



2025 Player and Parent Agreement

Welcome to the 21st SEASON of Niagara Spears Football (Legal name Niagara Varsity Football Club Inc, will be herein known as NVFC). The purpose of this agreement is to provide players and parents with the who, what, where, when, why of the coming season, along with a clear picture of what you can expect from the Spears and what The Executives and coaches expects from its players and families. While we have tried to anticipate most questions, emerging issues will be addressed in communication from team managers or posts to website and social media platforms.

Coaches

We are very fortunate that so many outstanding football coaches from across the Region have stepped forward to assist with this year's teams. Coaching staff are once again committed to a "program" approach in conditioning, practice structure, drills, even play calling. The consistency of having all three teams working together whenever possible will help ensure a smooth transition for players as they move from U14 to U16 to U18.

Varsity:

Head Coach Brian Duguay

Team Manager Jocelyn Duguay Broom

Junior Varsity Head Coach Brad Martin

Team Manager Jocelyn Duguay Broom

Bantam

Head Coach Troy Herbert

Team Manager Carrie Neilson

Team Fees

Registration/Fees: Before a player receives Spears equipment, he must be paid in full. No player will participate in a contact practice unless that player has full equipment. Before a player may participate in an indoor or outdoor workout, they must pay the \$300.00 non refundable tryout fee, \$250 participation bond deposit and \$550.00 equipment deposit.

Notice of an athlete's intention to withdraw from the Niagara Varsity Football Club program must be submitted in writing to their respective Team Manager, Head Coach or Niagara Spears Registrar. EQUIPMENT MUST THAN BE RETURNED WITHIN 7 DAYS. Tryout fees are non refundable, season fee refunds are NOT guaranteed and will only be considered until June 1st of the playing year and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (non-injury). Any requests for a refund premised on an injury must be submitted, in writing, to the Team Manager before June 30 of the playing year, in order to receive consideration and be accompanied by a doctor's note stating they can't play for the remainder of the season. All requests for a refund must be presented at an Executive meeting by the respective Head Coach or Team Manager, subject to a majority vote by the Executive.

2025 player fees are \$950.00

Tryout- \$350.00

Season Fee- \$600.00

The Cost PER Football Player:
(Season Fees breakdown):

Fields	\$307.00
Administrative (website, Hudl, Communication App, Veo,)	\$62.00
League Fees	\$18.00
Club House (rental and Insurance)	\$78.00
Trainers (incl. supplies)	\$74.00
Swag (tee, pictures and practice jerseys)	\$104.00
Busses	\$270.00
Equipment (new, upkeep)	\$184.00
Refs	\$80.00
Banquet	\$45.00
Emergency Funds	\$80.00
Total	\$1,302.00

What Players pay: \$950

Difference that must be made up from fundraising and sponsorship PER player: \$352 X 150 players
=

\$52,800.00 PER SEASON!

Any players with an outstanding balance owing on lost or damaged equipment or uniforms will not be permitted to register until the outstanding balance has been paid in full. Any athlete who has an outstanding balance of registration fees from years previous is not a member in good standing, therefore will not be permitted to register and take part in tryouts, practices or games until the outstanding balance is resolved.

Niagara Spears does everything possible to keep fees for players at a low cost to make it affordable for everyone, we are unable to operate without our fundraisers and sponsorship and encourage everyone to participate to help us, help you.

The Niagara Spears has a mandatory Participation Bond, all families must issue a post dated cheque or pre-authorization form for \$250 to the registrar or treasurer prior to the beginning of the season, once a family has completed the minimum of 5 hours, parents will be issued their bond back at the end of the season. If a parent wishes to opt out of volunteering a \$250 payment can be made. Niagara Spears Executives do not expect or wish for parents to volunteer during their own athletes home game.

Sponsors

As an organization, we would not be able to offer our players all that we do, while keeping costs reasonable without the generous support of our community partners. Some of this year's sponsors have been with us since the beginning. We have appreciated those family members who have either sponsored or referred us to potential sponsors. We have a variety of mutually beneficial sponsorship packages available to promote businesses from across the Region. We are currently offering our Spears Sponsors Program which is designed to promote the Spears Football Organization within the Niagara Region while at the same time, earning dollars off your registration fees.

