

# Allendale High School *Football Program* *Handbook*



***T**ogether*

***E***<sub>veryone</sub>

***A***<sub>chieves</sub>

***M***<sub>ore</sub>



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# INTRODUCTION

**“Talent may get you to the top, but it takes character to stay there. One important aspect of character is the ceaseless desire to improve.”**

**John Wooden**

This book is designed to help you, your son, and your family to understand the Allendale football program. Our philosophy, policies, coaching style, teaching style, expectations and actions are designed to be as competitive as possible. More importantly, they are designed to enhance the character, academic, and social behavior of every member of our program. This is the driving force for what we do. Every young man is vitally important to our team. Each young man has a different role that is based in large measure by his talent, work ethic and ability to add value to the team. ***Playing time is not a measure of a young man's value.*** There are certain “expectations” placed upon the weekly performance of our program. One of those many expectations is for A.H.S. to be playing at a highly competitive level of football. With that in mind, we will put the young men on the field that provide the best opportunity for our team’s weekly success.

Two functional goals for our program include:

- 1 Investing whatever resources we have to make our players the best young men, leaders and people that they can become.
- 2 Making a commitment to develop the athletic skills of every player in our program.

## **Through the game of football we will teach the meaning of L.I.F.E.**

**L** EADERSHIP – the willingness to positively influence others and enlist support to accomplish extraordinary things. This is exemplified by what one says, but most importantly by what one does for others to follow.

**I** MPROVEMENT – always working to get better. Help make the world around you a better place. Being intrinsically motivated for improvement will lead to competing at a higher level.

**F** AITH – must have faith in your family, faith in your teammates, faith in your coaches, faith in your technique, faith in a future, faith in our team, faith in your life, faith in what is right and true. Believe in yourself, in what you are taught, and in us. Only then will we be strong enough to face whatever comes our way.

**E** XCELLENCE – being top notch...from home, to school, to the classroom, to the weight room, to the field. Do everything to extraordinary standards. Go beyond the “norm.”

It is our deepest desire to take the program, and the young men involved, to the apex of educational athletics. Football is, in our opinion, one of the greatest games of all time. It is the perfect training ground for young men to develop who they are as individuals. This game pushes and stretches a person to extremes, and at those critical points true personal growth occurs. It often takes extraordinary times to clear the individual's vision of his true character.

A first class football program is an excellent vehicle to mold the young men of tomorrow. Only through excellent execution of the fundamentals, by people of great character with high standards, will any program be truly successful.

Not only will the participants in the program benefit, but the school and community will as well. Pride and tradition are life long values. It is one of our goals to make sure that the Allendale Football Program is a source of pride, rich with tradition, and exemplifying excellence within our community.

The vision we have for this program is to be competitive and successful in every aspect of life. We have developed a tremendous plan to help your son accomplish greatness. Part of that plan is to hold him accountable to the values that we teach. As Martin Luther King once said:

**“Everyone has the power for greatness. Not for fame – but for greatness, because greatness is determined by service to others.”**

# **Leadership Improvement Faith Excellence**

These are key attributes to “the greatness” that Dr. M.L. King spoke of...L.I.F.E.

# ALLENDALE FOOTBALL

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**VISION** – To develop EXCELLENCE in all phases of life: athletic, academic, personal and spiritual.

**MISSION** – DEMAND EXCELLENCE. Excellence differs from perfection. We will constantly strive for excellence in everything that we do: on the field, in the classroom, in the community, everywhere we live. We will fight against mediocrity in everything.

### CORE VALUES OF

#### **LEADERSHIP:**

LOVE: To be a great teammate, great member of this community, to be a Falcon in your heart.

#### **IMPROVEMENT:**

EFFORT: The hallmark of a Falcon Football Player is that you will always give your best effort to any task you undertake. Work for A's and B's – C's are only AVERAGE! Average effort does not create success – Do not accept Mediocrity or “the way things are.”

#### **FAITH:**

ATTITUDE: To stick together, fight through the difficult times, and be thankful for every opportunity that we have.

#### **EXCELLENCE:**

STRENGTH: It takes tough minded people to maintain a constant pursuit of perfection and have the courage to push beyond that which is considered just “good enough”.

#### **MOTTO: “Sacrifice makes it Sacred”**

The things that require the most sacrifice are always the things that mean the most and become sacred to us.

