Directors.

Tobacco, Drug, and Alcohol use: NHS, as well as the other campuses we will be visiting, is designated as a tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free zone. Therefore, we ask parents that they not smoke on or around NHS or any other school campus which we may attend. Also, drug and alcohol use is strictly forbidden at games, practices and other associated events and will not be tolerated. Anyone involved in such activities will be asked to leave. Law enforcement authorities will be contacted if individuals refuse to leave or behave in a disrespectful manner.

Football Practice: In the event you cannot be at practice, it is mandatory that one of the coaches be notified prior to practice. Please contact the Head Coach directly or call (916) 557-8787. The following penalties apply:

- Missing one practice will prohibit the participant from starting the next game.
- A second missed practice during the same week will disqualify that child from playing in that week's game.
- Children not playing in a game for these reasons are required to attend the game but will not dress.

During the first week of conditioning, participants should dress in gym shorts, t-shirts and should have cleats. After the first week the player will wear the equipment issued to them with a practice jersey and football pants. No jewelry or body ring piercing may be worn. Mouth guards are required at all times. Players should bring a full water bottle to each practice

Cheer Practice: In the event a cheerleader cannot attend practice, it is mandatory that one of the coaches in the squad be notified prior to practice. Please contact the coach directly or call (916) 557-8787. The following penalties apply:

-Missing two consecutive practices will prohibit the participant from cheering in the first half of the week's game.

-A cheerleader with numerous injuries during the season may be asked to provide a physician's release prior to participating in half-time routines and with the cheer competition squad.

-Five missed practices will result in dismissal from the squad, and will prohibit the participant from the competition squad eligibility. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by a coach and the Board of Directors.

-If a member misses an important practice prior to a performance or competition, their spot in the routine will be replaced with another member.

Cheerleaders should wear loose fitting gym shorts or sweats and tops to practice. **After practice outfits are distributed, all cheerleaders must dress in Jr. Nighthawk practice gear.** No jeans or clothing with buttons or zippers. Sneakers with socks and shoelaces must be worn. Light make-up may be used at Cheer Coordinators discretion; face painting and tattoos are allowed during games. **Jewelry and body ring piercing is not allowed at any practice or game.** Hair must be neatly groomed and kept out of the face and off the shoulders. Nails must be cut so that no nail can be seen above the fingertip. Nail polish can be worn at practice, but is not allowed at games. No acrylic nails are allowed. Cheerleaders who are not appropriately dressed will not be allowed to participate in practice. Please bring a full water bottle and towel to each practice.

Cheer Competitions and Other Off-Season Activities: Cheerleaders will take part in the 2009 SYFC Cheer Competition hosted by Power Cheer on November 14, 2009. Parents and coaches may decide to allow a squad to participate in cheer competitions outside of SYFC. In such cases, the parents of the members of such squad(s) will be responsible for funding/fundraising for the competition(s) chosen.

Cheerleading practice hours will also increase during the weeks prior to cheer competition. Your coach and Cheer Coordinator will have more information.

NJN may also request members of cheerleading squads to participate in charitable or community events to increase exposure for the cheer program.

PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT

Participants of the Jr. Nighthawk program are expected to abide by a code of conduct that includes but is not limited to the following:

CHEER

- **Be On Time:** Practices begin at 6:00 pm. Cheerleaders are expected to arrive at least 15min. before practice, at least 1 hour before games so that squads can be checked in, and at least 90 min. prior to competitions (this includes Jamboree) so as to guarantee punctuality.

- **Safety First:** No running, kicking, jumping, play fighting etc. **ABSOLUTELY NO TUMBLING OR STUNTS** without a coach's and or instructor's assistance.

- **Have a Good Attitude:** Cheerleaders and parents are expected to have a positive attitude at all times. We are inspiration leaders, a team, and a sense of support for our football players, our organization and our community. It is our job to represent ourselves in a manner that promotes team spirit and fun.

- **Be Respectful:** Cheerleaders and parents are to treat each other, the coaches and the opposing teams with respect. **Vulgar language, insubordination, fighting, and interfering with the coaches/squad during practices and games will not be tolerated.** A designated area will be provided for parents during all games and practices.

- **Always Do Your Best:** Cheerleaders should realize that they are not going to be the best at everything, and coaches do not expect them to be. Some cheerleaders may be more advanced in their abilities than others. This does not mean that they are not good cheerleaders. The most important thing is to give it your all and to have fun!

- **Keep up with your schoolwork:** Poor grades in school and not completing homework will result in disciplinary action by the coaches.

- **Communication:** We are more than just a cheer squad, we are a cheer family. All cheerleaders and parents should express any concerns and ideas that they have with us. An open line of communication is important to succeed.

FOOTBALL

- **Respect your coaches:** Back talking, profanity, or any form of disrespect will result in disciplinary actions.

- **Take care of your equipment:** This is the key to safety. Let the coaches know if your equipment needs repair.