Athletic Trainers

Nothing is more important than the safety and well being of our players. The Niagara Spears have extended the OSFL rule which ensures qualified medical personnel at each home and away game to include practices. It is the responsibility of parents and players to ensure that a player's health card (or copy) is available at all practices and games. We want nothing to compromise a player's ability to receive immediate care. Completion in full of a Spears medical history form is mandatory. Please advise the Head Coach, Team Manager and member of our athletic trainer staff ASAP of any urgent medical concerns/issues.

League insurance (that is obtained through Football Ontario's National Registry) is supplemental coverage (you must use personal insurance first) and may cover some or all of the cost of some treatments and/or prosthetics/braces. Any player getting injured during a practice or game will have to follow the directive of the Athletic Trainer. These directives may include the request of a doctor's visit and or note, and the inability to participate in practices and or games. Any player getting injured outside of practice or game time will be required to report to the Head Coach, Team Manager plus the Trainer to discuss treatment requirements. Full cooperation with the directives of the Trainer is required. Verbal clearance from a parent, sibling, family member or family friend who is in the medical field is not appropriate and will not be accepted.

Our athletic trainers utilize the resources from Football Canada for Concussion Return to Play (<https://parachute.ca/>). Football Ontario requires all team staff to participate in Safe Sport Training as well as Making Headway Training and Safe Contact. Niagara Spears also abides by Rowen's Law. All athletes, parents, coaches and officials are responsible for recognizing and reporting athletes who demonstrate signs of head injury or who report concussion symptoms.

Removal-from-Sport Protocol

An athlete is immediately removed from further training, practice or game if the athlete is suspected of having sustained a concussion, and the parent or guardian is informed of the removal. Once removed from activity due to concussion symptoms or declaration, the athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice, or game until cleared by a medical doctor and then our athletic therapist utilizing the return to play protocol. Emergency medical services will be activated where there is loss of consciousness or where a more serious head or spine injury are suspected.

Return-to-Play Protocol

Return to sport strategy (<https://parachute.ca/>) are implemented and discussion with Athletic Trainer will be regular. Return to sport does not occur until medical clearance is provided in writing by the athlete's physician and the athletic trainer provides assessment and clearance for return to play.

Return-to-Sport Strategy: Graduated Approach Step Activity

Step	Activity	Description	Goal
1	Activities of daily living and relative rest (first 24-48 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical activities at home (e.g. preparing meals, social interactions, light walking) that do not result in more than mild and brief worsening of symptoms • Minimize screen time 	Gradual reintroduction of typical activities
After a maximum of 24 to 48 hours after injury, progress to step 2.			
2	2A: Light effort aerobic exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with light aerobic exercise, such as stationary cycling and walking at a slow to medium pace • May begin light resistance training that does not result in more than mild and brief worsening of symptoms • Exercise up to approximately 55% of maximum heart rate • Take breaks and modify activities as needed 	Increase heart rate.
	2B: Moderate effort aerobic exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually increase tolerance and intensity of aerobic activities, such as stationary cycling and walking at a brisk pace • Exercise up to approximately 70% of maximum heart rate • Take breaks 	
If the athlete can tolerate moderate aerobic exercise, progress to step 3.			
3	Individual sport-specific activities, without risk of inadvertent head impact school with accommodations (as needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add sport-specific activities (e.g., running, changing direction, individual drills) • Perform activities individually and under supervision from a teacher, parent/ caregiver or coach • Progress to where the athlete is free of concussion-related symptoms, even when exercising 	Increase the intensity of aerobic activities and introduce low-risk sport-specific movements
Medical clearance by a Physician			
4	Non-contact training drills and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress to exercises with no body contact at high intensity, including more challenging drills and activities (e.g., passing drills, multi-athlete training and practices) 	Resume usual intensity of exercise, coordination and activity-related cognitive skills.
If the athlete can tolerate usual intensity of activities with no return of symptoms, progress to step 5.			
5	Return to all non-competitive activities, fullcontact practice and physical education activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress to higher-risk activities including typical training activities, full-contact sport practices and physical education class activities • Do not participate in competitive gameplay 	Return to activities that have a risk of falling or body contact, restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff
If the athlete can tolerate non-competitive, high-risk activities, progress to step 6.			
6	Return to sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrestricted sport and physical activity 	

