

To: Parents, Coaches, Cheerleaders and Football Players of Northboro and Southboro,

We are pleased to officially announce that the Northboro/Southboro Youth Football and Cheer Association has become part of the Central Massachusetts American Youth Football and Cheer Conference. Though the board feels that this move is in the best interest of the kids in our towns, Pop Warner disagrees with our decision.

In the coming weeks you may be contacted by Central Mass Pop Warner trying to start a program in our towns, as they feel that this would be in the best interest of their league. For all the reasons stated below, it became obvious to this board that this was not the case. Unfortunately, Central Mass Pop Warner has taken the stance that the assets (monies and equipment) of our program belong to Central Mass Pop Warner. They do not recognize the fact that these assets were generated by the Northboro/Southboro Football and Cheer Association to benefit the children of our towns. They are attempting to seize these assets which we will protect to the fullest extent of the law.

Why did we make this change? There were many concerns that were voiced during the 2010 season and once again reiterated in the survey which was completed this past fall. First, to strengthen the quality of our program we will provide additional preseason training for our coaches as well as adopt a strict, binding code of conduct for our players and coaches. In addition, joining AYF will address many of the other concerns, in particular the following four main issues:

Issue: Travel time to the towns we play is a burden on the parents and participants (cheer and football)

Solution: Central Mass AYFC Conference has teams in our nearby towns. There are currently 20 (including Northboro/Southboro) teams within the Central Mass AYFC Conference, including most of the towns that our high school plays (highlighted in yellow).

Ayer/Shirley	Hudson	Lunenburg	Milford	Shrewsbury
Charlton/Dudley	Leicester/Spencer	N/S T-Hawks	Nashoba	Tyngsboro
Clinton	Leominster	Marlboro	Nipmuc	Westborough
Groton/Dunstable	Littleton	Maynard	N. Middlesex	Worcester

Issue: The towns we play as part of Pop Warner are much larger than ours and more like cities

Solution: Northboro and Southboro population combined is approximately 24K people. The average town population of the Central Mass AYF Conference is 19K people excluding Worcester and 27K including Worcester.

Issue: Older kids playing down (i.e. Old/Lighters) are creating a noncompetitive environment

Solution: Central Mass AYFC Conference is a grade based organization playing in the All-American Division. This means that participants in the same grade and of similar age will play together. The main difference of this division compared to the Pop Warner program is that a child's weight no longer will factor into the decision regarding his/her team placement. The board believes that the All-American Division of AYFC will provide consistency and continuity for the players and teams through the 8th grade. Under the weight based system, some children outside the limits of Pop Warner's weight restrictions were prevented from playing in their own age group due to these weight restrictions. On the flip side, children who qualified as 'older/lighter' were often placed on squads with younger kids. In making its decision, the board reviewed an often-cited research study conducted by the Mayo Clinic, which concluded that age is a greater factor in football injuries than weight. The conclusions from that study are supported by the lower insurance rates for grade-based football programs relative to programs that have older/lighter players playing with and against younger children. As part of the All-American Division, the Jr. T-Hawks will offer football teams at the following levels: Tiny Mite (Kindergarten & First Grade), Mitey Mite (Second & Third Grades), Fourth Grade, Fifth Grade, Sixth Grade, Seventh Grade and Eighth Grade.

Issue: Children playing on larger teams receive little playing time above the minimum play requirement

Solution: Central Mass AYFC promotes team sizes that will maximize playing time. Towns are encouraged to split teams into two equally qualified teams which will play similar schedules within the league.

It is our hope that you realize we have taken the time to listen to what the parents and players expect out of this organization and will join us to kick off our inaugural season as a member of the Central Mass AYFC Conference.

We ask that you support our new direction and keep our towns unified within one league. In conclusion, we believe that this is what is best for our kids and will help our program flourish for many years to come. We welcome any questions or comments you may have as we begin a new future with our Football and Cheer programs. Lastly, in the coming weeks, we will kick off our registration for the 2011 season including a free, fun event for all past and new participants including parents.

Regards,

NS Youth Football and Cheer Board
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