
Pickens Dragons *Football*



Winner's Manual

MIDDLE SCHOOL PLAYERS



Pickens Dragons Middle School Football

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Mission Statement – *The Pickens Dragons Football program is dedicated to helping student-athletes succeed academically, have great character, become better athletes/players, and compete for championships*

In Pickens County, we want a program where:

- Players are successful in the classroom
- Players learn character and integrity
- Players reach their maximum potential as athletes, players, students, and people
- Players have fun at football and enjoy our fast paced Offense, Defense, and Special Teams
- Players are excited to be a part of our program
- Players are better off because they were part of our football program

Core Values

- Attitude
- Discipline
- Team
- Excellence
- Consistency
- Effort
- Commitment
- Toughness
- Compete
- Pride

Constant Reminders

- Invest your time, don't spend it
- Dominate your opponent TODAY
- Do Your Job!
- Worry about what you can control
- If it were easy, everyone would do it!
- What are you selling today?
- Be Great in November

The PLAN – How are we going to achieve our goals?

1. Take the “What if’s” out of the program – everything organized; no controllable surprises
 2. Gain the tools to succeed through strength and conditioning
 3. Learn how to succeed by mastering football survival skills
 4. Become winners through intangibles
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1. Have a winning ATTITUDE

- Attitude is a choice
- Paradise is where you are
- See your challenges as opportunities
- Have an attitude of gratitude
- Humility comes before the honor
- Enthusiasm breeds Enthusiasm
- Worry about what you can control
- Have the proper state of mind
- If you think you can, you can
- See yourself being great before it happens
- Have Fun! Enjoy the Game
- NO EXCUSES!

2. Be DISCIPLINED

- Eliminate mistakes – don't beat yourself
- Play Smart, Be Coachable
- Eliminate the Clutter – Focus on the Moment
- Discipline is a daily decision

3. Play TEAM Football

- It's not all about you, it's about the team
- Have great togetherness
- Team before self
- Sometimes what is best for the individual is not what is best for the team
- Take care of business
- Great game day readiness

4. Strive for EXCELLENCE

- Reach your full potential
- Do more than expected
- Maintain high standards
- Embrace the basics, little things
- Satisfaction is the first step to failure
- Put in a full day
- Portray excellence in everything you do

5. Be CONSISTENT

- Dominate your opponent TODAY
- Make every second of every day count
- Champions can never relax
- Consistency is the hallmark of excellence
- Don't get too excited or too depressed
- Winning is a Habit

6. Give great EFFORT

- Laziness is unacceptable
- Everyone can give effort
- Make all mistakes full speed
- Play better than you are
- Work for what you want over and over
- Dependability over ability
- There are no shortcuts to success
- Have a hunger to succeed
- Outwork anyone who wants the same as you
- All we need is your best
- Be Persistent

7. Show COMMITMENT

- Invest your time, don't spend it
- Show genuine care about all on team
- Love is a commitment
- Respect for yourself; Respect for others

8. Be TOUGH

- Play Hard
- No Flinches
- Be the most physical team
- Push yourself to be great
- When it gets tough for them, it's just right for us

9. COMPETE every day, every play

- Get the most out of every day
- Every player, every play, every day= 4th & 1
- Make them quit!
- Never give up
- Regardless of odds, get the job done
- Adversity is inevitable, so be prepared
- See adversity as opportunity to get better

10. Take PRIDE in the Program

- Don't embarrass the team
- With Tradition comes responsibility
- Carry yourself with class; Win with Class
- Do your job!
- Do what is Right
- Faith in coaches & teammates
- Trust your teammates
- Trust the system



PICKENS FOOTBALL

On-Field Keys to Success

1. Create Big Plays

- Create turnovers
- More 10+ yard runs than opponent
- More 20+ yard passes than opponent
- Dominate on Special Teams

2. Win the 3 “T’s”

- Tackling – be the best tackling team
- Turnovers – limit ours, take from them
- Third Downs – somebody is getting the ball on the next play – make it us!

3. Multiple and Simple

- Use many formations on offense
- Change the tempo on offense
- Use many different defensive looks
- Uniqueness on every specialty group

4. Win the Running Game

- Run the football successfully
- Stop the run – make them one-dimensional

5. Win on First Down

- Offense gain more than 4 on 1st
- Defense hold them under 4 on 1st

6. Be the Smarter Team

- Take away their best player
- Know the Situations
- Win the Weekend – coach scouting

7. Most disciplined team

- No turnovers
- No foolish penalties
- No missed alignments
- No missed assignments

8. Win the Big Field

- Win the Red Zone
- Great Net Punting
- Great Kick/Punt Returns
- Win the Swing Plays – score after a turnover – stop opponent after we turn the ball over

9. Have a killer instinct

- Get 1st downs in the 4th Quarter
- Score after crossing the 50 yard line
- Score following an opponent’s score
- Stop opponent after our score
- Score on 1st series of 3rd Quarter
- Stop opponent on 1st series of 3rd Qtr

10. Win the Off-Season

- Master Technique for speed/strength training
- Improve core strength
- Improve bending and flexibility
- Transfer gains from training to field
- Get the last rep – each player should see themselves making a great play on that last rep



PICKENS FOOTBALL

Team Procedures

Requirements for Playing Football:

- *Be academically eligible*
- *Have a current physical*
- *Participate in Team Functions*
- *Follow the Team Policies*

What determines playing time?

