

Oakton High School Football Player Success Guide

A WORD FROM COACH THOMPSON

"As a coaching staff, our mission is to create a positive family environment that fosters the values of commitment, sacrifice, and honor in the development of lifelong champions. Our football program has a rich tradition of hard work and success, and we place value on our players achieving at every opportunity given - not just on the field.

This Oakton High School Football Player Success Guide provides valuable information to help you and your son navigate the many challenges they will face during their high school football career. I hope you find it useful and I look forward to working with both you and your son throughout the school year. Go Cougars!"

Joe Thompson



INTRODUCTION

If the teenage years weren't difficult enough, young athletes add additional challenges to their daily lives.

This **Oakton High School Football Player Success Guide** offers information and tips to help Oakton football athletes excel in their classrooms and at their sport, stay safe throughout the school year, and become champions for life.



Inside you will find information and ideas from parents and guardians who have already had athletes go through the Oakton football experience, and so the suggested tips and ideas are tried and true. Not all suggestions work for everyone, so read through the guide and see what might be right for your family situation. In the back of the guide are some additional sources where you can go for more great information.

The information contained here is provided only as a suggestion and to give ideas that may help you guide your student athlete through their Oakton High School football years.



Oakton Football
Building Champions

Nutrition
Alcohol & Drugs

Scholar Athlete
Teenage Driving

Parties & Sleepovers

NUTRITION

To perform at the highest possible levels, both academically and athletically, requires that all of an athlete's bodily systems be perfectly tuned. Good nutrition is key to reaching your highest academic and athletic potential. Taking in the right nutrients helps a football player's mind stay sharp. It also helps them grow muscle mass and get stronger, maintain the proper body weight, and establish optimum nerve-muscle reflexes for agility, quickness, and explosiveness. Without eating the correct foods all of the training, workouts and coaching will not be enough to allow you to perform at your highest potential. Good nutrition must become an integral part of the athlete's daily regimen if he is to tune his mind and body for optimal performance.

Carbohydrates, proteins, fat, vitamins and minerals, and water are all nutrients that the body needs in the right balance to perform at its best. Miss one nutrient, and the whole system is impacted. The athlete's body needs these nutrients every day, so planning meals and snacks to ensure proper nutrition is a must for the serious athlete.

PREVENTION



Daily vitamin supplements ensure an athlete's body has what is needed to build muscle, repair damage and fight infections. Increased energy demands of young athletes should be met with breads, rice, and pasta like foods. Protein bars and shakes are a great idea immediately after lifting weights and heavy workouts to help the body grow new muscle. And, water is the best way to hydrate the body, Sports drinks should only be taken when heat drains the body of minerals through excessive perspiration.

CHECKING UP



Kids love to snack on junk food. However, cookies, candy bars and soft drinks are full of simple sugars that can negatively impact the athlete's ability to perform. They provide immediate rush of energy, followed by a debilitating crash as the sugars are burned up. Make sure your son has nutritious snacks such as granola bars, protein bars, bananas or other fruits. These provide longer lasting energy and minerals the body needs to perform at its best. Encourage your son to stay away from junk food.

HARD CORE



Water is critical to the young athlete. It helps the body burn food for fuel, cool itself when it is hot, repair soft tissue damage, pump nutrients around the body in the circulatory system, and remove waste products. Ensure your son is drinking enough water every day. Stay on top of the amount of fluids your son takes in and make sure he is drinking plenty of water all the time. Don't buy or offer junk food at all during the football season, but rather train your son to eat healthy snacks like cut carrots, raisins and nuts.



SCHOLAR ATHLETES

All athletes in the Fairfax County School System are first and foremost students in the classroom. No matter how much our kids enjoy sports, and despite how much they learn about life, teamwork, effort and reward from the field of play, schoolwork provides the true foundation of their learning and needs to come first. Scholarship is the foundation for building a life long champion, and an integral [part of the Oakton Football experience.

Not all students excel at sports, and not all athletes excel at schoolwork. However, schoolwork and athletics should never be seen as mutually exclusive, and each Oakton football player needs to be able to learn to effectively manage both aspects of the school life together. The tips below may help your student athlete learn how best to integrate their scholarship and their athletics and learn to achieve their highest level of performance at both.

