



# WOODBURY FOOTBALL



## Frequently Asked Questions & Answers for Rising 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Players

### When is Registration? And How do I register?

All student-athletes at WHS are required to register ONLINE. **Registration for Fall Sports will open on/after July 1<sup>st</sup> each year.** \*\* When the registration links are live, we will send out a mass email to everybody in our database to announce that the Activities Office is open for registration.

There may be one or two forms that a student-athlete needs to sign (along with a parent) that would need to be physically turned in at the Activities Office before a player will be cleared to start practicing. This includes the **PHYSICAL EXAM** form (required every 3 years) that must be signed by the parent & the doctor who performed the exam.

For FREE & REDUCED LUNCH players, there will be a code that you need to enter to waive/adjust the participation fee. These codes are kept by the WHS Activities Office. Please call **651-425-4420** to request a code. Upon verification of a student-athlete's F/R status, a code will be given that is unique to each family. You will then need to enter this code during your online registration.

You are allowed to come into the WHS Activities Office to register online on the computer housed in the Activities Office. However, it is strongly suggested that you call and make an appointment (see number above) to ensure that the Activities Office is open.

Note: **Players will NOT be allowed to participate in practice if they have not been properly registered and cleared for participation.** Players who are not cleared, but who intend to play football, are still required to attend and observe practice until the player is cleared.

### Is there a specific form that I need to use for my physical exam?

**YES.** The MSHSL has a specific form that your doctor must complete for participation in high school sports. Some doctor offices have these forms on file, but it is strongly advised that you take the proper paperwork with you to your physical exam. **If you do not have the correct form completed and signed by the doctor, you will not be cleared for participation.**

Every year we have players who are delayed in starting practices because of improper physical exam paperwork. There are no substitutes for the proper paperwork. Many offices will "redo" paperwork, but require a 2-3 day allowance to complete a different form. Therefore, please make sure the proper form gets used.

Woodbury HS Activities website: [www.whsactivities.org](http://www.whsactivities.org)

Minnesota State High School League website: [www.mshsl.org](http://www.mshsl.org)

### **When do practices start?**

All practices for grades 9-12 start on the same day. Please refer to the **CALENDAR** on the Woodbury Football website (above) for the latest information including practice dates and times. **NOTE: Football for all grades starts PRIOR to the beginning of the school year.**

The practice schedule for all levels of play will be posted by August 1 on the website calendar.

The first day of practice for the 2023 season is Monday, August 14.

### **Where do I report for the start of practices?**

9<sup>th</sup> Graders should report to the LOCKER ROOM where the 9<sup>th</sup> grade coaching staff will meet them to start the season by 7:00 am (locker room will be open by 6:30 am).

### **Contact Information for the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade coaching staff:**

Please **DO NOT** contact Coach Smith before August 1<sup>st</sup>. Questions prior to August 1 that are not addressed on the website or in this FAQ document should be directed to Coach Hill (Head Varsity Coach) at: [woodburyfootball@gmail.com](mailto:woodburyfootball@gmail.com)

After August 1<sup>st</sup>:

Justin Smith – Head 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Coach [JSmith1@sowashco.org](mailto:JSmith1@sowashco.org)

\*\*\* Please communicate planned absences to Coach Smith after August 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **What/When is the “9<sup>th</sup> Grade Signing Night”?**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Signing Night is a festive ceremony where current WHS players and coaches welcome 8<sup>th</sup> graders – our *RISING 9<sup>th</sup> GRADERS* – to the Woodbury Football program.

This will take place in the first week of June of your 8<sup>th</sup> grade year in the WHS Lecture Hall. The Lecture Hall is located right inside the South Entrance of the school. **For 2023, our Rising 9<sup>th</sup> Grader Signing Night will be held at 6:00 pm in the WHS Lecture Hall on Tuesday, May 30<sup>th</sup>.**

This ceremony features players “signing” or committing to play football at WHS and having their photo taken with a WHS Jersey, Helmet, Football, and any family members that accompany the player on this night. **This is NOT the time for registration, but rather a ceremonial event.**

Every player who attends is given a Woodbury Football T-Shirt that is specifically designed for this night and ONLY available to those who attend.