Player Evaluations

More than 100 prospects are likely to participate in each team's evaluations. A player's athleticism, football skills and experience will naturally factor into the team selection process. However, the Niagara Spears coaching staff unanimously believe that these are not the only qualities, or even the most important qualities that we seek in a successful player. Football skills, knowledge of plays and formations, even athletic ability and aggressiveness can be taught and developed. First and foremost, the Niagara Spears coaching staff will be watching for "coachability indicators", including positive attitude, work ethic, leadership potential, self-discipline, ability to follow directions, team focused behavior and heart. Needless to say, commitment to attendance at practices will also be an important factor. All of the time and energy of our coaching staff, particularly during the evaluation period from **January to April**, will be devoted to player development and assessment. The cooperation of parents and families is sought in providing coaches with a necessary level of "insulation" from issues not related to these priorities. In the event a concern is identified:

1. Players are encouraged to discuss and resolve issues directly with their coaches.
2. Parents with issues that cannot be appropriately addressed at the player/coach level may request an appointment through the Team Manager. We would also ask that parents/family/fans please respect our "24 hour cool -off policy". Please wait a minimum 24 hours after a game or practice before approaching team managers or coaches with "constructive criticisms" or concerns. Messaging DURING a game with concerns is not appropriate.
3. Parents are not to approach positional coaches with concerns or complaints. If this occurs positional coaches are to refer them to the Team Manager.
4. The Team Manager and Head Coach will make all attempts to resolve the complaint or concern, by providing insight, advice, and an explanation or by restating Team, NVFC and League Policy and Procedure. The player should be present in these discussions, as their wellbeing and development is the focus of the NVFC
5. If the concern or complaint is unable to be resolved at the team level, the Team Manager shall report the complaint or concern to the Executive. The Executive shall make all attempts to resolve the complaint or concern.
6. The President or Vice President shall notify the league if the Complaint or Concern involves league policy and procedures or involves another team.
7. If the Complaint or Concern involves criminal activity the Executive will notify the appropriate agency that has jurisdiction over these matters.
8. Grievances: Any player who feels he has a legitimate grievance will approach:
 - 1st his positional coach,
 - 2nd coordinator,
 - 3rd head coach,
 - 4th Team Manager

in a professional manner outside of the game time. The player will not complain to team-mates during games or practice. The issue will be dealt with one on one with the appropriate party.

Misconduct will be dealt with at the Coaches discretion with the support and assistance of the Niagara Spears Executive. Discipline can include, but not limited to:

- a- Automatic dismissal
- b- 3 strikes your out – players will receive no more than two warnings by the head coach due to misconduct. The third incident will result in the player being dismissed from the team.
- c- Equipment Abuse (throwing helmet 1st time =warning, 2nd time = game suspension) Other equipment abuse will be dealt with by a warning for a first offense followed by a penalty for second and reduced playing privileges for a third.

d- Verbal misconduct – excessive use of vulgarity or searing will be dealt with through warning, penalty or reduced playing privileges.

In terms of assigned positions, we hope that players and families alike will respect that in all cases; decisions will be made with the best interests of the team in mind. Given the depth of our rosters, there will be minimal need for players to play both ways. However, in light of possible injuries, vacation or other unavoidable absences, and to increase the flexibility with which players are deployed, all players will be asked to learn and be comfortable playing at least one and possibly two additional positions, to ensure depth at each position.

It must be stressed that all the **Niagara Spears teams are elite teams** representing the best the Niagara Region has to offer. Expectations of “equal playing time” or the presumption that all players will participate in a given game are unrealistic. That being said, the coaching staff will, in the interest of developing fundamentally sound players, make every reasonable effort to ensure that all players see the field depending on game situations and player safety.

Alcohol/Drugs:

Zero tolerance for alcohol and drugs.

Theft:

Any player found or seen taking other players' belongings or Spears property without permission will be terminated immediately.

Cell phones:

No use of cell phones or any other electronic communication device will be permitted during practice or games, unless authorized by the head coach.