PREVENTION



At a minimum, be involved in the selection of your child's classes. Consider the time commitments he has regarding sports and other extra-curricular activities and ensure that there will be enough time for him to hit the books. Freshman football players have mandatory study hall after school. Suggest to your upper classman player that he too take this time to concentrate on schoolwork. Often players are too tired when getting home after practice to have much quality study time each night.

CHECKING UP



Check Blackboard to see what assignments you son has for each class and how he is doing. Ask him to report progress to you regularly, not just when report cards come out. Help him stay on top of his schoolwork especially during the football season. If you think your son is struggling in a subject then email or talk to the teacher immediately. Teach your son to pace himself in his schoolwork and stay steady, don't let him get behind and then have to catch up.

HARD CORE



Encourage your son to commit to achieve a 3.5 GPA and be recognized as a Scholar Athlete, and hold him to his commitment through study and follow up. Work with teachers to help students who are falling behind. This might involve getting tutors (academic coaches) to help your son succeed in the classroom just like he has coaches to help him succeed in football. Make academics the priority, smart students make smart football players who are more sought after by college recruiters.



ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Alcohol and drugs have no place in the life of an Oakton football player. In addition to being illegal, they diminish athletic performance in many ways, such as reducing muscle ability to take up and store oxygen or shed carbon dioxide, impairing overall lung capacity, reducing agility and explosiveness, and slowing down mental acuity. As parents we need to talk to our kids and set the expectation that we have no tolerance for drugs or alcohol in their young lives. A fighter pilot who ejected from his airplane was asked when he made the decision to bail out. He answered *“Ten years ago when I first learned to fly this plane.”* By making the decision before hand that if certain conditions existed he would bail out, the pilot could easily make the right decision in a crisis. Role playing with your son about peer pressure, and equipping him with responses to its different forms can help him make the right decisions when the pressure is on. As parents we also need to set good examples of responsible behavior with regard to drugs and alcohol. Our actions speak louder than our words. Never leave narcotic prescription drugs where your kids can get a hold of them. It is an easy and dangerous source.

PREVENTION



At a minimum, call ahead to homes where your child will attend a get together or party and ensure that a parent or adult guardian will be there to chaperone the kids. Also, be sure to ask specifically about alcohol, as some parents serve underage children, mistakenly thinking that it is OK as long as the kids stay in their home. If alcohol will be there, DO NOT let your child go, rather suggest they have some friends come to your home instead.

CHECKING UP



After your child attends a get together or party make sure that they see you upon returning home. Check their eyes for glassiness and dilation, and their breath for alcohol. DON'T let them slide if you think they are using. Impose penalties for irresponsible behavior. Find out how they got the drugs or alcohol and inform the parents of any other kids involved. This may prevent such behavior in the future.

HARD CORE



Drug test your kid. This may seem harsh, but in families where trust has been broken, proactive parents have purchased drug and alcohol urine test kits from CVS or Walgreens and randomly test their kids. This can give your child a great response to the intense peer pressure kids are under to use - the excuse that *“Hey, I can’t, my parents drug test me.”*



TEENAGE DRIVING

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, although teen drivers (ages of 15 and 20) constitute almost 10 percent of all licensed drivers, they are involved in 12 percent of fatal motor vehicle-related crashes. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a 16-year-old driver is more than 20 times as likely to have a motor vehicle crash than any other licensed driver. In fact, the leading cause of death among 16- to 20-year-olds is motor vehicle-related crashes. Kids are in more accidents because they lack experience, and because they take more risks.

Because of figures such as these, the State of Virginia places restrictions on cell phone use, the number of passengers and nighttime driving rights for young inexperienced drivers. As parents, we need to become familiar with the laws of the State, help our kids understand the risks of driving as an inexperienced driver, and hold them accountable for risky driving behavior.