There is no guarantee of a specific amount of playing time at any level in our program. We will guarantee you the chance to compete in practice for playing time in games. Playing time is determined based on the following three characteristics:

- Attitude
- Effort
- Ability

Injuries

Unfortunately, injuries are part of football. It is important that you understand the following about injuries:

- **Relay ALL information on any ailments to the coaching staff.** We cannot fix problems that we do not know about. Please let us know what is going on and we can communicate what to do next.
- Assume you will always dress out for practice unless you are told otherwise by the coaching staff or a physician. Even if we are limiting your participation, we still want you to dress out and look ready to participate.
- If you have a serious injury and are out for a substantial amount of time, you still must attend practice each day.

What can players expect from coaches?

1. Be honest – honest doesn't always mean nice, but we should be fair and truthful
2. Help players achieve their goals
3. Help them become better football players – our job is to make you better
4. To help them now and after they leave our program in any way
5. To treat them with respect – respect is not given, but earned
6. To make decisions based on what is best for the team
7. To provide discipline and structure
8. To make our school the best place in the state to go to school and play football

Lockers

- You will be issued a locker each year, and that will be your locker for the entire football season.
- You should keep your locker locked at all times. If you did not lock your locker, we have a hard time helping you if something gets stolen.
- If your locker does not work or you have any other locker problem, let the coaching staff know.
- It is the responsibility of the players to keep the locker room clean. If the locker room is not clean, we will punish the entire team.

Equipment

- You will be issued full equipment. It is your responsibility to keep up with this equipment and turn it in at the end of the season. If you lose anything, you will be placed on the distraction list and be charged for the equipment.
- Do NOT come to practice without being fully equipped. Safety is our primary concern and you should always have all equipment on at practice. Failure to do so will place you on the distraction list.



PICKENS FOOTBALL

Team Policies

We believe in developing players who want to do everything necessary to succeed. We believe in holding the players accountable and we will eliminate players who are not following our team policies and procedures.

Team Policies

Any player that violates our team rules will be placed on the distraction list for a period of time to be determined by the coaching staff.

- Do Right – you know difference between right & wrong
- Be on Time – promptness shows commitment
- Be Dependable – Dependability over Ability
- Give your best effort – all we want is your best
- Outwork anyone who wants the same thing you want
- Treat everyone the way you would like to be treated
- Put in a full day – invest your time, don't spend it
- Report all issues (injuries, problems, etc.) – we can only fix problems we know about
- Do not engage in any behavior that would reflect poorly on our team.
- Take pride in our football program

*"Show class, have pride and display character.
If you do, winning takes care of itself." –Paul
"Bear" Bryant*

Distraction List

What is the Distraction List? – The most successful teams eliminate distractions. Any player causing a distraction will be put on the "distraction list". This is the group that stays after practice or workouts to do extra cleaning and conditioning.

Missing Practice

If you miss practice, you cannot make up that opportunity to get better. The only way you can miss practice is to call ahead and asked to be excused.

- **If you miss practice excused** – you get 1 day on the distraction list (simply to make up time missed and show your teammates you missed them)
- **If you miss practice unexcused** – you get 2 days on the distraction list and if it happens repeatedly you will be removed from the program.



PICKENS FOOTBALL Academics

The Football program is dedicated to helping the student-athletes reach their maximum potential in the classroom and on the football field. We believe in taking an interest in academics and our goal is that each student-athlete becomes a well-rounded individual more prepared to succeed after he leaves high school. Every student-athlete in the football program is tracked academically.

Goals in Academic Success Program

- To assist the faculty to push student-athletes to reach their full potential in the classroom.
- To reinforce the importance of academic achievement and preparation for the future.
- To provide necessary guidelines to our student-athletes and connect them to proper channels of academic support

Each student-athlete is expected to:

- Be organized in school work – develop habits in your school work that will carry over in life
- Be accountable and consistent – work hard in the entire semester. Do not relax until the end
- Attend class all of the time and be proactive in class

Role of Football Program in Academics

- Study Hall as needed – In order to fulfill our commitment to academics and give our athletes the help they need, the football team may take part in study hall at various announced times in the school year.
- Tutoring from teachers – individual tutoring at the convenience of the instructor as well as county-wide and school-wide tutoring programs
- Provide proper channels for success after football –

Study Skills

As a teenager, the most important thing for you, the thing that should be your number one goal, is your education. An education gives you options and a chance for a better life. You need study skills.