Away games:

All players are to arrive at the bus pick up (Seymour Hannah Sportsplex- just out front of the Kiwanis Field) 30 minutes prior to departure. All players must travel with the team on the bus to the game wearing the provided team attire and the team designated short color. No hats are permitted unless it is a NIAGARA SPEARS team hat. Players may make other arrangements for their travels home only after confirming with and signing the alternate transportation form with the Team Manager. Misconduct (swearing, littering and vandalizing the bus) will result in penalty, and or reduced playing time. Team Captains are responsible to see that the bus is left in appropriate condition.

Home Games:

Players are to arrive at the field 2 hours prior to game time wearing the provided team polo and the team designated short color. No hats are permitted unless it is a NIAGARA SPEARS team hat. Unexcused lateness – any player who arrives after designated meeting time with unexcused lateness will not play in the first half of that game. Excused lateness – any player who arrives after designated meeting time with excused lateness will need to inform the Team Manager 24 hours before the game.

Game Day:

League Rules

1. Helmets on during handshake
2. Jerseys not to be taped up at back
3. All equipment (knee, hips and tails) must be on during game. Only clear eye shields are allowed to be used. No tint is allowed
4. No metal spikes
5. Any combination of 3 Objectionable Conduct (OC) or Unnecessary Roughness (UR) means you are gone for the rest of the game you are playing in as well as the next one.
6. No Fighting.

SPEARS Rules

1. Any excessive lack of discipline (fighting, challenging opponent's bench, challenging or disrespect of coaching staff or support staff, verbal abuse of officials) will result in suspension from game and or team.

Social Media – Players and Parents

The use of SOCIAL MEDIA including but not limited to Facebook, X, Instagram, SnapChat, All Canadian Gridiron, Hudl, WhatsApp, Threads and TikTok in any form of bullying or harassment towards the Spears Organization, players, parents, Niagara Spears Executive, Ontario Summer Football League (OSFL) Board of Directors, OSFL teams, players or referee's within the OSFL will be dealt with in accordance to the Misconduct Policy.

Equipment:

All equipment and uniforms issued by the Niagara Spears remain the property of the Niagara Varsity Football Club, with the exception of cleats, most football equipment is provided (Players electing to wear any of their own equipment require advance inspection/approval by Head Coach). With each set of equipment valued at over \$1000, we expect that appropriate respect will be shown regarding its care and maintenance. Players/parents are responsible for keeping equipment tight, and for bringing problems or deficiencies to the attention of coaching staff. A post-dated (September 1, 2025) cheque for \$550.00 is required before equipment will be released to a player. A detailed inventory will be documented for each player. All Spears equipment will be handed in following the last game of the season –no exceptions. The Post- Dated cheque will be returned or destroyed once the equipment has been handed in. Players/parents will be responsible for equipment that is lost and/or damaged through negligence. Equipment must be returned within 7 days once a player leaves the team or once the season ends. Niagara Spears jerseys are not to be altered in ANY way without Niagara Spears Executive permission.

- Belt – \$10.00
- Knee Pads -\$10.00
- Helmet - \$550.00
- Jersey (Each) - \$115.00
- Shoulder Pads - \$300.00
- Pants - \$70.00

Practice Uniform

Players must never wear any game uniform attire during any practice (jersey – pants) Practice jerseys must be worn along with practice pants during the practice. All equipment (all pant pads including **knee pads** or girdle and knee pads, shoulder pads, helmet and mouth guard) must be worn during tryouts/practices unless otherwise stated by the Head Coach. Once the team is announced (and tryouts are over) other team's jerseys (ex. high schools or Team O) and other coloured helmets are not to be worn- only Niagara Spears supplied practice jerseys and cardinal helmets are to be worn. Pajama pants are NEVER to be worn on the field ever.

Practice

Attendance: Will be taken at each practice either by the team manager or positional coaches.

Poor Attitude and Effort: will not be tolerated! **Players need to contact the Team Manager when going to be absent from a practice by the communication app attendance tracker no later than 8 hours before the start of the practice. If players are going to be absent from a game they must inform the Team Manager AT LEAST 72 hours before a game so that coaches can make alternate arrangements.** We understand emergency's happen and those cases will be dealt with on a case by case basis. ATTENDANCE WILL DETERMINE YOUR PLAY TIME. Players who are unable to practice due to injury must attend practice and must report to the Head Coach and Trainer with a doctor's note. Players who fail to do this will have playing privileges reduced.

