

STONE CREEK JUNIOR COUGARS
FOOTBALL & CHEER



PARENT HANDBOOK

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- Northern Youth Football League
- Organization Structure
 - Board Meetings
- Volunteer Driven
- Communications

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Football Age Restrictions
- Football Weight Restrictions
- Cheerleading Age Restrictions
- Birth Certificates
- Physical Examination
- Injured Players

REGISTRATION, FEES & OTHER COSTS

- Registration Fee
- Pre-Registration (returning players only)
Open / New Player Registration
- Registration Day
- Bounced Check Fee
- Refund Policy
- Incidental Costs

SCJC PROVIDED EQUIPMENT

- Equipment Loss/Damage Fee
- Care of Uniforms
- Football Equipment Pickup

PLAYER PROVIDED ITEMS

- Football Player Provided Items List
- Cheerleading Provided Items List

PRACTICES & SCHEDULE

- Absenteeism
- Early Summer Skill-Camps
- Summer Practice Schedule
- Regular Season Practice Schedule
- Practice Location
- Walking/Riding Waiver
- Team Assignments



TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

PRACTICES & SCHEDULE

- Absenteeism
- Early Summer Skill-Camps
- Summer Practice Schedule
- Regular Season Practice Schedule
- Practice Location
- Walking/Riding Waiver
- Team Assignments

GAMES

- Play Time
- Field Equipment

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Parent Code of Conduct
- Parental Concerns & Problem-Solving Protocol
- Player Code of Conduct

SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY

INSTRUCTIONS

- Basic Outdoor Safety Rules for Severe Weather
- Lightning

Appendix A - Contact Information

- Board Members
- SCJC Official Website
- NYFL Official Website

NOTICE: INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Although we strive to provide the best and most up-to-date information in this handbook, the information contained herein is subject to change without notice.



Our Mission

Development of our youth sport activities of football, cheerleading and mascots to help improve the physical, mental, and moral well-being of our youth participants while developing a sense of fair play and good sportsmanship, while never compromising the welfare and safety of our athletes.

Our Vision

Put Kids First!

Our Values

Place the emotional and physical well-being of players above any personal desire to win.

Treat each player as an individual and provide a safe playing environment.

Lead by example in demonstrating fair play and good sportsmanship.

Use coaching techniques that are appropriate for the player's age and skills being taught.

A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

A successful Junior Cougars season is one where our kids have fun, improve their skills, become better people, and want to play again next year.



Introduction

Welcome to the Stoney Creek Junior Cougars Football and Cheer family, also known as the Junior Cougars. The teams were formed in 2016 by local youth football and cheer enthusiasts. Our primary focus is on developing a competitive spirit to succeed with fun for all participants, while never compromising the welfare and safety of our children. We have been serving the youth of our community for over 7 years and are a not-for-profit organization. We hope your family finds participation in the Junior Cougars to be enjoyable, rewarding, and exciting.

As with any organization, there are rules and policies that must be adhered to in order to maintain a safe environment for all participants and ensure efficient functioning of our activities. This handbook provides information about our mission, requirements, rules, and policies that govern participation as part of the Junior Cougars family. Please read this handbook carefully and feel free to contact any Board member (see Appendix 'A') or your child's team Head Coach or team Directors with any questions. Throughout this handbook, the word "athlete" is used to represent a football, cheerleader, or mascot participant. Remember that we are a youth sports organization, and the games are for the athletes, not the adults.

Northern Youth Football League

The Northern Youth Football League (NYFL) began in 2005 and was formed for "athletes" to promote youth football, cheerleading and mascots. The NYFL currently has 7 independent franchises of which the Junior Cougars are one of those. The other NYFL franchises are: Lake Orion Dragons, Lapeer Jr. Lightning, Oxford Jr. Wildcats, Clarkston Chiefs, Shelby Rebels, and Davison Jr. Cardinals. The NYFL is a not-for-profit organization and is managed by the NYFL franchises. Additional NYFL information is available on their website at www.nyfl.net.

Organization Structure

The Junior Cougars are certified by the Michigan Corporation and Securities Commission as a Not-for-Profit Corporation, governed by our Bylaws, and managed by the volunteer SCJC Board Members and Executive Board Members that oversee the operations of the organization. This dedicated group of volunteers helps ensure the success of the organization and a great experience for the players. Please see **Appendix 'A'** for a listing of Board positions and contact information. Our Bylaws are available on our website.