- **When you don't practice, you don't play:** All excused absences must be coordinated with the coaches. If you don't make an effort to attend practices, coaches are not required to play you.

- **Be Respectful:** Football players and parents are to treat each other, the coaches and the opposing teams with respect. **Vulgar language, insubordination, fighting, and interfering with the coaches/squad during practices and games will not be tolerated. Any profanity and/or unnecessary aggression or violence towards another player or adult will result in disciplinary action.**

A designated area will be provided for parents during all games and practices.

- **Keep up with your schoolwork:** Poor grades in school and not completing homework will result in disciplinary action by the coaches.

-**Arrive on time for practices and games:** Come prepared to work and play.

CONSEQUENCES

Disregard for the above rules and expectations by either a cheerleader or football player will result in the following actions being taken:

1st Offense: Verbal Warning

2nd Offense: Reinstated Verbal Warning to the participant (Verbal notification to parent)

3rd Offense: Written Warning with parental signature required (If not returned, participant will not be permitted to attend practice until it is returned)

4th Offense: Final written warning w/a copy sent to the Board and a request for a meeting with the parent, the child, a coach, and a board member. (Depending on the severity of the issue a 1 game suspension could be issued) ***Please note: Participant will be required to attend game but not be permitted to participate if parent does not attend meeting and sign form acknowledging the issue. Player/Cheerleader will also remain on suspension from games and practices until the issue is resolved.**

5th Offense: Request made to the board for participant to be removed from the squad.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

1. I acknowledge and understand that I will ensure that my child will be promptly brought to and taken home from games and practices. It is my responsibility to notify my child's coach if my child will be late or absent.
2. I acknowledge and understand that parental involvement and support is necessary for team success. I will commit to parent volunteer (PAR, snack bar, chain gang, fundraising, etc.) duties as needed throughout the season.
3. I acknowledge and understand that parents are required to pay entrance fees at home and away games, cheer competition, and playoff games.
4. I acknowledge and understand that only parents who are assigned to on-field duties (PAR or chain gang) are allowed on the football field on game day. I will not step on the playing field or the team's bench if I am not assigned to an on-field duty for that game.
5. I acknowledge and understand that if I am assigned to an on-field duty (PAR or chain gang) on game day I will refrain from giving coaches and players "advice" during the game.
6. I will refrain from approaching coaches immediately following a game to discuss my concerns regarding the coach/team/players.
7. If I would like to discuss concerns with a coach I will schedule a meeting with that coach through the coach coordinator. I will give the coach coordinator a summary of my concern(s) so that the coach will be prepared for constructive dialogue.
8. I will refrain from using profanity and making derogatory statements toward any coach, player, official, opponent, board member, or parent.
9. I will teach my child to prepare and compete to the best of his/her ability while displaying respect for coaches, teammates, officials, opponents, board members, and parents.
10. I will not smoke or use/consume drugs or alcohol while on immediately before, during, or immediately after practice, games, or any other team activities.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Coaches and staff dedicate hundreds of hours to our organization; we are asking only a few from you. Our Parent Coordinators will have a volunteer sign-up sheet every week at practice. **Our organization depends on your help; when you volunteer for a job, please fulfill your assignment.**

The following are job descriptions for positions that need to be filled during our games (volunteer hour times are per game, and are approximate):

Team Mom or Dad, (entire season) 1 person per squad. Responsibilities include but not limited to: working as a liaison between Parent Coordinator, Head Coach and parents.

Weigh Master (entire season) 1 person per squad, for football teams only. Responsibilities include: weighing players for the opposing team before each game. Training and certification required.

Announcer (home games only) 1 person per squad. Responsibilities include: assist announcer with welcoming opposing team, announcing plays, score, etc.

Booster Booth (home games only) 2 people per game. Responsibilities include: helping with the sales of Natomas Jr. Nighthawk gear, t-shirts, hats etc.

Chain Gang (away games) 3 people per squad. Responsibilities include: helping move the markers down the field for each play.

Entrance Gate (home games only) 2 people per game. Responsibilities include: control gate entry, collecting the entrance fees.

PAR (home & away games) 2 people per squad, for football teams only. The object of PAR (Player Allotment Rule) is to make sure all players get a minimum amount of playing time. Each team is required to track all of the players' plays. Note: a game will be subject to forfeiture if a team fails or provide PAR volunteers.

Set-up/Take Down Crew (home games only) 2 people first and last game. Responsibilities include: setting up snack bar, field and booths etc. take down crew, removes items from the field assists with snack bar breakdown and clean up of stadium.

Field Gate Attendants/Walkway Monitors (home games only) 2 people per squad. Monitor stands and access to game field.

Snack Bar Helpers (home games only) 5 people per game, 1 which requires grilling. Responsibilities include: working in the snack bar during games, not including your child's game

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM AVAILABLE

The Natomas Jr. Nighthawks offer high school students the opportunity to complete their community service commitment and/or Senior Project. Please see a Board Member for more details.

