



# FOOTBALL

## Frequently Asked Questions

### General

**What is the UM Gator Athletic Program?** The UM GATORS is a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization founded in 2008. Our goal is to have a professional and ELITE organization for competitive youth sports. We are proud members of the Metropolitan Washington American Youth Football League (Metro AYF), which is a division of the American Youth Football (AYF) National Program.

**What is the time commitment?** There are ten hours of practice per week before school starts, Monday - Friday, dropping to six hours per week after school starts, Wednesday - Friday. After school starts there is one game per week. See the sections on Games and Practices for more information. The first day of practice is July 25, 2011 at 5:45pm to 7:45pm. Additional practice details are below.

**Who can participate?** Any child, in grades 1 through 9 can participate.

**Are all kids able to play?** Every registered child must play a required number of plays for each game.

**What if I'm outside of Prince Georges County area?** We have no boundaries in the Metro AYF; you are welcome to play for any team you desire.

**Are parents allowed to coach or volunteer?** We welcome all parents to get involved in the program; rather it's coaching or volunteering. All parents and coaches are required to undergo a background check before participation can begin.

### Registration

**When does registration start?** Registration starts on March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, and the registration enrollment period ends on September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

**How late can I sign up?** The earlier you sign up, the better we can secure your spot on a roster. Once teams reach 25 players per team, you will be put on the waiting list. Your registration fee will be refunded back to you if we can't secure a spot for you from the waiting list. Early registration allows the organization to secure the equipment you will need to play. The UM GATORS Athletic Program reserves the right to close registration at any time with no advance notice.

**Are there any discounts?** Yes, we provide very lucrative discount packages for all of our players. Regardless of when you sign up, there will always be multiple discounts for siblings and multiple program participation discounts.

**Are there any payment plans?** The payment plans are broken down by making a \$100.00 down payment right now to secure your roster slot on the football and cheer teams. The remaining balance must be paid by June 1, 2011 in order for your slot to be secured. **If you do not make your remaining balance payment by June 1, 2011, your roster slot becomes open to other registrants that have paid in full.** Each team will have (25) roster slots and some divisions will have a total of two teams each; UM GATORS Red, and UM GATORS Black. All registrants who makes a down payment but do not satisfy their June 1, 2011 payoff balance; will be reimbursed if the team/s are filled to capacity in that division prior to the submission of their final payment.

**When do I turn in my Medical Release form?** With our new 2011 on-line registration system, once you register, all required forms are automatically filled out in the background for you. You can print these forms at any time. The Medical Release form must be printed, signed, and turned in to the organization before you are allowed to participate. You can bring the form with you on the first day of practice July 25, 2011.

**I have a medical condition or disability. Can I still play?** More than likely you can play. If your doctor is willing to sign your medical release and you are willing to work hard and play your best, you can generally have a good football experience. However, we would recommend contacting our President (Coach Hawk) to discuss your specific details and any concerns you might have.

**Does my Medical Release form need to be signed by a doctor?** Either a doctor or a registered nurse must sign and date the form.

**Do I need a physical?** A doctor's examination or physical are acceptable if that is what your doctor or registered nurse requires to confidently sign your Medical Release form. It must be dated in the current calendar year.

**Do I have to participate in a Fundraiser?** No, your fundraiser commitment is part of your registration fee.

**Do I have to work concessions a certain number of games?** No; another positive change in 2011 for our parents. The UM GATORS home games will be catered by food vendors; we want you to enjoy the day by watching your kids play football. The UM GATORS staff will be responsible for concessions, if needed.

**Why does it cost so much?** The UM GATORS organization is growing and expanding every year to bring you more options and an improved practice, game day and family experience while still maintaining the same high quality standard for excellence that we hope initially led you to join us to begin with. The reality is that there are substantial costs involved with running a growing elite organization. However, the UM GATORS are committed to working with families that support and share our vision for providing an elite youth sports and mentoring program, but have financial challenges.