PREVENTION



Establish limits on your teenager's driving privileges, Ask your kids where they are going, and who they are meeting up with. Make sure they do not exceed the number of kids they are allowed to have in the car and that they are home by the time they should not be on the road. Find out how the other kids are getting to their destination. If there aren't enough cars for all the kids, then someone is carrying too many passengers. Have them call you when they safely arrive at their destination.

CHECKING UP



Call the place where your child says he is going, and make sure he is actually there. Sometimes kids tell their parents they are going one place, get there, and then carpool up and head somewhere else. If they aren't where they are supposed to be call them on their cell phone, ask them where they are and if they have more than the approved number of kids in the car. If so, then tell them to pull over safely and that you will come and get them. Discuss with them their inappropriate driving behavior and consider imposing penalties.

HARD CORE



Observe your child. High school kids mature at different rates. Consider your child's maturity level and ability to act responsibly before allowing them to get their license and handing them the keys to the car. While many of us can't wait to let our kids start driving so we can stop carting them all over creation, it may be worth it to hold off for a while especially if your son isn't quite ready. Talk with your son and set maturity goals that, if reached, will mean you will be open to his getting his permit and license.



HOSTING PARTIES AND SLEEP-OVERS

It is appropriate and healthy for kids to get together and interact with one another in a group setting. It builds important interaction skills that will equip your son for life in the workplace and community. That said, inappropriate get-togethers can only lead to trouble. If you plan to host a party or sleep over, you should not be serving alcohol to minors, and you need to be aware that some kids will try to sneak alcohol into the party. This places a heavy burden on you the parent or guardian to check up on the kids as they arrive so that the get-together can remain a safe and enjoyable experience.

PREVENTION



If you are hosting a party make sure everyone knows your house rules. Whether it be low noise levels, parking of cars in the neighborhood, and especially that NO alcohol be present. NEVER allow your kid to have a party if you or another responsible adult are not present. Talk to your son before the party. They know who will try to sneak alcohol in, and so you can be observant and check with that kid when he arrives to make sure they aren't trying to sneak anything in to the party. Understand that it is illegal to provide underage children with alcoholic beverages.

CHECKING UP



If you intend to inspect kids upon entry to your party for alcohol, make sure they know if before they arrive. Once there, inspect every bag, backpack, big coat, and handbag coming into your party. Kids are very inventive, and some will try to sneak alcohol past you. If you find any alcohol on a kid, deny them entry to the party and call their parent or guardian. Don't be shy, if it were your kid sneaking alcohol into someone else's party, wouldn't you want to know? If you think kids aren't going to try to sneak anything into your party, watch this frightening video on the internet:

http://www.guzer.com/videos/hides_guns.php

HARD CORE



During the football season there really is little reason to have a party or sleep-over. Oakton football players are expending tremendous amounts of both physical and mental energy between school and football. Teammates and coaches are counting on your son to be at the top of his game. They need their rest and down time to recoup and conserve their strength. Consider easing your son out of sleep-overs as he enters his high school years, and explain that parties can wait until after the football season is over and he has more time and energy on his hands.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NUTRITION



- Sports Nutrition Basics from Training to Competition - Tips for athletes - How to eat and drink for sports performance and recovery (<http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/sportsnutrition/a/SportsNutrition.htm>)
- Sports & Nutrition – The Winning Connection (<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/hsnut/index.html>)
- Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook on Amazon.com

SCHOLARSHIP



- Learning Guide to FCPS 24:7 Learning – “Blackboard” (http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/HughesMS/blackboardms/BlackBoard_Basics_July15.pdf)

DRIVING



- Information on age-related restrictions (<http://www.dmv.virginia.gov/webdoc/citizen/drivers/vadm/vadm1-2.asp>)
- Teen Driving – Leading Cause of Death for Teenagers (<http://www.allstate.com/foundation/teen-driving/teen-safe-driving-facts.aspx>)

ALCOHOL & DRUGS



- NCAA Drug Free Sports website (<http://www.drugfreesport.com/choices/drugs/index.html>)

PARTIES & SLEEPOVERS



- Virginia Alcohol Laws and Parental Responsibility – brochures (<http://www.abc.state.va.us/Education/parent2/parent2.htm>)

