

## Fairfield Wildcats Youth Football

### ADOPTING USA FOOTBALL'S HEADS UP FOOTBALL PROGRAM FOR 2013 SEASON



The Fairfield Wildcats Football Program based in Fairfield CT, is committed to ensuring a positive youth football experience and advancing player safety this fall by providing league-wide coaching education and teaching resources that benefit players, parents and coaches through, USA Football's Heads Up Football program.

USA Football is the official youth development partner of the NFL and its 32 teams. Fairfield Wildcats Youth Football includes 10 tackle football teams, and 8 Flag Football teams comprised of more than 250 players and 50 coaches throughout Fairfield.

Every Fairfield Wildcats Football coach will be trained in Heads Up Football techniques before leading their teams this season. All Fairfield Wildcats Football head coaches and assistant coaches will complete USA Football's accredited Level 1 Coach Certification Course, which includes Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concussion recognition and response protocols, proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting and Heads Up Tackling techniques, which aim to take the head out of the line of contact.

Through Heads Up Football, Player Safety Coaches will be trained by USA Football to implement, evaluate and monitor all Heads Up Football player safety protocols within the organization. Player Safety Coaches work with league commissioners, coaches, parents and players throughout the season to provide on-site clinics and mentoring to ensure that coaching and player safety best practices are used.

"The Fairfield Wildcats Youth Football Program is proud to join Heads Up Football as an additional way to help kids be safe while learning the game of football", said Tom Grace, President of the Fairfield Wildcats Youth Football Program. "Heads Up Football promotes a safer, better game"

USA Football Executive Director Scott Hallenbeck said:

***"We are proud to have Fairfield Wildcats Youth Football join us in leading America's youth football community through Heads Up Football, helping to set the highest standards of player safety and coaching education in any youth sport."***

**Adopted in 2013 by Fairfield Wildcats Football and by youth leagues on a national level, Heads Up Football requires four primary elements:**

Coaching education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All coaches within a youth program are trained to teach the game’s fundamentals by completing USA Football’s nationally accredited Level 1 Coaching Certification Course.</li> </ul>
Concussion recognition and response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaches learn and are assessed on CDC concussion recognition and response through USA Football’s Level 1 Coaching Certification Course.</li> <li>• Coaches, parents and players are taught concussion-related protocols at the start of the season at a league-wide clinic and have them reinforced throughout the season.</li> </ul>
Tackling technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USA Football’s Heads Up Tackling technique, endorsed by medical and football experts, teaches players to keep their heads up and out of the line of contact.</li> </ul>
Equipment fitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaches, parents and players are taught proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting.</li> </ul>

USA Football’s Heads Up Tackling technique was developed with contributions from USA Football’s Tackle Advisory Committee, which includes Northwestern head coach PAT FITZGERALD, UCLA head coach JIM MORA, former NFL running back MERRIL HOGE, Miami Christopher Columbus High School head coach CHRIS MERRITT and sports **psychologist DR. DAVID YUKELSON.**

**About USA Football:** USA Football, the sport’s national governing body, leads the game’s development, inspires participation and ensures a better and safer experience for all youth, high school and other amateur players. The independent nonprofit is the official youth football development partner of the NFL, its 32 teams and the NFL Players Association. USA Football manages U.S. national teams within the sport for international competitions and provides more than \$1 million annually in equipment grants and youth league volunteer background check subsidies. Endowed by the NFL and NFLPA in 2002 through the NFL Youth Football Fund, USA Football (**[www.usafootball.com](http://www.usafootball.com)**) is chaired by former NFL team executive Carl Peterson.