### **What equipment do I need to purchase?**

Football players are not required to purchase any equipment. WHS has all required protective equipment with the exception of cleats. We do have a large number of “hand-me-down” cleats from previous years that players can choose from if they do not have cleats – but there is no guarantee that we will have the correct size.

There are a few pieces of equipment that most players will choose to purchase on their own:

- **Protective Girdle.** 5-pad sewn in girdle. We will make these available for a group order during the spring, and this will be communicated via email. \*\* Most players choose to purchase their

own girdle, and it lasts for their entire career playing football at WHS. This is due to not wanting to wear an “undergarment” that had been previously worn by another player.

- **Protective cup or “nut cup”.** These are NOT provided, nor are they required. Individual use is up to player/parent discretion.
- **Gloves.** We do not provide gloves, nor are they mandatory. **Gloves must be WHS colors** – Royal Blue, Black, White, or Gray.
- **Mouth guards.** We provide basic mouth guards to all players who need one. However, some players may choose a higher level brand (i.e. Shock Doctor) and/or have a mouth guard created by one’s dentist. This is your option. Players must have a mouth guard to participate in any contact situation. High school rules state a mouthguard **cannot** be WHITE or CLEAR.
- **Padded undershirt** – including those that incorporate greater shoulder and/or rib protection. Some players may choose to wear this under their equipment.
- **Visors.** While the coaching staff strongly encourages players NOT to purchase a visor, some players choose to do so. All visors must be clear, and any visor that needs to be removed is highly likely to be damaged or broken in the process, so only purchase a visor if absolutely necessary.

There are some pieces of equipment that you should **NOT** purchase:

- Wristbands – especially the tiny ones meant to accentuate one’s biceps. These are NOT legal in high school football.
- Neon colored anything – including pink. We require players to look as uniform as possible, so bright colored shoes, gloves, socks, etc are not permitted. (Exception: Varsity Tackle Cancer game when players are offered a standard item to wear – i.e. socks)
- Additional padding without clearing it with a coach. For example, shin guards would not be allowed, nor certain elbow pads. **If there is a question, please check with a coach before spending money on a pad that may not be legal equipment.**

### **Summer Camps:**

**All of our summer opportunities are strongly encouraged but they are not mandatory.** They are offered as opportunities to help our players become better athletes, better football players, and to get a jump start on our offensive and defensive schemes. Players who attend camp enter the season with a great foundation of being prepared for the season.

We have two opportunities that are strongly recommended:

**ROYAL POWER & SPEED:** This is a camp that features strength training and speed/agility development. This summer program is run by the training professionals from ETS who have an incredible reputation working with high school, college, and professional athletes. This program involves weight training, agility & plyometric training, and speed development. Registration can vary from year to year, so look for registration information being communicated via email in the spring. This camp runs Monday-Thursday (mornings) in the months of June & July, with no sessions during the MSHSL “no contact” week that includes the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. All campers receive a T-shirt. **\*\* Rising 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> graders should register for Session II (8:00 – 9:30 am) or Session III (8:45 – 10:15 am).**

**TEAM CAMP:** This is THE summer camp for Woodbury Football Players in grades 9-12. The Rising 9<sup>th</sup> Graders will separate from the “varsity” group for their own team activities after going through the positional and group work with the older kids. This camp will feature coaches from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade coaching staff, as well as the entire varsity coaching staff. This camp features the introduction and installation of WHS offensive and defensive schemes that will be used in the Woodbury football program. All campers receive T-shirt. We run this camp as a fundraiser for our program, so the registration link will be emailed out in the late spring.

Costs & Registration: Registration is TBD. Payment plans and a Free/Reduced lunch rate is available. However, ALL PLAYERS MUST BE REGISTERED TO PARTICIPATE in any summer camp.

Note: These camps are highly encouraged but not mandatory. While we believe that those who attend camps will enter the season with a greater understanding of our football fundamentals and systems, there is no penalty for those unable or unwilling to attend.

### **How do we get added to the email distribution list?**

The best way to get added to the Woodbury Gridiron Club (and Coach Hill's) email distribution list is to go to the program website: [www.woodburyroyalsfootball.com](http://www.woodburyroyalsfootball.com) and click on the link that says "Join Our Email Database" and self-enroll onto the distribution list. This will automatically register you to receive emails.

