



2014 Annual American Youth Football and Cheer Awards

AYF Coach of Year (All American Division)
Keefe Matheny - Empire Ducks

AYF Coach of Year (National Division)
Ronald Gray - PG Storm

AYC Coach of the Year
Tanya Alexander - Southwest Region San Antonio Stallions

AYC Dance/Step Coach of the Year
Paisley McGhee - Westside Cubs - Detroit, Michigan

Most Gold Medal Rankings
Big East Region

AYC Volunteer of the Year
Kelly Frazier - Atlantic Region

AYF Volunteer of the Year
James McKinney - Desert Pacific Region - Gilbert Dawgs

AYF Giving Back to Community Organization of the Year
Southwest Region - LE Chamberlin - Houston, Texas

AYF Academic Achievement Organization of the Year
Greater Phoenix AYF - Desert Pacific Region

Official Sponsors



The Annual AYF National All Star Game Week was another huge success.

The West All Stars, East All Stars, and Cheer All Stars enjoyed a full week of activities, practice, interaction, and fun. The General Managers and Coaching Staffs provided leadership and direction along with support from the National Staff, JWT, Intersport and the Marines.

Click the Image Below to View Video Highlights



The week started off with an inspiring AYF Welcome Address from Captain Andrew Holmes of the Marines. Following the address, it was time for team meetings, Swag Bag pick up, meeting teammates, and then time for rest!

[Read the Full Recap Here!](#)

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New Year's Congratulations

Craig Karahuta will assume the role of VP of Football and Cheer Operations. Craig has presided over one of the most successful football and cheer organizations in Pop Warner and AYF/AYC. He has served as league director of Ocean County CYO Basketball League, President of Toms River Raiders Association, and President of NJAYF before assuming the duties of AYC National Cheer Operations Director. Craig has shown to be a qualified administrator in both Cheer and Football.



Joe Galat said, "Although AYF has never had a person in this capacity in the past, it became obvious when Craig volunteered his efforts in so many areas he had already filled this position."

AYF would also like to congratulate Lou Montanaro and Tina Certo who have been appointed the new Big East Regional Directors. AYC National Staff is proud to announce the new leadership of Tammy Gagne from NHYFSC as the new AYC Cheer Director.

The Key to Building a Successful Youth Organization by Shannon Shy the AYF National Membership Director.



You hear the mantra "It's for the kids" a lot in youth organization circles. I know it's big here at AYF/AYC. Recently, a community leader looking over the fence at AYF from another football organization asked me, "What does that mean - 'for the kids'?" He continued: "What do you do, for example, if you catch a coach of a championship team cheating using an ineligible player? Do you hurt the rest of the players by taking away their championship? They had nothing to do with the dishonesty." That question, and my answer to that question, which was received favorably by the community leader, prompted me to write this article for

The Huddle. (My answer is provided at the end of this article.)

I spend a great deal of time throughout the year communicating with folks around this awesome country (and in other countries)

**2015 AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL
NATIONAL LEADERSHIP MEETING
FEBRUARY 6TH-8TH, 2015**

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RSVP BY 1/30/15 TO ELIZABETH BRAY @ ebray@americanyouthfootball.com



NFL Director of Football Development

My 6 year old recently informed me that he does NOT want to play flag football this Spring. He played flag this Fall and now he wants to play tackle football. I informed him our town doesn't have tackle football for kids his age. He quickly computed this information and declared "I want to play baseball then."

"What?" I thought to myself. I was stunned. And then I began to freak out a little bit. I started to worry that he might fall behind the other kids in his football development. Or that he might not want to ever play football again. Or, worst of all, what if he falls in love with baseball and I have to go watch those boring games for the next 12 years of my life? (Note: I grew up in a baseball family, so I feel qualified and entitled to that opinion).

What did I do you ask? I gave myself the proverbial slap across the face and I snapped out of it. You might think I'm a little nuts because he's only 6. Well, I feel like I have a healthy perspective when it comes to sports and youth, but it's hard to think clearly when it's YOUR kid. If only for a few seconds, my emotional response took over. I don't admit this proudly, but I need to recognize that I am not immune to selfish, knee jerk reactions.

Of course I'm biased towards football. I think it's the greatest sport in the world. Yes, there are some similarities among all sports, but football is unique and different. So, while I'm hopeful he plays football as he gets older, I had to define what is important for him and his experience in sports right now. In order: have fun, be active, have fun, start developing an affection for all sports, have fun, develop athleticism, and have fun.