FOOTBALL & CHEER EQUIPMENT

The association will provide all necessary football equipment, with the exception of cleats or other personal type pads. The cost of this equipment is over \$300 per child. Upon issuance of the equipment, each parent and participant is required to sign an equipment contract outlining the cost for each item. Parents will also be asked to pay for any misused or broken equipment showing damage above normal wear. All equipment and Mighty Mite cheer uniforms must be turned in clean and washed. A cleaning charge may apply. Please follow washing instructions on all garments carefully.

Although Cheer Uniforms are purchased by parents, we ask that they be kept clean and stain-free. We also ask cheer parents to make sure that girls bring an extra pair of shoes and an extra t-shirt, so cheerleaders change their shoes after cheering and protect their uniforms during snack.

No purchase of jerseys/uniforms or equipment will be accepted; all property of the Natomas Jr. Nighthawks must be turned in. In addition, families that return their 2008 season equipment in excessively late (as defined by the Board of Directors) will be required to provide a \$200 deposit before they are issued equipment for 2010 (assuming they have returned the 2009 equipment). **The Natomas Jr. Nighthawks reserve the right to file a case with small claims court for missing/unreturned equipment.**

GAME DAY

This is the day we have all worked for! Game day is very exciting. Weigh-in for football players begins exactly one hour prior to starting time. Each football player needs to arrive at the game site no later than one and a half hours prior to the scheduled game time. At the discretion of the Head Coach, players that arrive after their team has weighed in may be allowed to weigh-in at halftime and participate in the second half of the game. Cheerleaders must arrive 1 hour before games so that squads can be checked in, (this includes Jamboree) so as to guarantee punctuality. **Please note that Gatorade (or any drink other than water) and any snack food or gum are not allowed on any field with artificial turf. Please make sure your child has water to last him/her throughout the day.**

First Aid: The organization will include individuals who are trained in CPR and first aid. Your family's health insurance will serve as the primary care coverage for the participant. Any football or cheer related injury, regardless of outward appearances, is taken seriously and will be addressed as such. Safety is our primary concern and extra care will be taken in dealing with any reported injury. We also encourage participants to make known any injury to his or her coach immediately upon occurrence. Participants should not hide injuries in order to facilitate more playing time. Any parent/guardian of a player or cheerleader sustaining an injury which prompted a coach or board member to recommend a doctor's visit will be asked to provide a medical release from that doctor prior to further participation in games, practices, or competition.

Player Allotment Rule (PAR): The league requires that each certified football player play a minimum number of plays per game. An official play can include offensive or defensive scrimmage plays or special teams plays such as punts, kick-offs, etc. Each coaching staff will have one assistant coach specifically assigned to coordinate the compliance of this rule. This assignment is in addition to the normal PAR monitors

required by SYFC rules. It is the goal of each coach to provide as much playing time as possible for each participant. Playing time is generally based on the player's ability to make a positive contribution to the team efforts. SYFC rules dictate that each player participates in a set number of plays during the game (note: halftime exception).

Snack Bar: The snack bar is a crucial source of revenue for all associations, it is asked that no one bring outside food or drink to games or competitions. Coolers will not be allowed into the Natomas High School stadium on game day. If you must bring your own food and drinks, please enjoy them outside the gated area of any game or competition. Exception granted to those bringing coolers for the players and cheerleaders' half-time snack.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is extremely important in the success of any organization. Please share your questions, comments, or suggestions. If there are any issues you would like to address please submit them in writing to the Board of Directors. You may be asked to appear at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The address for submission is PO Box 340164/Sacramento, CA 95834 or you may submit the information via e-mail.

2009 NATOMAS JR. NIGHTHAWKS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Migdalia Wade, President
president@jrnighthawks.org

Christina Campos, Vice President
Vp2@jrnighthawks.org

Shauntae Haskins-Thomas, Secretary
secretary@jrnighthawks.org

Jeanie Smart-Smith, Treasurer
treasurefb@jrnighthawks.org

Cornel Wade, Player Development Coordinator
webmaster@jrnighthawks.org

Vanita Davis-Morris, Cheer Coordinator
cheercoord@jrnighthawks.org

Fred Hicks, Coach Coordinator
coachcoord@jrnighthawks.org

Ursel Wilkerson, Football Parent Coordinator
parentcoordfb@jrnighthawks.org

Chantell Howard, Cheer Liaison
parentcoordch@jrnighthawks.org

Ursel Wilkerson, Snack Bar Coordinator
snackbar@jrnighthawks.org

Cornel Wade, Webmaster
webmaster@jrnighthawks.org

2009 CONTACT INFORMATION

MAILING ADDRESS

Natomas Jr. Nighthawks
PO Box 340164
Sacramento, CA 95834

INFORMATION HOTLINE

(916) 557-8787

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF NATOMAS JR. NIGHTHAWKS
PARENT HANDBOOK

I have read the Natomas Jr. Nighthawks Parent Handbook in its entirety and will/have shared the appropriate information with my child(ren).

Child(ren)'s Name

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date _____