If you are not receiving informational emails, email Coach Hill at [woodburyfootball@gmail.com](mailto:woodburyfootball@gmail.com) and ask to be added to the distribution list. You will be added within 48 hours.

NOTE: If you are receiving an email for the first time, you may need to click a box to "opt in" to receive emails. If you do not accept this, emails may be rejected or relegated to your spam folder (depending upon your email server). In addition, **please do not unsubscribe or un-enroll**. We use Constant Contact to communicate via email, and once un-enrolled, the program works to prevent the sending of unwanted emails.

### **Where do I get the latest updates and information for Woodbury Football?**

Almost all information is communicated first via email, and then posted/linked on the Woodbury Football website: [www.WoodburyRoyalsFootball.com](http://www.WoodburyRoyalsFootball.com)

***PLEASE refer to your emails and the website BEFORE emailing Coach Hill about a question.***

Most answers can be found within seconds of examining this FAQ document, our website, or emails that have been previously sent. If the answer to your question is still not there, email Coach Hill at [woodburyfootball@gmail.com](mailto:woodburyfootball@gmail.com)

### **Is it OK for my player to miss practices for vacation?**

Each year this is a tricky subject. The football season starts during the "summer vacation" period and flows through two other school holidays – Labor Day Weekend and MEA Weekend. For Rising 9<sup>th</sup> Graders, we realize that vacations over one of these times may be unavoidable by the time you learn about the high school football schedule. Therefore, we ask that you communicate any vacation conflicts immediately with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade coaching staff. For 9<sup>th</sup> graders, these will be "excused" absences if they are communicated to the coaches ahead of time. However, the expectation is that there will be a common understanding between the football program, player, and parents involved, as outlined below:

First, the missing of practices and games by any player will have a detrimental effect to the player's status on the depth chart, and in turn, one's playing time. Players and parents must be committed to regaining any on-field playing time through hard work in practice, and there must be a realization that one week of hard work up on returning may not result in one resuming a previously established role. While a player is on vacation, teammates are practicing to improve and build chemistry as a team, and playing time will reflect the roles established in practice.

Second, **this tolerance of vacations is NOT extended beyond one's 9<sup>th</sup> Grade year**. Thus, those who have been in the program for a year (so players entering grades 10-12) are expected to make

accommodations in their vacation plans and summer schedule to be in attendance at all practices and games from the start of the season through the final varsity game. NOTE: While each summer schedule varies, there are two weeks each year when there will be no football activities. These weeks are the MSHSL “no contact week” that includes the 4<sup>th</sup> of July AND the week(s) in August prior to the official start date of football practice.

Finally, if the vacation leads to extensive absences that are detrimental to the team or make it unable for the player to adequately rejoin the team (i.e. gone for three weeks in September), then the vacation may be deemed an unexcused absence and the player recommended for dismissal. This is not meant to be punitive, but rather an appropriate conclusion to a situation that would otherwise be unfair to the player, program, or both.

### **How are positions and playing time assigned?**

The coaching staff will ultimately make the designation for position and playing time assignments. Traditionally, players are given the opportunity to select the position of their choosing the first day or two of practice as coaches evaluate team personnel. From this point coaches will move players to meet team needs and develop a depth chart according to ability and development within the program’s schemes.

Positions and playing time are not topics for discussion via email or meeting in person. Players can always meet with coaches to determine areas of improvement that could lead to an increase in playing time or a change of position, but this will not be a topic discussed between parents and coaches.

In addition, previous playing experience and/or depth chart perception is NOT necessarily relevant to participation on the 9<sup>th</sup> grade team. A driving force in our program is competition to earn playing time, and players will be encouraged and coached to compete every week.

### **What is 9A and 9B designations for games?**

We want all of our 9<sup>th</sup> graders to gain experience playing in football games. This will vary depending upon each player’s role, as well as week to week while facing different game situations. In order to try to accomplish this goal, we work hard to schedule as many “B” games as possible. Each year the initial scheduling goal is to play a minimum of eight 9A games and four 9B games. Please keep in mind that the number of 9B games will be based on the availability of players to participate and this may fluctuate between opponents from week to week.