#### **STYLE OF PLAY:**

DISCIPLINED, TOUGH, TENACIOUS, HARD HITTING, RELENTLESS

**AND WE WILL DO IT ALL WITH CLASS.**

## **TO THE PARENTS**

There are some tremendous advantages to living in our community. There is a close knit feeling that we are very thankful for in Allendale. It is a special place. In our football program, your son will become part of a family that will look out for him for the rest of his high school career. We need you to be an active, contributing part of our program, and help to make it great for your son and all the other members of our program.

### **IMPORTANT THOUGHTS:**

This program will strive to be the best in the state. We will work to make our product on the field, on game night and in practice, the best there is. However, we cannot gauge this program on wins alone. There are many critical qualities that we develop in young men that must be counted as well. As a coaching staff, we are totally committed to helping the young men we coach reach their potential: as players and as men. We all feel very passionate about helping to develop quality brothers, husbands, fathers, and men for today and the days to come.

We define success in this way:

***When development of our athletes, during the time they spend with us, occurs in the direction of becoming outstanding young men.***

The football program at Allendale High School is as much a part of the school curriculum as Mathematics, Science, English, History, or any other subject we have to offer here at A.H.S. It is a place where learning will continue outside of the classroom. There is no doubt that many lessons for L.I.F.E are being taught on a daily basis.

### **SOME OF THE LESSONS LEARNED IN THIS PROGRAM:**

- ❖ Character development
- ❖ Community service
- ❖ Teamwork
- ❖ Selflessness
- ❖ Commitment
- ❖ Value of hard work and a strong work ethic
- ❖ Maintaining a positive attitude when things don't go well
- ❖ Responsibility
- ❖ Being a QUALITY role model.
- ❖ Being dependable
- ❖ Value of caring for others
- ❖ TEAM ABOVE SELF

Developing and maintaining a football program requires charting the best possible route with a clear destination (GOALS) in mind, then consistently striving to find the best way to reach the destination all while constantly making adjustments based on our principles.



## **CHOICES FOR COACH-ABLE ATHLETES:**

Teams can make a conscious decision to uphold the best of values. Individual players can make choices that will define them as athletes. Though we will be dealing with the following on a regularly basis, here are some things to consider and talk with your son about:

### **ENTHUSIASM**

- love of the game
- share it with teammates
- bring everything you got every day: game and practice

### **LISTENING, CONCENTRATING AND FOCUSING**

- without this, there is no improvement
- demonstrates respect for coaches and teammates

### **SELFLESSNESS**

- the ability to put the team ahead of yourself in every decision
- accept and fulfill a role

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

- to accept responsibility for outcomes
- problem solver – not an excuse maker
- look to yourself first when improvement is needed

### **CONSISTENCY**

- reliability
- can be counted on by self and teammates

### **WORK HABITS**

- subject yourself to hard, productive work
- commit to continuous improvement
- commit to a particular course of action

### **DISCIPLINE**

- discipline and love are two sides of the same coin
- accept and embrace discipline for the sake of the team
- self control on and off the field
- focused attention and effort

### **SPORTSMANSHIP**

- respect for the rules and the game
- respect for and accepting the judgments of others (officials)
- respect for your opponents as guests
- reacting correctly even when others don't
- truthful, honorable and genuine
- being worthy of respect from others

### **DETERMINATION**

- the ability to start your own engine
- quick recovery from mistakes – the ability to persevere
- show initiative
- stay with your obligations and promises: NEVER QUIT!

### **TEACHABLE SPIRIT**

- can take correction as a compliment
- consistently seeking new information
- eager to learn

### **CONFIDENCE**

- quiet inner feeling based on preparation – not arrogance
- relaxed aggressiveness
- confidence builder for those around you

### **PRIDE**

- shared joy of the inner circle
- does not require or expect special treatment
- sense of dignity
- valuing the work and accomplishments of the team

### **COMPETITIVENESS**

- controlled determination
- able to make a quick recovery from mistakes or misfortune
- relentlessly pursue success – the drive to be more

### **MENTAL TOUGHNESS**

- inner strength to be able to control emotional responses and concentrate on what has to be done in pressure situations
- use emotion and energy to make yourself tougher, not to give your opponents strength
- mindset focused on pushing forward and pushing through whatever seems to block your way
- stay the course
- nothing can happen that will break your spirit – you stay enthusiastic, confident and positive

## OUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY:

KEEPING OUR FOUR PRIORITIES IN ORDER  
FOR THE A.H.S. FOOTBALL PROGRAM

1. *FAITH*

2. *FAMILY*

3. *COMMUNITY SERVICE*

4. *ACADEMICS*

5. *FOOTBALL and ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT*

1 **Faith:**

**Defined:** Based on the *Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, © *Random House, Inc. 2006*.

1. confidence or trust in a person or thing: faith in another's ability.
2. belief that is not based on proof:
3. belief in anything, as a code of ethics, standards of merit,
4. a system of religious belief: the Christian faith; the Jewish faith.
5. the obligation of loyalty or fidelity to a person, promise, engagement, etc.:
6. the observance of this obligation; fidelity to one's promise, oath, allegiance, etc.

You must have faith that as a coaching staff we not only understand the game and how to teach it, but that we will carry the lessons taught on the field into everyday life. We will put the needs of the entire group (team) first. We will also look after your son like he is family to us. We may not parent him the same as you, but we do care about him greatly.

2. **Family:**

**Defined:** a group of people who are generally not blood relations, but who share common attitudes, interests, or goals.

We work to build a family concept – where the entire group looks out for the individual. Putting others first is a foreign notion in our society – but it is something that we strive to get our young men to do on a daily basis. Family needs are second in our priority list, so if there is a family matter at home that will affect our football family, please keep us informed.

As a coaching staff, we will track grades, performance, behavior, attitude, family situations, and in essence build a network of support for each young man we coach. Playing football will provide an anchor for any player that needs, wants or allows us to take a role of leadership in his life.

### **3. COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

Each young man in the program will be expected to donate ten hours of community service by the end of football season. We give our participation awards on two criteria: 1) the player finishes the entire football season; 2) the player gives 10 hours of community service. We define service as “any act that is done voluntarily for the betterment of another person.” We are looking for opportunities to teach our young men that giving something back to the community makes it a better place to live. Any community service hours must be documented in writing by an adult.

### **4. ACADEMICS:**

FACT:

Michael Johnson, a counselor at Tascosa High School in Amarillo, said a study two years ago found that those with a bachelor's degree made an average of \$66,445 annually. Those with a high school diploma made only \$37,303 on average. Those who had some college credits made about \$42,868, according to the study. Those with no high school diploma averaged about \$28,881. Degree hikes earning power for graduates – Education is the key for opening many job doors. By Janelle Stecklein

FACT:

1 out of 17,000 high school football players will earn Division I scholarships. NFL teams only carry 45 players (32 teams x 45 players = 1440 players in the world that play at this level).

Everyone wants to play in the NFL – BUT - THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU  
This is why we must produce great effort in the classroom. It puts you in control of your future. If you are ineligible – you cannot experience the benefits of being a team member.

In order to address this issue, we will hold STUDENT-ATHLETES in this football program accountable for their grades, academic performance, attitude and behavior in the classroom. We will never ask nor expect for a teacher to change a grade. We will expect that through EFFORT the students in our football program will EARN their success.

We also know that every young man in our program is unique. We know there are learning difficulties, family challenges, problems and issues that come up. Our goal is to make the Power Group a link to enable us to learn more about your son as a person – and establish stronger relationships.

Our academic philosophy is such that we must do a great job in the classroom first and foremost. We will monitor grades, and cultivate accountability on behalf of our student-athletes. We will strive to create great communication with parents and teachers. Should you ever have an academic concern, call or email Coach Burk. It will get addressed.

## 5. **Football and Athletic Development** – Fifth and LAST Priority

If we are committed properly to our priorities, focusing on football is easy.

**There is much demanded from those to whom much is given.**

*Investment leads to commitment.  
Commitment leads to relationships.  
Relationships lead to acting with Honor.  
Acting with Honor leads to SUCCESS.*

**The Sacrifice makes it Sacred.**

As in any activity that you make a commitment to – you are expected to be at practice on time, dressed and ready to perform every day. There are always those players who refer to themselves as “gamers.” In other words, they don't like to practice. I can tell you this without hesitation: if you aren't a “practicer” in our program, you won't have a chance to prove yourself in a game. Practice habits are developed through our entire program as a mechanism for investment and improvement. If you miss practice, there will be a coach's penalty that may include missing game time as a result. Please make a point to take care of routine doctor and dentist appointments outside of practice time. If you are going to be absent, you need to let your coach know ahead of time. If you have an emergency, your parents may excuse you. Please remember that while you are not at practice, another young man is, and is working hard for the opportunity to earn playing time. The more we compete in practice – the greater chance we have as a team to succeed in our games.