If there are personal circumstances that lead you to look around for a better bargain, we understand, we know there is competition for your dollars in this area. However, we encourage you to look closely as you "comparison shop" with other area youth sports groups. We also encourage you to ask the right questions. Although, advertised registration costs, fees and such may be lower in another program, be sure that you understand what those fees include; quite often, the lower the fee the more you will be responsible for once the season has started. We encourage you to evaluate the **quality of the program...quality of the uniforms...quality of the field...quality of instruction...quality of the players/parents...quality of the staff...safety of the practice/game areas...quality of the league...type of team/organization insurance coverage....history of success and commitment to local youth.**

We hope and expect that you will recognize the clear difference between joining another local youth group and investing in the "The Program". It's not bragging or arrogance, but demonstrated facts. We think of ourselves as a family and a family-oriented program. The UM GATORS coaches, staff, volunteers, and parents make an investment in your son/daughter and we ask that you invest in us as we grow and develop into the pride of P.G. County and the surrounding area. We reward the loyalty of those who invest in us, support us, and believe in our vision for providing quality athletic programs targeting our underserved communities.

Please take a look at the chart below and it will show that your registration fee falls short of what it cost to operate this program.

UM GATORS Admin/Operation Fees		Association Office/League Expenses		Equipment	
Background checks	\$1.25	Association fee: Metro AYF	\$2.00	Helmets: Sanitize/rental	\$72.00
Staff and Director Insurance	\$7.25	Team registrations: Metro AYF	\$7.00	Shoulder Pads: Sanitize/rental	\$35.00
Club/Ceremony Rentals	\$4.00	Team registrations: AYF	\$3.00	Game Pants: cleaning/rental	\$32.00
Training/registration fees	\$7.50	Player Insurance	\$12.25	Game Jersey: cleaning/rental	\$45.00
First Aid Kits	\$1.50	Referees fees	\$17.50	Practice Jersey: cleaning/rental	\$9.95
Game Balls	\$6.25	Post Season Play	\$5.75	Practice Pants: (player keeps)	\$4.50
Field Paint	\$10.00	Website fees and maintenance	\$3.75	Game Socks: (player keeps)	\$9.00
Ice/Water	\$5.00	Board Meetings	\$2.50	Mouth Pieces: (player keeps)	\$5.55
Practice equipment: dummies	\$4.75	Copies/print cartridges	\$1.85	Belts: (player keeps)	\$1.25
Fuel/Maint.-GATOR Trailer	\$1.55	Postages	\$8.85	Girdles: (player keeps)	\$8.25
Field Preparation/Maintenance	\$6.25	Paper supplies	\$1.85	7 piece pant set: cleaning/rental	\$11.00
Red Cross Training/CPR	\$1.00	Club/Ceremony Rentals	\$5.00	Cup: (player keeps)	\$1.00
Fundraiser fee	\$50.00	Snack fee/Home game meals	\$30.00	Equipment repair/access.	\$1.00
Total	\$106.30	Total	\$93.30	Total	\$230.50

<b>Total cost per player:</b>	\$430.10	<i>Premium trophy, awards banquet and camp costs are mostly absorbed by the UM GATORS organization.</i>
<b>Registration fee per player:</b>	\$250.00	<i>Our registration fee is very comparable or cheaper than other major youth programs.</i>
<b>Organization <u>overage deficit</u> cost per player:</b>	\$180.10	<i>Even with your fundraiser fee added into the registration cost. This is our shortfall that we try to make up thru donations from you or sponsorships from our local businesses.</i>

## **Equipment**

**What equipment is provided?** We provide all of the equipment you will need except for cleats. There are very few organizations that will provide all your equipment to include practice gear. Make sure you are aware of that when you pay a low registration cost somewhere else.

**What is an equipment deposit?** Unfortunately, we have had to deal with parents who don't return equipment and/or don't return it in a timely matter. As a result, for the 2011 season, a \$150.00 (post dated check-Dec 15<sup>th</sup>) deposit is required before any equipment is issued out. If your equipment is returned by Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, your check will be returned to you immediately. If your equipment is not returned by Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, the UM GATORS Athletic program will cash your \$150.00 check. Please note, that there is a \$35.00 fee for returned checks.