**We have ONE 9<sup>th</sup> grade team.** We **USUALLY** do not split up into separate “A” and “B” 9<sup>th</sup> grade teams. Traditionally the 9<sup>th</sup> grade team may, however, split up during a team time period and work with different units in practice. \*\* If we have over 50 players at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, we **MIGHT** determine that breaking into an A and B team will provide the best development.

**The 9A game is the “first team” game featuring the players at the top of the depth chart entering a given game. Playing time is NOT Equal.** Therefore, it is entirely possible for a player to not see on-field time during the 9A game.

In the 9B games, **players who are determined not to have played enough significant minutes in the 9A game will play in the 9B game.** Again, playing time may not be equal, but **all** players who attend a 9B game (given that they are in good standing with the team) will play in the 9B game.

Thus, at the end of a given week, our goal is for all 9<sup>th</sup> grade players will have seen the field in either the 9A or the 9B game. We believe that this will allow for the continued development of all players to work towards improving the Woodbury Football program.

## **What is the Woodbury Gridiron Club and How do I get involved?**

The Woodbury Gridiron Club is the booster club that supports Woodbury High School Football, and in some circumstances, programs that feed into Woodbury High School Football. The primary function of the Woodbury Gridiron Club is to raise money to support the building and maintenance of a high functioning high school football program.

While membership in the Woodbury Gridiron Club is strongly recommended due to the Club's vital role in the health of the Woodbury High School Football program, it is not mandatory. There will be volunteer opportunities for all members of our program whether or not a family is a member of the Woodbury Gridiron Club.

Membership in the Woodbury Gridiron Club - whether as a paid member, volunteer, or officer on the board – does not have a reciprocal effect with a player's playing time or role on the team. While the football program recognizes the crucial role that an effective booster club can have on our success, involvement will not be in exchange for playing time, position selection, or any other undue influence on coaching and/or staff decisions.

Please learn more about the Woodbury Gridiron Club by visiting the Woodbury Football website:

[www.WoodburyRoyalsFootball.com](http://www.WoodburyRoyalsFootball.com)

## **All 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Player Families will be expected to Volunteer at two events this year:**

Every 9<sup>th</sup> grade family will be expected to volunteer at TWO events for a time period of approximately 4 hours. An example of this would be working in the concessions stand for two varsity games. Meeting this expectation involves having one adult work one event/shift. It will be the responsibility of each family to trade/exchange assignments if they cannot be fulfilled due to other conflicts.

\*\* Note: We ask all of our families to volunteer during the year. However, due to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade parents being less likely to miss watching their child play during varsity games, we utilize our 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade parents in the varsity concession stand for their volunteer shifts. Our varsity/JV parents are expected to volunteer at 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> grade games and/or the pregame needs at varsity games.

## **Is Woodbury Football doing anything to address concerns surrounding concussions?**

Yes. Absolutely. First, we follow all of the concussion protocols as mandated by state and federal rules. This includes removing any player from participation if symptoms of a concussion are present until he is **CLEARED BY A DOCTOR** to return to play. When in doubt, we play it safe. We have a Certified Athletic Trainer at all of our football events – practices and games. At the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, the WHS ATC is at all home games, and our opponent is responsible for providing an ATC at away events.

In addition to following safety protocols, we have a couple of additional steps to help with concussion prevention and diagnosis. First, we have all players go through the **Baseline testing**. This is a test taken on a computer screen that measures healthy/normal brain activity of an individual. It is this test that an athlete who has possibly sustained a concussion will take again, and the results compared with the original by a doctor who specializes in neurological health.

Next, our program has made a commitment, and we are in year five of this commitment, to steadily restock our helmet supply with Riddell Revolution Speed helmets or their newer model. In an independent study by Virginia Tech, this helmet was the ONLY helmet that initially received the revered 5-star rating for safety. Our restocking commitment has made every helmet in our program a Riddell Revolution Speed or newer version (Speed Flex) since the 2018 season. While no helmet can guarantee to prevent a player from receiving a concussion, all players in the WHS program will be in 5-star rated helmets.