Additionally, you must know, understand, and honor the Athletic Code at Allendale High School. It is a matter of honor, leadership, improvement, faith, and excellence to put your team, your family and your reputation ahead of getting into trouble.

### **KEYS IN OUR PHILOSOPHY:**

- Football is an educational tool. We strive to work together with your family to make your son as great as he can be.
- We expect your son to do what is right even if it is difficult-hard-time consuming-etc.
- We have all got to do a great job ACADEMICALLY- it can mean the difference of millions of dollars of earning power in the long run for our players.
- We are TEAM oriented and L.I.F.E. directed

## **THE TEAM CONCEPT:**

We must constantly keep in mind that this football program does not exist for personal glory – it exists to bring glory to the team, school, and the community. All of us must make sacrifices for the team - players, parents, coaches. We need to keep the needs of the team above our own personal desires. Our Allendale Football Family consists of players, managers, coaches, booster club members, teachers, custodians, administrators and parents. Our coaches are students, husbands, and fathers first. We have other employment that we get paid by much more than our job as football coaches. Please respect that this is a high school football program. We do this because we love working with your sons, love the game of football, love to compete, and love to teach. Trust, appreciate, and have faith in our coaches for all that they do – and all the sacrifices their families make so that we can be a part of this program. We understand your sacrifice as well. Each one of us has a role to play in your son's development. We are all committed to creating the best football program possible. Please join us in that.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS:**

As a coaching staff, we understand that where we see a young man – parents still see a little boy. Parents may often see things differently than coaches do. Everything we do is designed to earn the respect and trust of the parents. We must be in this together with every young man's family. When our kids trust us like family, we will really have accomplished something significant. Therefore, we have adopted a set of parent rules that helps us to define our roles and expectations. Always keep in mind that my role as the Head Football Coach is to make the best decisions for the entire team first.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH COACHES:**

This is an explanation which defines acceptable/reasonable times as well as the unreasonable times for communication between coaches and parents regarding any issues. Acceptable/reasonable time is defined as the time period from the day after a game and extending until the end of school time on the day of the next contest and excluding unreasonable times in between. Unreasonable time frames are considered late hours of the night, the half hour before and during practice time, and the time period after school hours on the day of a game which extends until the following morning. Quality discussions will only occur only when calm and cool heads prevail. It is very good practice to take 24 hours to think and reflect before trying to discuss any issues that may be “emotionally charged.” The time limitations defined above will only help to promote quality discussions, which are what we all want.

# **A.H.S FOOTBALL PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

The Football Program at Allendale High School exists for the benefit of our student-athletes. All decisions will be made with the best interest of the team first and individuals second. High School football is a very competitive sport, and we play under a microscope of expectations. Here are rules and roles to focus on for parents, players and coaches.

## **FOOTBALL PROGRAM RULES:**

### **RULE ONE:**

All Student-Athlete policies and expectations in the Parent-Athlete Handbook will be followed as set by the Athletic Department. Consequences are determined per Handbook stipulations.

### **RULE TWO:**

Any further "Conduct Unbecoming of a Teammate" will have consequences determined through either a combination of the Team Leadership Council and coaching staff or by one of the groups' discretion depending upon the severity of the infraction. The unacceptable violations of Conduct Unbecoming of a Teammate can range from, and are not limited to, dress code violations (e.g. as simple as wearing the wrong games socks, etc), to missing or being tardy for practice, to words spoken, to postings on the internet, to twitter, to physical actions, to much worse and more grievous acts against the team or teammates.

### **GAME TIME SUSPENSIONS:**

If there is a violation of conduct that results in a consequence determined to include loss of playing time, then we will proceed in the following manner whenever possible:

- ✓ Player will be notified of the suspension.
- ✓ The player has the responsibility to communicate the suspension with his parents as soon as possible.
- ✓ Communication to the parents from the coaching staff, prior to the next contest, will take place as soon as it is reasonably possible.
- ✓ Please understand that there is also an unreasonable time frame that could unfortunately result in the parents not receiving the communication prior to the game.