**What equipment do I have to provide?** Cleated football shoes (a.k.a. "cleats"). It is our experience that the majority of the kids will use their mouth guard as "chewing gum". Therefore, we recommend that you purchase extra mouth pieces. We will have mouth pieces for sale at the practice trailer. If you have braces, please consult your Orthodontist for proper mouth protection. You may also want to have other personal equipment such as gloves, wrist bands, face shields, etc. We recommend that you discuss your need for such equipment with your coach before actually purchasing it. Face shields are authorized for the Cadet division and above. Athletic cups are required and will be issued to every player with their girdle.

**What kind of cleats do I need?** Metro AYF rules require that our players wear football cleats that are designed for youth football. They must be either a molded cleat or internally threaded shoes where no post is extending from the shoe (instead, the cleat post screws internally into the shoe). Maximum size of cleat is ½ inch (measured from tip of cleat to base of shoe). **No all metal, primarily metal, or metal tipped cleats may be worn.**

**Where do I get the equipment you don't provide?** Football shoes and equipment can be purchased at any sporting goods store such as Modell's, Sports Authority, and Dicks Sporting Good. Every participant should receive a AYF membership card. The UM GATORS will receive a percentage of the sales from the participating retailers.

**What if there is a problem with my equipment?** Many problems can be corrected using the tools and supplies that each team has, so contact your coach for assistance. If they cannot resolve the issue, then they will arrange to get you a replacement.

**My helmet hurts, can I get a different one?** It is extremely common for your helmet to hurt your head for the first couple of weeks. They must be tightly fitted in order to protect the head, which can result in some discomfort. Every effort will be made during equipment hand out to ensure a correct fit. We recommend that once you get your equipment, you wear your helmet before the start of camp and practice, in order to break it in. And remember, when you wear it, be sure to pull it all the way down, hard.

**When and where do I get my equipment?** Equipment handout date will be July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from 9am to 3pm at the UM GATORS headquarters. You can only pick up your equipment if you have registered and turned in both your fourth quarter report card and Medical Release form. If you do not have the forms completed and/or if you are not prepared to submit the \$150.00 equipment deposit check, you can be fitted, but you will not be allowed to take your equipment home with you.

**What if I can't make it to the equipment hand outs?** We do ask that you make every effort to make it on this date, since it is selected to cover most families. However, if you find it impossible to attend let us know as soon as possible, so that we can make other arrangements.

**Can I get my equipment early for a camp?** No, equipment is only authorized to be used at UM GATORS sanctioned events due to insurance restrictions.

**How do I take care of my equipment?**

**Jerseys and pants** – Make sure you remove the pads and belt (if any) and wash in cool water with like colors. It is highly recommended to Pre-treat stains if necessary. **Please Do NOT bleach.** Air dry if possible as name lettering may come off otherwise. The game jersey and pants are not to be used for practice. Game socks can be washed in warm water.

**Shoulder and other pads** - Wipe off with clean, damp cloth. Allow to air dry.

**Helmet** - Hand wash off dirt and clean interior pads with clean, damp cloth. Allow to air-dry. Parents, we ask that have your child take responsibility for keeping track of all of the equipment and keeping it clean.

## **Teams**

**Will there be traveling?** Yes, the ultimate goal of the UM GATORS is to make it to the national championship, which is held in Orlando, Florida. If all of our teams make it, all of the players are expected to attend. So please begin saving and planning to spend the first week of December in Orlando, Florida,

**How are different grades grouped?** Players are assigned by age and weight. There are teams that will have multiple grades combined for that division.

**How are players assigned to teams?** Players are assigned to different teams by their age and weight. Each team will have a max of twenty-five players or less. There will be certain instances that we will allow teams to go over the 25 players limit. If there are multiple teams for each division, the executive board and coaching staff will assign those players to a team based on whether or not the parents are willing to travel to the national championship, held in Orlando, Florida.

**Can I request a specific coach?** No.

**Can I request friends I want to be on a team with?** If your brother (or sister) is in the same division, you can request to be on the same team, otherwise, no.

**How do I find out what team I will play for?** You will be informed once your age and weight is assembled and verified.

**How are coaches chosen?** Applicants for head coaching positions are required to go thru an extensive interview process conducted by the UM GATORS Executive Board. Once selected, the head coach will be allowed to select his coaching staff (usually from the parents that are volunteering on that particular team) with the final approval coming from the Executive Board. All coaches are required to have a background check.