Board Meetings

Board meetings are held once every month (except December).



Volunteer Driven

We are a totally volunteer organization with dedicated people working hard to ensure all participants have a fun and fulfilling experience. Most of our volunteers work full-time and have many commitments, but they recognize the benefit of helping to ensure that the Junior Cougars continue to support and teach our youth athletes. Your involvement will help your child gain a sense of community, good sportsmanship, and satisfaction of accomplishments as a team. Since your child is a participant in the SCJS organization, so is each family. Your involvement is very important and enhances your child's experience. Volunteering is a requirement and is what makes our organization great.

Communications

TeamSnap emails and chats are our primary method form of communication to inform to our families all information pertaining to practice schedules, game times, weather delays, etc. Please make sure your email entered into TeamSnap is accurate; additional family members can be invited by the main contact via TeamSnap to ensure everyone is aware of all the pertinent information. Also, our website & Facebook page are great sources for the latest information.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

SCJC teams are divided into two divisions, which are Freshman and Junior Varsity. Each division has specific age and weight requirements that are mandated by the NYFL. There are no weight restrictions for the cheerleading divisions.

Football Age Restrictions

In order for a player to be eligible to play football in a specific division they must meet the division's age requirements (See Figure 1). To determine the age eligibility of a player, it is the player's age as of August 1st of the current calendar year. According to NYFL rules, any child that has not had their eighth (8th) birthday on or before August 1st will not be able to participate in active play without a waiver signed by the child's parent/legal guardian and such waiver must be approved by the assigned team Head Coach, SCJC and the NYFL. We take a limited number of 7-year-olds. 12-year-olds may play if they provide proof of being in the 6th grade. A 7-year-old and 12-year-old Football Player Waiver is available on our website. Other restrictions may apply; see the NYFL football rule book for complete details.



Football Weight Restrictions

Prior to each game, in order to be eligible to play in the game, football players will be weighed and must not exceed their division's weight requirements (see chart below). Any player who doesn't make weight may continue to practice and weigh in at each game until they weigh the maximum or less for their division. A player's weight may be challenged by the opposing team prior to the start of any game during the regular season or playoffs. Weights are actual body weight, without wearing football equipment.

Football Divisions	Age	Maximum Weight	X-Man Maximum Weight (Natural weight without equipment)
Freshman	8-9 (7 w/waiver)	125lbs.	135lbs.
Junior Varsity	10-11 12 (if in 6th grade)	145lbs.	155lbs.

Cheerleading Age Restrictions

In order for a player to be eligible to participate in cheerleading in a specific division they must meet the division's age requirements (See chart below). To determine the age eligibility of a player, it is the player's age as of September 1, 2022.

Cheerleading Divisions	Age
Mascots	5-7 years old 5-year-olds would need to be evaluated by our Cheer Directors.
Freshman	8-9 years old
Junior Varsity	10-11 years old 12 years old are eligible if in 6th grade



Birth Certificates

Each eligible player must provide a copy of their original birth certificate during registration. For security, please black out the social security numbers. This copy will be kept on file by SCJC for future age verification. Birth certificates are provided and inspected by opposing teams prior to each game.

Physical Examination

Each player must have proof of a current year physical, from a medical doctor, in order to participate. You must obtain a physical from your own physician. If we do not have a physical form on file by the start of summer practice, your child cannot participate in any SCJC activities. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS! The physical form cannot be returned as SCJC must maintain it in the team records for the duration of the season.

Injured Players

Sometimes it is necessary for injured players to seek medical assistance. When this happens, the player will be ineligible to practice or participate in any games until they obtain a medical release from a physician. The release must specify the date the player is allowed to return to practice. Players WILL NOT be allowed to practice or participate in any game until the release is provided to the players Head Coach and the Director of Football so it can be kept on file with the player's records. Also, if your player is sick, for the protection of the team, please do not send them to practice.

REGISTRATION, FEES & OTHER COSTS

SCJC has a formal registration process for both returning players as well as for new players desiring to join our premier youth football league.

Registration Fee

SCJC has a simplified registration fee structure (see chart below). The registration fee covers equipment, field rental, stadium costs, referee costs, and other miscellaneous operating expenses (each jersey is customized with the player's last name). All fees must be paid before any equipment is issued or before a player can participate in any SCJC activities.

