



# Panther FOOTBALL

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

### Spring Lake Park High School Football Program Philosophy

Teach life lessons about Toughness, Effort, Actions & Mindest through the game of football.

### What is expected of incoming freshmen football players during the summer?

**Our summer camps are strongly encouraged.** These camps help our players become better athletes, better football players, and to get a foundation established before August practices begin.

**Panther Football Camps:** We offer 2 camps in the summer. Strength & Speed Camp and Mini Camp. Summer Camps are run by members of our high school coaching staff. Camps typically start early/mid June and will end in early August. Registration is done online through the SLP Community Education webpage.

### Panther Football Camps - Summer

**Strength & Speed Camp** – During the summer we have a 3 day a week lifting program that is based on Bigger, Faster, Stronger training principles. We will work to develop strength, speed and flexibility. Strength training is critical to our competitiveness and injury prevention on the field. A typical schedule is M-W-F in the morning. Players register for the group time that best fits their schedule

**Mini Camp** – This is our technique, skill and scheme camp. We begin our work for the upcoming season in the summer, players who participate in Mini Camp are far better prepared to play in the fall than those who don't. In order to participate in Mini Camp players must also be registered for Strength & Speed Camp. For 2021 Mini Camp will be on Monday & Friday between Strength & Speed Camp group times.

**Passing League (7 v 7)** – Passing League for Wide Receivers, Running Backs, Quarterbacks, Tight Ends, Linebackers, and Defensive Backs. We compete after Strength & Speed Camp on Wednesdays. Our goal is to have 2 teams play, one Varsity and one for our younger players. 9<sup>th</sup> grade participation is dependent on our numbers and the availability of our opponents having a second team to play. If we have an opportunity for 9<sup>th</sup> grade participation more info will follow. There is no additional registration required for this summer activity, players who are in our Strength & Speed Camp as well as Mini Camp will be able to participate.

**Participation in our Panther Football Camps is highly encouraged. We believe that those who attend will enter the season with a greater understanding of our football fundamentals and systems.**

### Is it OK for my player to miss summer football activities for vacation or other commitments?

We have a strong commitment from players and coaches in the summer. Summer vacations are a part of summer and we know that there will be some conflicts.

There is a “no contact” period around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, there will be no activities that week. The week prior to the start of Fall Camp will also be a week that we do not schedule activities.

**Multi-Sport Athletes** – we are big supporters of multi-sport athletes; our coaches will push players to play other sports at SLP. In the summer this can create some conflicts as well, the expectation is that players are at football activities as much as possible. We have had a number of players in the past play on some high level summer teams that have done a great job balancing both. Missing to train on your own with a “special” trainer rather than with the TEAM is not advised.

**Do I need to register through the Athletic Office for summer football camps?**

**NO.** There is no registration through the school or the MSHSL for summer football.

Players need to register for Panther Football Camps through SLP Community Education.

**Do I need a Physical for summer football camps?** - **NO.** Players do not need a physical form turned in to participate in Panther Football Camps. Athletes will need a current physical on file in order to register for fall football.

**When do I check out equipment?** - All registered players will be issued equipment prior to the start of Mini Camp. Equipment check out is at SLPHS; 9<sup>th</sup> grade will be issued equipment on the first day of camp.

**What equipment do I need to purchase?** – SLPHS 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 purchase on their own:

- **Girdle.** We do issue girdles to any player who needs one. ***It is highly recommended that you buy your own.*** This is due to not wanting to wear an “undergarment” that has been previously worn by another player. Most players choose to purchase their own girdle, and it usually lasts for their entire career playing football at SLP.
- **Protective 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 SLP colors** – Royal Blue, 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.
- **Padded undershirt** – including those that incorporate greater shoulder and/or rib protection. Some players may choose to wear this under their equipment. White is the preferred color.

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

- Wristbands – wristbands are not allowed under MSHSL rules.
- Eye Visors/Shields – not permitted unless medically necessary.
- Neon colored anything – including pink. We require players to look as uniform as possible, so bright colored shoes, gloves, socks, etc. are not permitted.
- 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.**

**When is registration for Fall Football? How do I register?** – Registration is done ONLINE. More information on registration will be available this summer. Every athlete needs a current sports physical on file (a physical is good for three years). All other registration materials are found on the SLPHS Athletic Department website. Scholarship information is available online for free and reduced lunch students.