**How many teams are there?** This will depend on the number of players that sign up. We are projecting to have the following teams: Tiny Mite, Mitey Mite, Cadet, Jr. Pee Wee, Pee Wee, 7<sup>th</sup> grade All American (unlimited), and 8<sup>th</sup> grade All American (unlimited)

**Do I have to try out?** No, as long as your registration is complete and paid, and you are not on a waiting list, you will be placed on a team.

## **Practices**

**Where are the practices held?** All practices will be held at the Brandywine Lions Club, Cheltenham, MD.

**When do practices start?** The first day of practice will be July 25, 2011.

**How long are practices?** Most practices are 2 hours long. Practice times will be 5:45 to 7:45. The whole organization practices on the same days of the week.

**How many practices are there per week?** Between July 25 and the start of school, each team will practice 5 days a week. Practices/Scrimmages will be held primarily on Saturdays. After the start of school, each team will practice 3 days a week; Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Game day is not considered practice time.

**Why are practices so late?** There are two reasons for this. First, most of our coaches and volunteers have regular jobs as well as the parents, and it is very difficult to start practice before 5:30 PM. Every effort is made to make sure the kids are released at 7:45 PM.

**If I missed practice because of school work, will my kid still play?** Yes, your kid will still play in the game. However he may have a limited role that week if he's not up to speed on the coaches "game day plan" for the week. It is highly recommended to attend all the practices and take advantage of the Gators Academic Tent (G.A.T.), which is discussed below under PCB.

**What about the vacation I have scheduled?** Go and enjoy yourself. Football will still be here when you get back. But please tell your coach as soon as you can. With that said, if you have any flexibility, try to schedule around the football season, especially August, since the first two weeks of August is conditioning. Your player must have the required hours of conditioning before they are allowed to wear football gear.

**What if I miss the first week of practice?** The biggest downside to you missing the first week of practice is that you will not be allowed to practice in full gear for the first week of your team's practice, which means you will not be able to take part in any contact

(hitting) drills. You will be a little bit behind your team mates for a little while. Also, practices might be a little boring while you watch others run into each other. But you will catch up and you will still be placed on a team. If you attend a week of camp; we will give you credit for the ten mandatory conditioning hours that is required by AYF before any participation in contact drills.

## **Games**

**How long are the games?** Games are made up of four 8 and 10 minute quarters. Most games last for 1 hour for Tiny Mites and Mitey Mites, and 1 ½ hours for the Cadet divisions and above. In addition, players are expected to be at the field at least 1 hour before the game to warm up and weigh in. So count on spending up to 2 to 3 hours on game day. If the game ends in a tie, and time is available, the game will be extended in "Over Time" to determine the winner.

**Why do I have to get to the game so early?** Players are expected to get to the game site at least an hour before game time. This ensures that there is adequate time to warm up and weigh in. Being late for warm ups can increase your chance for injuries, while being late for weigh-in can cause you to be disqualified from some game time, and in some cases may cause a team forfeit. It is important to be on time to the game site. If you are "time challenged", consider carpooling or setting your alarm 30 to 60 minutes earlier than usual. You don't want your child to get hurt, and you don't want to miss a game!

**What is Over Time?** Over Time is an extended quarter to break ties, usually at the end of a game. Basically, the ball is placed on the 10 yard line away from the goal and the offensive team has 4 tries to score. Then the teams switch sides and the new offensive team has 4 tries. If only one team scores, they are the winner. If neither scores after the 4 tries, the game remains a tie, unless it's a playoff game.

**How many games are there?** The teams can play between 8 to 12 games if they advance to the playoffs. Those in the top 4 of their division will move on to the Division 1 playoffs, and those that place 4 thru 8 will move on to the Division 2 playoffs. The playoffs consist of Conference, State, Regional, and the Nationals. We ask that every parent understand that we are a National organization, and the further we advance in the playoffs, we will be required to travel. If you know for sure that you will not be traveling, every effort will be made to place your child on a non-traveling squad, if one is available.

**Where are games played?** Our home games are played at the Brandywine Lion Clubs, in Cheltenham, MD. Most of our away games are played against other associations in Saint Mary's County, Prince Georges County, and Montgomery County. There are times when we will play other associations in AYF from Virginia and Baltimore, to name a few.