Participant	Football Registration	Cheer Registration	Mascot Registration
Registration	\$475	\$350	\$325



Returning Player Registration (Returning Players Only!)

Registration is online and will open on the first weekend of February at 9am. Online registration for returning players will remain open for 1 week prior to open registration being opened. All registration forms and payment will be done ONLINE. All returning players that register during this time frame will be guaranteed a roster spot with SCJC.

Open/New Player Registration

New player registration will open second weekend of February at 9am. All registration forms and payment will be done ONLINE. Open registration and placement into roster spots are on a first come first serve basis. Once teams are filled waitlist registration will open and we encourage families to add their athletes name and information to our waitlist. Additional teams or spots could be opened for athletes on the waitlist; drops from roster spots will be filled from the waitlisted athletes based on time of registration to said waitlist.

Refund Policy

If your child decides to drop out of our program prior to June 1st you will receive a full refund (less a \$100.00 Admin fee and possible uniform costs). No refund will be provided after June 1st of the calendar year of your registration.

Incidental Costs

During the course of the season, there are other additional incidental costs (some optional) to participants for various items. The following are estimated costs with an approximate date when the cost could be incurred.

- Team picture - \$15 to \$50 (August/September)
- Spirit Wear- team t-shirts, yard signs - \$25
- Mini Cheer - \$5 to \$10 per ticket (September/October)
- Playoff and Super Bowl Tickets - \$3 to \$5 per ticket (October/November)
- Mega Cheer - \$5 to \$10 per ticket (October)



EQUIPMENT

SCJC will issue each player their basic equipment (see Figure 4). Players must wear the SCJC equipment at each practice and or game. Each SCJC family will be notified prior to the start of the practice season of where and when to pick-up their equipment. Each player is responsible for the care and return of all SCJC equipment issued to them. At the end of the season each player will be notified as to when and where to return their equipment.

Equipment Loss/Damage Replacement Fee

It is the responsibility of each player to return the SCJC equipment that has been issued to them, in good condition except normal wear and tear. For any equipment that is not returned, is returned in poor condition, or is lost, the player will be assessed an Equipment Loss/Damage/Altered Replacement Fee according to the fee schedule below.

Item	Equipment Replacement Fee (Loss/Damage/Altered)
Football Player Equipment	
Helmet	\$450
Chin Strap	\$25
Shoulder Pads	\$150
Practice Pants	\$45
Practice Jersey	\$30
Game Pants	\$45
Game Jersey	Player Keeps
Game Socks	Player Keeps
Cheerleader Equipment	
Skirt/Vest Set	\$250

Unauthorized alterations of any kind to any SCJC provided equipment is strictly prohibited and may result in the player not being able to participate and a fee to replace said equipment; see chart above for costs.

Care of Uniforms

It is important that all players take good care of their equipment. Football game uniforms MUST be clean for each game. DO NOT USE BLEACH! All possible care should be taken to prevent the colors from bleeding. We suggest soaking for a period before washing in lukewarm water with mild detergent, NOT a strong detergent. Helmet, chin strap, ear pads, shoulder pads and pants should all be wiped down with a mild cleaner. Pads should never be submerged in water. Helmets should contain no stickers or permanent markings. Cheerleader uniforms are to be washed in cold water and hung-up to dry. At the end of the season, all equipment provided to the players must be cleaned and returned in good condition.



Player Provided Items

There are a few personal items (see lists below) that are the responsibility of each player to provide for themselves. These items are not included in the registration fee and are the responsibility of each player's parents to purchase.

Football Player Provided Items List

The following is the list of personal items that are the responsibility of each football player to provide for themselves:

- Approved rubber cleats or turf shoes. Metal cleats are prohibited.
- Game socks (included in your registration fee. Extra pairs can be purchased by the family)
- Athletic supporter and cup.
- **Two** attachable mouthguards.
- If your player wears glasses or special orthodontic devices, special facemasks to provide additional protection can be purchased. SCJC recommends the Nike and or Oakley facemasks for our SpeedFlex helmets. Tinted facemasks are not allowed by the NYFL.