I believe our sports culture in America is a bit broken. We have parents and coaches deciding for kids that they are going to specialize in one sport at a very young age. This is done with the goal of a college and perhaps professional career. I think we all know how that story goes- the child ends up hating that sport and quitting in high school when they start to formulate strong opinions. Or, the athlete enjoys success, only later in life to experience resentment and personal issues because they feel like they were robbed of their childhood. We know that the end does not justify the means, yet it's easy to get sucked into that line of thinking.

Let's remember that the best thing we can do is expose our kids to other sports and activities letting them develop other skills, which will ultimately benefit them on the football field. And one of the many great things about football is that you don't have to play it 12 months a year to be really good at it. There are plenty of positions on a football team that don't have to be mastered in kindergarten.

If you lose sight of this and you need a slap across the face to remind you, give me a call.

Watch the Preview of the 2014 AYF/AYC National Championships

about developing successful youth football and cheer organizations capable of sustainment. The key to success is actually fairly simple - begin by building a values-based foundation and stay focused on those values. Staying focused on the values that caused you to create the organization will ensure that all of your decisions are made in the best interest of the kids. And to be candid, if you're here for any other reason, AYF/AYC is not the place for you.

[Read the full article here.](#)

AYF Welcomes: New Associations

Atlantic Region

Marshall Heights (Metro AYF)

Big East

Blackhawks (Penn Elite)

Bucks County Bears (Penn Elite)

New England Region

Dual County/Tri-Valley Youth Football Conference

Southeast Region

Gulf Coast AYF Conference



New PlayAYF Feature: Concussion Awareness Training & Testing Now Available

PlayAYF can now embed the CDC's Head's Up to Concussion training content and "exam" into the registration flow for Associations with Premium Plans. [Learn more...](#)



It's

AAA Nomination Time! DEADLINE EXTENDED!

To be considered for Academic All-American (AAA) honors all scholar athletes must have a 96 percent or higher grade point average. In addition, while making a mark in their local communities, all AAA winners must exhibit AYF's four pillars of achievement (Academics, Respect, Discipline and Performance) and exemplify excellence in academics and sportsmanship.

To be eligible for the AAA award, applications must be submitted by Jan 31st, 2015 by logging in to [MYAYF.com](#) and navigating to the awards section.

Good luck to all potential award winners.

GIVING BACK

**If you or someone you know has FOOTBALL or CHEER uniforms/equipment to donate please contact AYF [GIVING BACK](#) so that we can kick off the spirit of "giving back" this season!

AYF/AYC INVITES YOU TO

Highlights



The Full Layout

with Tammy Gagne

With the successful 2014 competition season behind us, the AYC staff, along with the regional cheer and dance directors (RCDD) is busy planning an amazing 2015 season for our cheer membership.

Emphasis in 2015 will be on coaches education, clinics, camps, and communication. Together we can make 2015 a bigger, stronger, more rewarding year for our members. Please reach out to your RCDD by the end of the month with your input on 2015 cheer rule changes.

Your 2015 RCDD's are:

- Kelly Frazier - Atlantic Region
- Tina Certo - Big East
- Don Carbiener - Desert Pacific
- Linda Atkins - Midwest
- Sandre Nelson - Mountain Northwest
- Julie Mullin - New England
- Diedrea Willis - Southeast
- Joyce Sinnette - Southwest

AYC promotes sportsmanship, pride, and commitment, while creating fun, fitness, and opportunities. Let us help you build your cheer family, one athlete at a time.

Wishing your program the best for 2015.

Tammy
ayc@americanyouthfootball.com

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Up up and Away



We lit the small burner at the bottom of the lantern (paper bag) which in turn filled the lantern with hot air that caused it to slowly raise into the midnight sky joining the thousands of others ascending to the heavens. Those glowing lanterns are intended to be the symbol of hope for the new year ahead. "What was your wish when you sent yours aloft," I was asked? I think I awkwardly answered something like "peace on earth". To be honest, I wished for health and safety to our five children and eleven grandchildren.