**How much time will my child get to play?** AYF has a minimum 8 play rule. This means that you will play in at least 8 active plays per game (plays ending in penalties, kneel-downs, and special teams are not considered active plays). Depending on your position, your skill, and especially your willingness to work hard, you may play more than the required minimum. Notice that "position" was the first item on the list: if you insist on playing one of the "skill" positions, like everyone else, you will likely not play as much. There are a lot of people who want to be the quarterback running back, or receiver. But if you are willing to learn to play any position, you will have a better chance to play more often.

**What position will I play?** More than likely, you will be playing several positions. Most players will play "both ways", both on offense and defense. Your coaches will observe and work with you to find the best locations for you. We want you to be successful!

**What rules are used?** In general, we use the High School football rules as defined by the NFHS. There are several modifications to these rules adopted by the Metro AYF and the AYF National Association.

## **Camp**

**UM GATORS Speed and Agility Camp:** The UM GATORS Speed and Agility Camp is a camp covering the fundamentals of youth football, which includes proper techniques for each position and building stamina and endurance. The camp consists of the coaches, staff, and high school players of the local area. This camp is directed by the UM GATORS Directors of Training and select guests.

**How much does the UM GATORS Speed and Agility camp cost?** The camp fee for 2011 is \$5.00 dollars per day, per participant. A \$150.00 savings passed on to you without any reduction in quality instruction, training drills, or fun.

**What if I miss the camp?** If you miss camp, you will be a little behind and it is your responsibility to catch up with your conditioning. Also, attending camp allows coaches to scout, and assess your skills, which is very critical when you are competing for certain positions.

**What do I need to wear to camp?** Dress for the weather. Wear proper fitting football cleats. If you are registered to play football with the UM GATORS, on the first day of camp, you will be provided your practice jersey, which is part of the equipment gear that will be issued. This practice jersey must be turned in when requested or at the end of the football season along with your other equipment. If

you have not decided to join the UM GATORS, but want to take advantage of the camp, a regular t-shirt will suffice.

**What do I need to bring to camp?** Just bring yourself, and a good attitude. Water will be provided for you.

**What group should I practice with at camp?** The camp staff will place you in different groups each day.

### **Parent Council Board (PCB):**

**What is the UM GATORS Parents Council Board (PCB)?** The PCB was formed by Coach Hawkins and the UM GATORS Executive Board to serve as the voice of UM GATORS parents, players, and cheerleaders. The PCB is comprised of a volunteer-based group of parents responsible for carrying out the goals and objectives of the organization including holding its members in the highest regard, while promoting a family-oriented experience.

**How will the PCB help me or my child?** PCB will: 1) offer one-on-one tutoring services, as needed; 2) staff the UM GATORS Academic Tent (GAT) to assist UM GATORS members with homework during football and cheerleading practices, 3) plan and coordinate fun-filled activities and events for UM GATORS families and friends, 4) engage in community outreach efforts including raising awareness about the organization, and 5) seek sponsorship and funding opportunities to enhance, promote, and support the mission of the organization.

**What kind of activities and events do you have planned thus far?** The PCB and the Executive Board have a number of planned activities under consideration. However, we are confident that we will host a UM GATORS **Community Cook-out, Coaches Game Night** with players and cheerleaders, and a fun-fill day at **S8Zone** in Crofton, Maryland. For a tentative listing of planned events and activities, please visit the UM Gator's website and click on the **Calendar** tab for more details.

**How can I get involved?** If you're interested in becoming a volunteer to assist with the services listed above and/or the planned activities and events, please contact the PCB at [pcb@umgators.com](mailto:pcb@umgators.com).

**If my son or daughter is in need of one-on-one tutoring, what should I do?** To requests one-on-one tutoring, parents should contact the PCB for an agreed upon scheduled time for the tutoring session.

**What is the availability of PCB staff during practices and games?** PCB staff will be available during all practices and games. During practices, PCB staff will primarily be located at the UM GATORS Trailer/Tent. For easy identification, PCB staff will be in specified PCB red, black and white tee-shirts.