Cheerleading Provided Items List

The following is a list personal items that are the responsibility of each cheerleader to provide for themselves:

- Clean white leather cheer shoes and laces (no logos)
- Navy or white earmuffs (your team will decide on the color)
- Headband
- Clear rain poncho or raincoat
- Duffel bag to carrier equipment
- Water bottle with the players name on it (for both practices and games)
- White socks, navy briefs, navy gloves, navy wind suit, turtleneck bodysuit, and hair ties (your team coach will provide more information to maintain uniformity for the team).

PRACTICES & SCHEDULE

It is important to realize there is a big difference between backyard football or flag football and playing in a competitive tackle football league. In order to assure that your child will be in a position to safely participate, it is imperative that they do not miss more than 1 practice a week IF participating in an additional competitive sport program. Families are required to communicate the day that their athlete will not be at SCJC practice due to any additional competitive sport practices.

Additionally, when planning your vacations, please be aware of practice start dates as it is very difficult for the player to make-up what they miss during the practices.

Absenteeism - Football

It is very important in any team sports for players to be at all practices for their team to be successful. Players or parents must advise their team head coach, prior to practice, of any absences due to illness or other personal activity. If a player misses two or more practices in one week, they will be ineligible to play in that week's game.



Cheer Playing Time and Attendance Policy

Attendance is crucial to the success of our cheer teams. When one girl misses, her entire stunt group is unable to practice. The Stoney Creek Junior Cougars Cheer team is a Competitive Cheer Organization; similar to how our football players practice to compete in games our cheerleaders practice to compete at two cheer competitions held by our league. It is highly recommended to evaluate if your athlete and family are able to commit to the policy below.

- The attendance policy goes into effect the week after camp.
- Miss three practices will have to sit out the first half of the following football game (still must be present and dressed for the full game to support cheer teammates)
- Missing six practices will result in sitting out for the entire following football game (still must be present and dressed for the full game to support cheer teammates)
- Exceptions will be made for athletes who provide a doctor's note if exceeding three absences. Please note, if an injury has occurred and competition is still a possibility, your athlete will be asked to sit and watch practices to observe and learn the material.
- Practices during the month of August will be 4 days a week until the start of school
- Once school begins practices will be Monday and Wednesdays
- There will be a dress rehearsal prior to every competition
- Missing a football game counts as an absence.

Every player will cheer in the games and competition as seen fit by league rules. (all cheerleaders participate in all games and rounds of competition). All players are expected to be at every practice and game.

Mascots are only required to cheer at home games. They are more than welcome to attend away games too if desired! However, they will be participating at their own discretion with the Freshman squad. Mascot coaches will not be present at away games.

*Playing another sport or participating in other activities during the current season is not an excused absence

Early Summer Skill-Camps

SCJC Cheer and Football holds each year a Summer Camp as part of our registration costs. Attendance at Summer Camp is not mandatory, but it is very important as it provides an excellent opportunity for new players to begin to learn some of the fundamentals and returning players to enhance existing skills and learn new skills. It is ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR NEW PLAYERS! It also allows players to meet their teammates and become acclimated with our practices. Summer Camp practices are 2 hours each evening scheduled and begin at 6pm on the nights scheduled. Further details about Summer Camp dates, locations, and times will be provided by TeamSnap.

Regular Season Practice Schedule

Regular season practices begin August 7th. Times and locations will be communicated to all our families on Cheer and Football by TeamSnap. Please plan for 2 hours each practice day for the entirety of the season. Daylight savings will alter our length of practices; time changes will be communicated by TeamSnap by your Head Coach.

There are no practices or games on Labor Day weekend (Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday).



Practice Location

Our summer practices and regular season practice are typically held on the practice fields and or gym at Hart Middle school; exact locations will be communicated by TeamSnap. Occassionly SCJC obtains opportunities to practice at Stoney on either the Varsity practice field and or at the Stadium. These changes of locations will be communicated by TeamSnap at the appropriate time.

If there is a change to the practice schedule, you will be notified by your team's Head Coach via TeamSnap. We will do our best to provide as much advance notice of any schedule change.

In the event of bad weather, parents must promptly pick-up their player(s). In case of lightning, please pick-up your player(s) immediately.

PLEASE ALWAYS BE ON-TIME TO PICK UP YOUR PLAYER FROM PRACTICE.

Walking/Riding Waiver

No player will be allowed to walk/bike ride to and from our practices. If a player lives within walking/bike riding distance from our practice location and desires to walk/bike ride to and from practice, their parent or legal guardian must sign a walking/riding waiver form and return it to the SCJC GM of Football.

