

Football Equipment List

Hello AB Pop Warner Football Parents:

The following is a list of the equipment you will need to purchase prior to our first full pads practice. All of this equipment can be found at Legends Sporting Goods. Equipment is also available Olympia Sports in Westford, the Maynard Outdoor Store and Dick's Sporting Goods.

Footwear/Cleats: While they are not required by Pop Warner, cleats are necessary in football. If you purchase screw-in cleats, the screw-in cleats cannot have any metal in them. Most cleats today are all molded rubber anyway. Football cleats are not a must, but they do provide more support than a soccer cleat.

Practice Pants/pads/belt: These usually come all together. The pants should fit snug. Football pants will sag when they get wet. The pant legs should end just below the knee. Some pants come with a belt, some do not. If they do not, make sure your purchase a football belt. In the event the pants do not come with pads, you need two knee pads and two thigh pads (all pictured below).



Girdle/pads: The girdle is worn under both the practice pants and our game pants. Again, they usually come with the pads. If they do not, you need two hip pads and one tailbone pad (all pictured below). Some girdles come with a pocket for a protective cup. Our experience is that these girdle/cup combos are not as comfortable while playing.



Protective Cup/Athletic Supporter: This is required by Pop Warner. We suggest the athletic supporter/cup as it fits better to the player's body and causes less discomfort. Some cups are available in a pair of lightweight shorts. This may not be the best option as they will be wearing a lot of layers (underwear, girdle, pants) and this would just add another layer.



Practice Jersey: ABPW has some practice jerseys for sale which you can purchase when you pick up your helmets and shoulder pads. They are \$20 which is about what they are in stores and we can fit it properly when they pick up their pads. If you decide to buy it from the store, be sure that it's big enough to fit over the shoulder pads (but not too big).

Chin Strap for the helmet: We suggest a protective chin strap, which has a plastic cup that fits under the players chin. **Make sure that you purchase a "youth" chinstrap.** Any other will not properly fit the youth helmet we provide and you will have to return it and get a new one. We recommend bringing your helmet with you to the store when purchasing a chin strap. If you need help fitting the chinstrap to the helmet, see one of your coaches well before the first practice in full pads.



Mouth guard: All players must wear a mouth guard while playing. It must be in their mouths before the snap or the team is penalized (Pop Warner takes this very seriously). **The mouth guard must attach to the facemask and must be colored** (clear mouth guards are not allowed).



Accessories

There are a lot of football accessories that are available. Some will enhance your child's experience from a protection standpoint, other just look cool but don't do much. Some accessories are not allowed by Pop Warner. Here is our take on some of the accessories available:

Arm pads/hand pads/elbow pads: We do not recommend nor discourage the use of these. It really depends on what your child thinks they need *after* they have been playing for a few practices. We don't suggest purchasing any of these until after your child has played a few practices. Certain positions benefit more from certain additional padding (arm/hand pads for linemen, elbow/rib pads for back). Too many times, parents buy these pads and the kids don't end up using them.

"Skull Caps" or "Doo-rags": These are sometimes worn under the helmet by NFL or college players and were made popular by Under Armor. By Pop Warner Rules, **they are illegal to wear under helmets.** Additionally, AB Pop Warner strongly discourages our players from wearing these at any time. If your child has one, please tell them to leave them home.

Gloves: Another popular item that the kids love because they look cool, but they may or may not improve your child's performance, safety or comfort. Many coaches don't want kids that handle the ball to wear them. Linemen really don't need them. Think carefully before you buy these...they might end up only wearing them in the yard to play catch with their friends.

Facemasks: In the past, some parents have purchased their own facemask for the helmet. We strongly discourage this. We have a number of different helmets and not all masks fit all helmets. Please talk to Randy or me if you would like to consider a different facemask. We have a lot on hand and in the color that we require.

Facemask Shields: Another item that has been made popular by the NFL. The Pop Warner rules state that shields can be used but must be clear. They cannot be tinted in any way. As a program, ABPW would prefer that your child not use a shield. One of the towns we play against experience a horrible accident while playing against a team that had a player with a shield and has asked us (as a courtesy) if we would not use them (which we agreed to). If this is a big issue with you, please let us know and we can discuss it.

Headbands/wristbands and other types of bands: A head band can't be worn under the helmet, so that's out. A wrist band is used to wipe your brow, which is hard with a helmet on and I really don't know what the purpose is of the bands that go on biceps or below the knees...other than to look cool. We recommend against all of these.

Hopefully, you find this helpful before you spend money you don't need to! As always, we're happy to discuss any of these or other items with you.