Finally, coaches will regularly check the fit on each player's helmet. It is CRITICAL that parents and players not adjust helmets on their own – especially during the first week of practice when the helmets always feel too tight as players have not worn a helmet for the previous 9 months. A proper fit goes a long way towards helmet safety, and the proper fit should be adjusted by WHS coaches only.

### **Can a 9<sup>th</sup> grader try-out for the JV/Varsity team?**

Each year we MIGHT end the season with a handful of 9<sup>th</sup> grader players on JV or Varsity. However, a 9<sup>th</sup> Grader cannot “try-out” to make the varsity team. At any point in the summer before or the season, the WHS coaching staff may determine that a varsity or JV need may require a player to be pulled up from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade team. This is then communicated to the player, parents, and the 9<sup>th</sup> grade coaches.

All 9<sup>th</sup> grader should plan on starting and playing the whole season with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade team. It is better for a player to play and help his team be successful than it is to be “pulled up” and only receive limited playing time. Therefore, we encourage all of our players to “shine where you are” and the promotion will come when the ability level meets the need of our program.

### **Can Rising 9<sup>th</sup> Graders start lifting weights and working out at WHS this spring?**

Yes. Starting after Spring Break, Rising 9<sup>th</sup> Graders are invited to WHS to work out after school up to four days per week: Tuesday, & Thursday. Transportation must be arranged and provided by individual student's families, and carpooling is strongly recommended. The workout will last from 3:30-4:30 pm. **If there is a school closing due to snow, then there will NOT be a workout.**

Also, **ALL CANCELATIONS OF WORKOUTS WILL BE COMMUNICATED VIA TWITTER (@WoodburyFB)**. When in doubt, players should go home in the event of poor weather. In the spring, we always seem to get those 6-inch mid-morning snowfalls. It is safe to assume on those days that workouts will be canceled.

Like all of our off-season activities, attendance is encouraged but not mandatory.

\*\* NOTE: You must be Zoned for WHS, be a member of the Spanish Immersion program (therefore coming to WHS), or have received open-enrollment confirmation in order to work out at WHS during the spring of your 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. If you are zoned for another school, unfortunately, you cannot work out at WHS until you are enrolled as a WHS bound student.

### **What is the try-out criteria and how many players make the team/are cut?**

**We do not cut at any level of Woodbury High School Football.** Because we have multiple levels of participation, a student-athlete will never have to worry about being “cut” and not allowed to play. With that being said, at the Varsity level, we do have a “dress list” and a player should not assume that he will be a varsity player just because he is a junior or senior. All students who want to play football will be allowed to play football at Woodbury High School provided that he is in good standing with the program (attendance, behavior, and academics).

Note: There are attendance requirements that included a limited number of excused and unexcused absences. Players at any level may be dismissed from the program if they violate the absence policy with too many absences. This, however, is not being “cut”.

### **Where can I find the game schedule?**

Two places: [www.WoodburyRoyalsFootball.com](http://www.WoodburyRoyalsFootball.com)

[www.Suburbaneast.org](http://www.Suburbaneast.org)



### **Where can I find directions to away games?**

On the conference website – [www.SuburbanEast.org](http://www.SuburbanEast.org) - you can see the location and click on it from the schedule. This should pull up directions. In addition, the Woodbury Royals Football App (free on iPhone & Android phones) will have this mapping ability from the “Directions” tab.

### **When are 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Games?**

Starting back in 2019, all 9<sup>th</sup> grade (A) games have been scheduled for 5:15 pm start times in the host team’s stadium. The 10<sup>th</sup> grade or B-squad game will follow. This change has been adopted by our conference to give younger players the “under the lights” feeling. The hope is that this will be a special experience that will encourage players to continue playing football throughout their high school career.

Please refer to the football website and the Suburban East website for specific weekly details. Traditionally, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade B games have been played on either Thursdays, Fridays, or the following Monday. See above information about 9<sup>th</sup> grade B games.

### **Where can I learn more about the Program?**

For an in-depth look into our program, you can find our Woodbury Football Program Handbook (PDF) linked on the Woodbury Football website.