GAMES

Games begin in late August, continuing through the end of October and are played on either Saturday or Sunday afternoons. A complete schedule will be posted on TeamSnap when our parent league provides us the schedule. This occurs approximately around the first or second week of August.

Play Time

Our football teams are the equivalent of other traveling sport teams in that while there is a minimum play requirement, playing time is earned based on performance. The object is to ensure every player has an opportunity to play and field a winning football team.

Field Equipment

The official type of football sanctioned by the NYFL is a Wilson/Baden brand made of either leather or composite leather. See figure 7 for the size of official footballs for each division is:

Division	Size
Wilson/Baden Brand Football	
Freshman	Youth Size K-2
Junior Varsity	TDJ



Banned Items at Games and Practices

There will be NO tobacco, alcoholic beverages, or use of any controlled substances (illegal drugs) permitted anywhere on the game or practice premises. There will be NO weapons allowed on the game or practice premises, with the exception of properly licensed uniformed officers or uniformed security guards. NO coolers, large bags, backpacks, cups (of any kind), wagons, etc are allowed in any school district stadium, with the exception of wagons or bags used by coaches, board members, or other team volunteers to transport items necessary for their teams.

Stoney Creek Junior Cougars Parent Code of Conduct

The NYFL was built on a concept of "KIDS FIRST." We strongly endorse the six pillars of character building. These principles: trustworthiness, respect, fairness, responsibility, caring and good citizenship embody what we hope each child will learn through his or her years in the league.

As parents of children in the NYFL you agree to the following:

- I will learn the rules of the games and the policies of the league
- I will emphasize teamwork and skill development.
- I will remember that children participate to have fun, and that the game is fun for them, not me.
- I (and all my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy for all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game and practice.
- I (and all my guests) will not engage in any unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, including but not limited to booing, taunting, refusing to shake hands, using profane language and /or gestures
- I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well-being of the athletes.
- I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
- I will demand a sporting environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco (including smoking within sight of the field) and alcohol.
- I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss or confront coaches at the game field

Football Players and Cheerleaders

- Will show the proper respect to all and be held to the highest standards of moral conduct and character both on and off the field. ****THIS EXTENDS TO THE CLASSROOM & HOME****
 - Bullying will not be accepted at practice or at school
- Will stay in the team-designated area(s), unless excused to leave, by a coach, parent or guardian.
- Will not at any time push, shove, punch, kick, fight, bully, make inappropriate comments, racial or ethnic slurs, actions that may be construed as sexual harassment, profanity, obscene gestures, flagrant and violent fouls, taunting, "trash talk", baiting, cheating throwing or abusing equipment or be guilty of physical contact as an aggressor upon any official, board member, coach, player, cheerleader, spectator, or other(s).
- Will not verbally abuse or threaten any official, board member, coach, player, cheerleader, spectator, or other(s).
- Will not harass, bait or be guilty of objectionable demonstration or dissent at any Official's or coach's decision.
- Will not refuse to abide by an official's or coach's decision.
- Will not disobey or attempt to circumvent rules and regulations or the intent thereof.



Board Members & Coaches

- Will show the proper respect to all and be held to the highest standards of moral conduct and character both on and off the field.
- Will not at any time push, shove, punch, kick, fight or be guilty of physical contact as an Aggressor upon any official, player, cheerleader, coach or spectator.
- Will not verbally abuse or threaten any official, coach, player or others.
- Will not harass or bait any official, player, coach, cheerleader, spectator or other(s).
- Will not use tobacco, alcohol or illegal narcotics in front of players/cheerleaders during practices, games, or be present during practices, games, under the influence of alcohol or illegal narcotics. This rule applies anytime a coach or board member is representing the Stoney Creek Junior Cougars.
- Will show the same respect that is due to all participants, including: other coaches, players, cheerleaders, spectators and league officials.
- Will not act in any way that is detrimental to themselves, their team or the Stoney Creek Jr Cougars, or NYFL.
- Will inform the Board of Directors of any rule violation by other Board Members, coaches, players, cheerleaders, managers, spectators or other(s). Board Member(s) will document any observed violation along with date and time of the incident.