Resolutions for the new year should come only after a critical reflection on the past. Since 1996 the mission of American Youth Football and Cheer is to provide wholesome development of youth through their association with adult leaders in football and cheer. My other 2015 resolution was to continue to offer families the best value in youth sports. AYF's resolution is to remain affordable, yet improve the services each year in all fifty states and internationally. But that value must resonate in the communities we serve. With three divisions from which to choose, AYF can reach more kids. National, All American and Conference All Star truly provide a place for every child. Because of these choices, National Championships in AYF and AYC are the biggest and best offered anywhere.

Check out the Annual AYF Awards in this months Huddle. Find the true value of giving back to your community, promoting Academic Achievement, and athletic excellence. The AYF Hall of Fame Ceremony is a fine indication that those who spend their lives helping kids "complete the circle of giving back" and are indeed the most honorable. Unlike the many camps and combines to be found on the web, AYF offers an affordable opportunity for players, parents, Coaches, and Administrators to get valuable tools at Camp AYF Xperience in your area. The highlight each year is the unique American Youth Football and Cheer National All Star Game. The top student athletes in football and cheer do get an experience of a life time. So let's review: Three Divisions at the National Championship level - Hall of Fame recognition, AYF Xperience, Character Development - Awards for Academics, Volunteers and Athletic Excellence - Community Involvement - Hall of Fame Honors - National All Star Opportunity and more.



"Link up and Like Up"

Atlantic Region: [Facebook](#)

Big East Region: [Facebook](#) [Web](#)

Central Midwest: [Facebook](#)

Midwest: [Facebook](#)

Mountain Northwest: [Facebook](#)

New England: [Facebook](#)

Desert Pacific Region: [Facebook](#)

South West Region: [Facebook](#)

South East Region: [Facebook](#)

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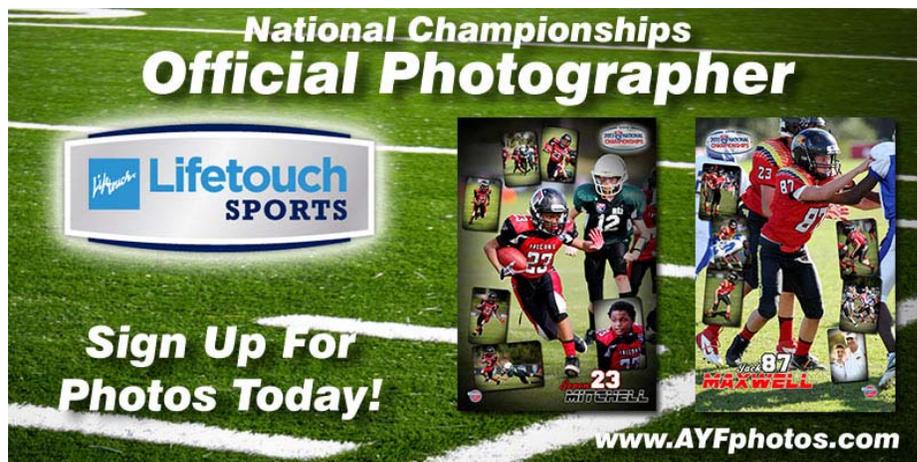
Concussion Awareness Having Positive Impact On Protecting AYF Youth

A recent study from the AYF endorsed Accident Insurance program indicates a significant increase in the number of reported concussions starting in 2011 and continuing to present. You might ask, why is this positive news? Because in the past concussions were largely missed or ignored and players often did not seek initial treatment and return to play counseling from a concussion expert in the medical field. For more information on the study and what AYF / AYC is doing to protect its youth, check out our recent blog at <http://www.sadlersports.com/blog/positive-impact-concussion-awareness/>

As George Clooney recently said at the Golden Globe awards "those of us who do what we love - have already got the brass ring" My hope is that this coming year you will consider yourself a winner for helping kids. Nothing you can ever do is more important. Los Angeles' Groundlings Improv Theatre has long been a proving ground for comics. The best have gone on to make us laugh in movies and TV.

I would like AYF to be the proving ground for leaders of youth who go on to make our lives better in this world.

2014 National Championship Photos and Videos Are Available To View and Purchase Online Now!



Visit <http://www.ayfphotos.com/Pictures> - For all the great action photos from the AYF & AYC 2014 Championships. The photos will only be available for a short period of time so capture those amazing memories now!



DVDs Available

Mr. Video covered all the action at the 2014 American Youth Football and Cheer National Championships.

For a complete list of football games to order <http://www.mrvideoonline.com/searchresults.asp>

For cheer information including how to watch your cheer performance on demand go to Mrvideoonline.com.

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