## COACH'S ROLES:

- Set a good example for players and fans to follow.
- Be positive, firm, fair and as consistent as possible.
- Be positive in the public eye in regards to our players, parents, and program.
- Make playing time and strategy decisions with thought and care.
- Establish and organize practice for the team on a daily basis.
- Be a good communicator with players and parents.
- Keep academic progress of athletes.
- Constantly evaluate all aspects of this program to make sure they are in the best interests of the entire team.
- Be available to talk with players and parents – other than game day.

## PARENT'S ROLES:

- Be a fan of everyone on the team: *Be most concerned with the success of the TEAM.*
- Respect the decisions made in games by the coaches and officials.
- Respect other fans, coaches, officials, and players.
- Talk with your son if he has any questions. If it is necessary, to get answers contact the coach using the guidelines below.
- Be positive with your son and keep any negative thoughts about the coach, the program or members of the team to yourself. **YOU DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO TEAR DOWN THIS PROGRAM.** The kids have one chance to be high school football players, help to make it as special as we can.
- Don't talk to coaches on game day or directly after a game about a complaint.
- Understand that it is the coaches' responsibility to make certain that students are safe and become better people and athletes, not to win every game.
- Be supportive of your son. He gets coached at practice everyday. Be positive in what you say, and be careful what you tell him. If you are telling him something different than he is hearing in practice, it will negatively affect his performance.
- **DO NOT COACH HIM. Be his biggest fan. Celebrate what he does well.**

## PLAYER'S ROLES:

- Be positive and have an unselfish, team oriented attitude.
- Support your teammates. Treat them like family.
- Be at practice on time and everyday – work hard to improve.
- If you have a question, concern or are unhappy about something, talk with your coach before you talk with anyone else. Come directly to us.
- Know and follow school and athletic codes.
- Challenge yourself to improve as a student, an athlete, and as a person.
- Notify your coach of any scheduling conflicts in advance. If you are going to miss practice or workouts – it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to communicate that.

## **HOW TO HANDLE ISSUES:**

If you have a question or concern, please take the time to think about what your question is. If it ultimately has to do with playing time, another player or game strategy, then *keep it to yourself*. Otherwise, follow this process:

Talk with your son about your question. What is your son's perspective? Can he solve the problem himself? Set up a meeting with us if you still have questions. You will be asked to create an agenda for the meeting and submit that to the coach prior to the meeting. Remember – we make decisions for the good of the team based on practice, ability, attitude, and chemistry. The decision that may seem to be very clear cut to a parent of one son is not so clear when all of these variables are taken into consideration. High school football is a competitive situation, and our responsibility as coaches is to put the best teams on the field. If questions/issues still remain, the next step is to set up a meeting with our Athletic Director and myself – again, an agenda will be asked for prior to the meeting.

## **SIX SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR THESE MEETINGS:**

1. The conversation must be respectful and in a professional manner in regard to both language and conduct and during a reasonable time as previously defined.
2. You **MUST** provide an agenda of items that you want to cover prior to the meeting. This will help us to direct the conversation and limit the scope of the meeting to solve the problems that can be addressed.
3. Everyone gets a chance to talk, but everyone must listen as well. Emotional control by all parties is critical.
4. Meetings will not occur on game day. They are held only by appointment.
5. Please understand that discussions concerning problems will not be held against the players or parents.
6. Your son will be present.

## **WHAT IS IT PROPER TO ASK ABOUT?:**

It is fine to discuss the treatment of your child. You are welcome to ask about how your son can improve. Asking about your son's attitude and behavior are also acceptable topics to discuss.

## **THINGS THAT WILL NOT BE DISCUSSED:**

- Playing time
- Game strategies
- Other Players
- You may not insult the coaches or coaching staff

Our goal as a staff is to make this experience a great enjoyment, education, and memory. We work hard to know your son, to make him better on the field and in life, and care for him very much. There is no correlation between how much a young man plays in the game, and how much we care about him. We are striving to build better young men, and their value as a person is completely independent of playing time. Life teaches us lessons in many ways. First and foremost, we want to do what is best for the team, and then secondly for your son as an individual.



## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN ATHLETICS:**

Our sports booster club exist for the betterment of all players in our program. There are great places for you to get involved in your child's athletic endeavors. I have included two excerpts from sources that articulate great meaning to why we need to have our parents contribute through participation and support.

### **EXCERPT ONE – Three Key Ingredients:**

The first excerpt is from the book The Turnaround by Chuck Mottley. In this passage – he is interviewing Head Coach Ron Eastabrook from Chapparral High School in Scottsdale Arizona during the 1997 football season:

**“There are three ingredients – three groups, actually that make a successful high school football program. Those three groups need to work in harmony, and the people in those groups need to feel good about each other.**

**The first ingredient is the support of the school administration. Led by the principal who believes strongly that extra curricular activities are as important in the high school experience as academics is paramount. Football is the first activity of the new school year. It sets the tone for the whole school year – the socialization – the teamwork concept – the commitment the spirit, participation and creates and attitude that is carried over into all aspects of a young person's life. The administration's support is so important because that attitude of strong backing passes down to all school employees.**

**The second necessary ingredient is the group of the Coaching staff and players. I try to hire coaches that have the same philosophy that I do in coaching young men. I believe in establishing a system and installing that system at all three levels – Freshman, JV and Varsity and then being consistent with it. And of course, it goes without saying, that the weight training program is key...having players commit to it on a year round basis starting in the summer before their freshman year. Commitment by the players to the program creates and ownership in the program by them, which in turn creates a family atmosphere.**

**The third ingredient is the Community; which includes parents, boosters, and local businesses. If a coach can get parents to focus on the entire football agenda – not just their own son alone they will have fun working together. When they feel an ownership in the program...just like the players must feel an ownership...then they tend not to be critical of it. They will find themselves working for a common cause and develop camaraderie over the years their son participates.**

**If any of the three of those groups drops the ball, you'll end up with a fumbled program.”**

## **EXCERPT TWO – What kids want from their parents:**

The second excerpt comes from a code of conduct for many parents that schools all over the country have adopted. It was developed by simply asking the kids what they would like their parents to know, but are afraid to tell them when it comes to their athletic participation. Parents cannot deny this message if they love their kids because it comes from their sons and daughters:

**What kids feel their parents' responsibilities are before, during and after a game:**

- 1 Ask yourself “why do you want your child to play, what do you expect out of your child, and what role do you expect him/her to have?”**
  - ❖ **The parents' answer should be the same as the child. If not, there is a problem.**
  - ❖ **#1 reason kids play – FUN.**
- 2 Once a parent is sure their kid is safe physically and emotionally, they should release them to the coach and let them enjoy the experiences (successes and failures) of playing the game.**
- 3 Yelling at an official is one adult screaming at another in a public setting that we are supposed to be using to teach kids discipline and respect.**
- 4 During the game, kids need to have model, poised, confident, and supportive parents.**
- 5 Kids want parents to learn to watch the game and concentrate solely on what they are doing.**
- 6 Kids want their parents to focus on the team and team goals and take the focus off of them.**
- 7 Kids want to hear ONE instruction voice during the game – THE COACH!**
- 8 Kids want their parents to be spectators – not coaches, officials or players.**
- 9 After the game, many kids state their worst experiences have been in the car with their parents.**
- 10 Kids need time and space after the contest. They do not need to be analyzed by their parents or listen to the parent criticize the official or the coach.**
- 11 Kids should never be made to feel that their parent loves them more when they play well in a game and less when they have a bad game.**
- 12 Kids need to hear “I love watching you play” or “I love watching you be a part of the team.”**

Please take time to think about both excerpts and put your best effort forward for all of our sakes...especially for your son.

## **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM**

### **SPORTS MEDICINE AND REHAB:**

GREAT CONDITIONING CAN MAKE UP FOR A LARGE AMOUNT OF INABILITY. IF YOU ARE IN GREAT SHAPE AND STRONG – YOU’LL HAVE A TREMENDOUS CHANCE TO STAY HEALTHY AND ALSO BETTER YOUR CHANCE FOR SUCCESS.

We are very blessed to have a trainer in our building on a regular basis. Our players must learn the difference between being sore, hurt and injured. If your son goes to the doctor, only that doctor can treat or release the player. Being sore or hurting is different from being injured. If sore or hurting then measures should be taken to heal, yet continue to push through the pains. Being injured means that a player cannot play due to medical restraints. Our training staff, which includes a Doctor and certified athletic trainer, does a great job of helping our players make that determination. Please trust them and listen to them.