Equipment Usage Expectations and Deposit

Every parent/guardian will be required to submit a check on equipment handout day, for \$250 as a deposit for your child's football equipment or \$125 as a deposit for your child's cheer uniform/equipment. This deposit will guard your Stoney Creek Junior Cougars program from having to unnecessarily spend its resources to replace unreturned or damaged equipment. (NOTE: normal wear & tear does not equate to damaged equipment). Upon submitting the check, your child will receive their equipment. Your deposit check will then be securely filed. At the end of the season, your deposit check will be shredded in exchange for your player's equipment unless otherwise requested. Please know that your check will be handled with extreme care and security and will never be deposited without prior knowledge.

Equipment will NOT be issued without submitting the mandatory deposit check,
NO EXCEPTIONS!

*SCJC WILL NOT deposit these checks unless the equipment/uniform is NOT returned to the Team or the equipment/uniform is returned in an unsatisfactory condition.



Volunteer Requirements and Deposit Information

In order to successfully pour into our children of the Stoney Creek Junior Cougars and to make practices and games happen successfully, we rely heavily on the volunteer activities of our parents. Our volunteer requirements are set up on a per family basis and require a minimum of (4) four sessions per season. A session is defined as an entire game (freshman or JV). The board will be monitoring and asking for help throughout the year. In order to make this program run efficiently we need volunteers. SCJC will publish a list of volunteer opportunities as the season nears.

Note: These volunteer sessions may be completed by **any family member 16 years of age or older.**

- Please be prepared at equipment/uniform handout to leave your volunteer deposit of \$450.00. Your deposit check will be securely filed.
- If you are unable to complete the volunteer hours, you have the option to pay the \$450.00 at equipment handout.
- If you have not completed ALL volunteer sessions (three) by the last season game, your volunteer check will be deposited.
- If you complete all your volunteer hours then your check will be shredded unless otherwise requested.
- Team Directors will keep track of all volunteer hours this season

Fundraisers

The registration costs that are charged for each child cover only a portion of the total cost to make the program run. Therefore, each family will have a fundraising obligation to sell a specified minimum amount of raffle tickets each season. The SCJC Big Raffle consists of selling 10 tickets per family; each family will obtain their 10 tickets at a cost of \$25 each to sell to family or friends for them to enter into the raffle. This is per family NOT per athlete.

Please sell the raffle tickets and return the completed ticket stubs by the assigned date. Drawings will be held at a Freshman and JV home game (date TBD).

PEP RALLY & TEAM BANQUET

Each start of the season, prior to the first scrimmage game, SCJC holds a Pep Rally event outside to pump us all up and help families get to know each other.

A formal banquet is held at the conclusion of the season, typically prior to the Thanksgiving weekend, to celebrate the achievements of each team and the players. This is also our way of saying thank you to your families and our athletes. Athletes are free, but additional tickets are generally about in the \$30 to \$40 range with a cash bar.

SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

Severe weather can and does strike at a moment's notice. Tornadoes, high winds, electrical storms, and other dangerous weather conditions are fast moving, can be wide-ranging and possibly life threatening. Severe weather conditions must be taken seriously and we at SCJC take these conditions extremely seriously.



Lightning

Whenever lightning is sighted, ALL SCJC outdoor activities must be suspended immediately. All athletes will be rounded up and placed into Hart Middle School until the weather clears or practice is cancelled, and parents arrive for pickup.

Activities will only resume when lightning has left the area. If lightning has not ceased within fifteen (15) minutes, all games/activities will be called off. On the occasion that poor weather is in the forecast we ask that a family member or authorized care giver be available for a prompt pickup if practices are cancelled.

Board Members

Board Position	Name
President	Jeff Sanders
Vice President	Jay Winterly
Director of Football	Aaron Beck
Director of Cheer	Lauren Nemitz
Assistant Director of Cheer	Melissa Trella
Secretary	Angela Kelosky
Treasurer	Jenna Angell
Director of Volunteers	Jon LaMarre
Director of Cougar Care & Team Moms	Janell Beck
Director of Events	Lisa Miller
Director of Communications	Kristine Howe

SCJC Official Website

SCJC has a team website that is updated on a regular basis. This site is a great communication tool and source of information. Examples of areas on the site include practice schedules, game schedules, NYFL updates, board updates and other key information. Our team website address is:

www.stoneycougars.com

NYFL Official Website

The Northern Youth Football League (NYFL) has a very informative website that can be referenced for league rules, league teams, league results, league calendar and other information. The NYFL website address is:

www.nyfl.net