**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 Sports Physical Exam?** - **YES.** The MSHSL and SLPHS have a specific sports qualifying physical form that your doctor must complete for participation in all MSHSL sanctioned high school sports. **If you do not have the correct form completed and signed by the doctor, you will not be cleared for participation.** You can find the most current form in several places:

1. SLPHS Activities Office has paper copies; or
2. Print from online forms at the following links:
  - Minnesota State High School League website: <http://www.mshsl.org/>

**When do practices start?** - All practices for grades 9-12 start on the same day – Monday August 16th. More information will be distributed this summer. Players will be at the high school the entire day – we do not allow our players to leave campus until we are finished with practices. Players need to bring their own lunch.

**Where do I report for the start of August practice?** - 9<sup>th</sup> Graders should report to the Gym area where the coaching staff will meet them to start the season.

**Is it OK for my player to miss in-season practices/games for vacation?** - 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 due 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.

Missing practices and games by any player may have a detrimental effect to the player’s status on the depth chart, and in turn, one’s playing time. Players 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 upon returning will 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.

**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 in-season practices and games from the start of the season through the final varsity game.

**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. 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.

**Where do I get the latest updates, game schedule and information for Spring Lake Park Football?**

We encourage you to visit our website at <http://www.slppantherfootball.com/> for information and updates.

**What are the Touchdowners and how do I get involved?** - The Touchdowners is the booster club that supports Spring Lake Park Football. The primary function of the Touchdowners is to raise money to support the building and maintenance of a high functioning high school football program.

The Touchdowners play a vital role in the health of the Spring Lake Park High School Football program. There will be volunteer opportunities for all members of our program; families are encouraged to participate.

Participation in Touchdowners events 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.

**Is Spring Lake Park 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 our football events – practices and games. At the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, the SLPHS Athletic Trainer is at all home games, and our opponent is responsible for providing a certified trainer at away events.

While a helmet cannot 100% prevent a concussion we have committed to providing top-quality helmets. Our current helmet supply included only 5-star helmets from the Virginia Tech Helmet study. All helmets that are worn get reconditioned every year.

**Can a 9<sup>th</sup> grader try-out for the JV/Varsity team?** - A 9<sup>th</sup> Grader cannot “try-out” to make the varsity team.

The coaching staff reserves the right to “pull up” a freshmen to play varsity football but would only happen in extremely rare circumstances. All 9<sup>th</sup> graders should plan on starting and playing the entire 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.

**August Practice** - Practice for all Freshmen will begin on Monday, August 16. There will be two weeks of full-day practices. Players are expected to be at SLPHS from 7:45 AM to approximately 3:00 PM. There may be some adjustment based on MSHSL rules and other TEAM events. Please talk with your player about the schedule each day. Players need to bring their lunch. Players are expected to stay on campus the entire day.

Once school begins, practice is held after school from approximately 3:10 – 6:00 PM. The Freshmen team will usually play their games on Thursdays.

**Gold Cards** - Our big fundraiser for the year is the sale of Gold Cards. Gold Cards are a discount card that offers many local and national discounts. Our “Blitz” night to go out and sell the cards is Tuesday August 17. Practice will end a little early and we will go out and sell cards until between 7:30 – 8pm. Players will need to report back to school to turn in money.

**What is expected of Freshmen in the off-season?** - The coaching staff encourages players to participate in a MSHSL sponsored winter and spring sport. Winter sport options include Basketball, Hockey, Wrestling, Nordic Skiing, and Swimming. Spring sport options include Tennis, Baseball, Track, Golf, and Lacrosse.

Players not involved in a MSHSL sport are encouraged to commit to the Spring Lake Park Winter or Spring Strength and Speed Programs.

**Contact Information for the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Coaching Staff**

Please contact Doug Potthoff (Freshmen Coach) at [dpotth@district16.org](mailto:dpotth@district16.org) with any questions that are not addressed on the website or in this FAQ document.

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