### **STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING PROGRAM:**

Our lifting philosophy is based on joining two training concepts into one. The first is the Bigger – Faster – Stronger (BFS) program that many high school and college teams utilize. The second is training for speed, explosiveness and athletic development. Our strength foundation has FOUR essential core lifts: the bench, the squat, the explosive high pull, and the dead lift. Our speed/explosive foundation is focused on improving running technique, sprint speed, body explosive movements and agility. We incorporate a great variety of direction-change drills. We also work very hard on the core muscle groups to help improve athleticism. This is all done with care and under expert supervision, because safety is extremely important.

One of the most important aspects of our athletic development program is developing relationships and spending time with our players. This is where we become a family, where we learn to care about each other and to push to our limits. The more invested we become as a team, the more we care about each other, the stronger our relationships are – the greater success we will experience. Again, ***the sacrifice makes it sacred.***

Lifting must be a major part of your winter, spring and summer. If you are involved in a winter or spring sport - you've got to have a plan of action. We have established a great plan for this off-season. We will be lifting before school from 6:00-7:10 AM. We work Athletic Development (weight lifting/speed training) on Mondays and Thursdays all year long. Our summer workouts will be on the same days and done through ***The Advantage*** program. Athletic Development and lifting will help us to get bigger, stronger, more powerful and more competitive along with lowering the risk of injury. Seize the opportunity!

## **PHILOSOPHY ON OTHER SPORTS:**

We are firm believers that kid's best interests are served when they are active in all seasons. We prefer three sport athletes. We expect two sport athletes. Many schools demand that kids play only one sport. It is our belief, in the football program, that "cross training" leads to better conditioned, tougher, more competitive athletes. Multi-sport athletes are also much less likely to be burned out because they don't only do one thing. What a great experience your son could have if after four years he has three sets of strong relationships with coaches and players.

We hope that your son is playing another sport. It is our belief that since you get one shot to be in high school, you should enjoy competing during all three seasons. Jake Plummer, who played in the NFL as a quarterback for over eight seasons told ESPN:

***"My ultimate goal is to get coaches to stop specializing their athletes, telling them they can't play other sports because it'll hurt their sport," Plummer says. "I played all three sports and handball whenever I could. That's why I made it in the NFL -- that rounded me out as an athlete."***

If you don't play more than one sport - you are cheating yourself out of some great experiences that you'll never get to have again in your life. If you are in more than one sport – consider yourself among the elite!

## **PLAYER EVALUATION AND PLACEMENT:**

Evaluating a player's athletic ability as well as his attitude, work ethic and other factors help us to motivate and teach him. As coaches, we will put time, effort, discussion, and thought in knowing the young man to find these things out.

When we place a player in a position, decide how much he'll play, or place him on the Varsity, JV or Freshman team, it is in an effort to make him as successful as possible. However, it is always first and foremost to determine what will make the TEAM most successful. Playing time is earned in practice, weight room, and conditioning. Trust is the most important factor we are looking for. If ever we change your son's position, it is in attempt to help the team, and to help him. We do all we can to be as fair as possible at all times. If your son struggles with a position change, please have him talk with us. Trust us that it is not done on a whim, but much thought and discussion between coaches have occurred in an attempt to do the best for the Team.

## **FRESHMAN, JV, AND VARSITY PHILOSOPHY:**

It is important for you to understand the differences and how we make decisions in regard to where your son is placed in our program.

**Freshman** – Only 9<sup>th</sup> graders can play freshman football. Much care is taken to help them adjust to high school. We will never put a freshman player against a varsity player unless we feel he is 100% able to play at that level. Freshman athletes who can play at that level do not come around very often. Our philosophy is to make the freshman team as successful as possible. However, there is more consideration put into experience than a game's outcome. We will not sacrifice the opportunity for TEAM success when possible. On occasion, a freshman football player is physically, mentally and emotionally mature enough to play up on the next level. A tremendous amount of consideration is put into a decision to move a freshman up. Such a move helps to challenge the player, as well as present opportunities for other players on the 9<sup>th</sup> grade team. If a player is determined to meet the criteria to play at the next level of competition, he may be moved up. Competition and experience are too vital, and we've learned that the best thing we can do for our players is to keep them with their class. We want the 9<sup>th</sup> graders to develop fundamentals, experience and leadership as a group. Our goal is to make them as successful as possible.