According to greatschools.com there are some basic guidelines for good study habits:

1. **Have specific places to study** – This area should have enough space to allow you to spread out your papers, books and notes. You need good lighting and no distractions.
2. **Get Organized** – You need a system to keep track of important papers. A 3 ring binder or something of that nature will allow you to keep up with your work.
3. **Use a calendar** – Use a planner or calendar and write things that you want to remember in there. Test days, days when you have homework due, project due dates, etc. This will keep you on track and help avoid the frustration of missing deadlines.
4. **Estimate how long each assignment will take** – This will allow you to set a realistic schedule. This should involve a small amount of work each day instead of a bunch of work the night before.
5. **Break a big job into a smaller one** – This will make things more manageable. The project will seem smaller. And you will get a feeling of accomplishment. You will be encouraged by making some progress and that will motivate you to see the project through.
6. **Communicate with the teacher** – If possible always sit in the front of the room. Whatever the rules are for that class follow them. Ask questions. Convey to the teacher that you are interested in the class, or that at the very least you are interested in your grade. And most of all, if you need help, ask for it.

Studying for Tests

When you are in your studying spot: turn off the phone, the iPod, the TV, the radio, etc. These are all distractions that divide your attention and keep you from being able to focus. Just re-reading the material is not the same as studying. Try other concepts such as:

- Take the main points and re-write them as questions.
- Highlight your notes.
- Use Post-It notes to mark key passages
- Make flash cards

Pick “your” time of day. Some people can focus better at night. For others it is best if they get up early and study in the morning. Be careful with this though, make sure you don’t stay up late studying and then not get enough sleep.

Sometimes you just have to memorize material. To do this you may want to use a mnemonic to help you remember something. For example, many of us used the fictional name Roy G. Biv to memorize the colors of the rainbow. (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet) Inventing your own mnemonic also works well. The sillier, the easier it is to remember.

Make the most of your time. If you have a doctor’s appointment or something that involves a waiting room, take some study material. Study in the car (only if you are not driving!)

Good study skills reduce anxiety because they produce positive results. They are a perfect example of delayed gratification. Doing what you need to now, in order to get what you want later.



PICKENS FOOTBALL

Parent Information

Parent Rules

- Coaches will not discuss playing time, other players, or the scheme with parents
- If you would like to discuss anything other than these issues, contact Coach Grigsby to set up an appointment
- We expect parents to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at games

Successful Football Parent Tips

- Don't put your son down
- Don't offer excuses for your son if he is not playing – encourage him to work hard and do his best, this is all he can control.
- Insist on good grades – don't let football be an excuse for declining academic standards
- Have faith in the coaches – the coaches are professionals. No coach on our staff has a player on the team and we always do what we think is best for ALL of the players.
- Encourage your son to play for the love of the game, not a scholarship – A college scholarship is something that a player or parent cannot control. Worry about the things you can control and enjoy your time in middle and high school. If a scholarship comes, it will be an added bonus.

Football can help off the field:

- **Grades** – We monitor the grades of every player in our program. We get grade checks every 4-5 weeks and follow up with teachers about tutoring, extra work, etc. If you ever have an academic problem and need the coaching staff's assistance, please feel free to contact us.
- **Character** – We are constantly reminding your son about good character. We have a Character Education program that will be a year-long approach to teaching character. The team concept of football and the trials and tribulations it causes are also a great character builder for many young men.

How can you get involved as a parent?

- **Help with the TD Club Fundraisers**
- **Help during Football Season** – sign up to be part of one of the following:
 - **Field Crew** – Help paint the field – on Wednesday nights during the season.
 - **Food Crew** – help serve meals on Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - **Concessions Workers** – we need volunteers to help sell Concessions at all Games
- **Help with the Annual End-of-Year Banquet**
- *Constantly promote the program by being positive and making football an enjoyable experience*

Frequently Asked Questions

When is a good time to go on vacation in the summer?

Summer break is mandated by the GHSA for the week of July 4th. That means your son will not miss any workouts if he goes on vacation this week. If you go on vacation another week, your son will not be punished, but he will miss those opportunities to get better and they cannot be made up

Do you like players to play other sports?

YES!! We strongly encourage our athletes to get involved in winter and spring sports. All we ask is that they are always at a football workout if they can be. Don't use the other sport as an excuse to be lazy.

When is practice mandatory?

Beginning August 1st through the end of the football season, practice is mandatory. Please do not schedule conflicts during this time. We have to hold all of our players to the same standard and have to punish them if they are not at practice. The only exception will be if they have an excused absence from school on that day.

Can we attend practice?

Definitely. You are welcome to come watch practice. Please watch from the hill or bleachers and please do not interact with the players. We appreciate your enthusiasm for our football program.

What do I need to do if my son says he is hurt?

Call the coaching staff. This is the best reason to call the coach. We are dedicated to keeping our players as safe as we can and will never deliberately put your son in jeopardy. Sometimes we don't know they are hurt because they don't tell us. If your son is hurt, call and make sure the coaches know of the injury – they can contact our trainer and physical therapist (at the high school) to see what steps to take next.