**Junior Varsity** – This is still a developmental level of football. The JV team is mostly for 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and again works to develop the abilities, desires, skills, work habits, mental toughness, and techniques of our Varsity team. There is an even greater drive to achieve TEAM success at this level, yet we still emphasize player experience. Your son will get dedicated coaching striving to build our younger athletes into better players. We hope to provide an excellent experience for all the kids on this team.

**Varsity** – The Varsity is our most competitive level of football. We have a defensive staff of coaches and an offensive staff of coaches. Our goal is to “Two-Platoon” and get as many young men as possible playing in the games. This helps us to keep morale high, stay more “fresh” at the end of games than our competition, and increase the investment level of more players. We will put our most competitive team on the field. Every day in practice, our Varsity players are in competition to play in the game on Friday night. Playing time is based solely on the potential each player adds to team success: In other words, they play as much as their performance in practice merits. There are no guarantees of playing time in Varsity games. All players striving to be a Varsity player must understand that there will be much expected of them. There will be extra meetings, film time, practices, and demands placed on them. It is an extremely competitive atmosphere and to earn playing time at this level means that they will have to make great investments. Again, the sacrifice makes it sacred.

## **Team Leadership Council**

### **RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ALLENDAL FOOTBALL TEAM:**

- MAINTAIN TEAM CHEMISTRY.
- POLICE THE TEAM FROM WITHIN.
- EXEMPLIFY WHAT IT IS TO BE A LEADER BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD.

### **LEADERSHIP COUNCIL CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Composed of those who are, and will be, a good representative for us
- A team player, not a selfish player.
- A dependable person.
- A student-athlete with no academic or discipline issues.
- A mentally tough with intestinal fortitude.
- A person of character who will do the right things when the coach is not looking.
- A person who will speak up to the team, as well as for the team.

THE TEAM LEADERSHIP COUNCIL CAN BE MADE UP OF STUDENT ATHLETES FROM ALL GRADES IN THE PROGRAM

### **TEAM LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

Selection of the leadership council is made by the entire coaching staff, based on the previous season's performance, practice habits, attitude, effort, off-season habits, classroom activities, and personality. We make decisions based on the young men we feel could present a leadership presence at all times. Each of the young men on this council will be chosen and it needs to be understood that it is a temporary position based on their consistency of leadership. Other names could be added as well as names removed. We feel that by putting groups of athletes together from a variety of age groups, positions, peer groups, and so on that we have an avenue to make our team closer. Ultimately, we are looking to make our football program a TEAM in the truest sense - a group of people who love each other, believe in what we are doing, and who are intent on being as collectively great as possible.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is our deepest desire that this experience of being an Allendale Falcon Football Player is the best it can be for your son. These young men get one shot at high school athletics. We want the relationships, memories, and experiences of being a part of this program to be sacred for players as they continue with L.I.F.E. beyond high school. There are ups and downs in football as there are in life, and it is those experiences that will give them the foundation to make good decisions later on. Hopefully the lessons that are learned from each opportunity, whether it is a peak or a valley, are still an opportunities to better yourself. The whole experience teaches us about life – not just good things, but also the hardships should be viewed as valuable. Building friendships, serving community, sacrificing for a goal, putting yourself in second place behind the needs of the team, and being a part of something bigger than any individual are all great traits to carry into life. Those things will be treasured and will be sacred to our young men for years to come. It is my sincere hope that this book helps you to think about our football program from a variety of perspectives. We are honored and excited to have your son be a part of our program, and look forward to working with him and with you in the near future.

We are fully committed to making the football experience a highlight of our community.

**Thank you – and live L.I.F.E to its fullest!**

**Head Varsity Football Coach: Ben Burk**

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\*\*I would like to thank all the Coaches in my life, as well as the players of past and present who have help shape my beliefs and philosophies. I take my job as Head Coach very seriously, and I truly believe our young men are blessed to have the opportunity to work with and learn from entire football coaching staff that we have here at A.H.S. I can tell you that we feel very blessed to have the opportunity to work with the young men of A.H.S as well.

**GO FALCONS!**



***THE SACRIFICE MAKES IT SACRED***