Injured Players at Practice: Require a doctor's note. Players will stay with their unit during practice- and take mental reps. Players will stay in designated area during contact drills and 12 on 12. Players will take mental reps and will not be disruptive.

Misconduct in Practice:

Any misconduct in practice toward a coach or staff member could result in one of the following

1. Warning
2. Endurance work
3. Player being dismissed from practice which will be treated as an unexcused absence from practice
4. Game suspension
5. Dismissed from team

Spirit Wear

Official Niagara Spears Spirit Wear is available through The Niagara Spears, any Spirit wear produced without the approval of the Niagara Spears Board of Directors is PROHIBITED

Player's Code of Conduct _____ **players initials** _____

- I pledge to accept responsibility for my Niagara Spears experience by following this Player's Code of Conduct
- I will respect the rules and regulations set by Niagara Spears, Ontario Summer Football League and Football Ontario and respect the decisions made by the coaches, team managers, executives and officials, even if they are unfavourable.
- I will accept responsibility for my behaviour, accept coaching decisions, and I will not sulk or dwell on my own or other teammate's mistakes but will accept responsibility for those mistakes without making excuses and focus on improving.
- I understand that playing time is determined by my attendance, attitude, and performance at practices. I will make every reasonable effort to attend all practices, film sessions and games. I will be dressed and prepared (with all my equipment) on time and ready to listen, watch and learn in every practice and give 100% effort in every game. I will know my playbook. I will notify my team manager immediately if I cannot attend a practice or game or I need assistance with equipment.
- I will respectfully ask questions for clarification and understand that I can approach coaches with concerns as long as it is done so politely and non-confrontational.
- I will avoid using foul language or engaging in any form of verbal or physical abuse or engaging in any form of unsportsmanlike behaviour, such as taunting, heckling, or provoking both Niagara Spears and opposing team's coaches, team managers, executives, officials or fans
- I will exhibit sportsmanship and fair play at every practice, and game. I will also encourage this behaviour from other teammates, coaches, team managers, executives, officials and fans. I will not engage in physical or verbal confrontations with teammates, players from opposing teams, coaches, team managers, executives, officials and fans before, during or after practices and games
- I understand that I am representing the Niagara Spears and poor behaviour during practices, games and any team events or outings may result in loss of playing time and/or expulsion from the team.
- I will be a leader both on and off the field. I will lead by example, I will be helpful and supportive of teammates, I will stay positive no matter the situation.
- I will not use any social media communication channels (email, texting, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok etc.) to communicate any offensive, abusive, harassing or insulting remarks in regards to race, sex, creed, or ability towards any other player, coaches, team managers, executives, officials and fans of Niagara Spears or opposing teams.
- I will understand the rules of the game and play within them.
- I will be gracious in victory and dignified in defeat.

Parent and Fan Code of Conduct

parents initials _____

WE, the Parents, Family, & Friends of the Niagara Spears participants, believe that the values embodied in good sportsmanship will be strictly adhered to as follows:

- I will respect the rules and regulations set by Niagara Spears, Ontario Summer Football League and Football Ontario and respect the decisions made by the coaches, team managers, executives and officials, even if they are unfavourable.
- I will avoid using foul language or engaging in any form of verbal or physical abuse or engaging in any form of unsportsmanlike behaviour, such as taunting, heckling, or provoking both Niagara Spears and opposing team's coaches, team managers, executives, officials or fans.
- I will accept responsibility for my behaviour as well as for the behaviour of those who attend events as my guest, and will be mindful of the impact of my actions on the overall experience for the coaches, team managers, executives, officials and fans.
- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all coaches, team managers, executives and officials at every game, practice, or event and refrain from criticising or blaming individual coaches, team managers, executives or officials for the outcome of the game because I will place the emotional and physical well-being of all participants ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will remain in the spectator area during games/practices.
- I will support coaches, team managers, executives and officials working with my child in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all. I will **not** advise the coach, team managers or officials on how to do their job. I will not coach my child during the game/practice. I will remember that the game is for our youth – **NOT ADULTS** – and that participation in Niagara Spears Football is a privilege, not a right.
- I will do my very best to make football fun for my child. I will not instruct him to harm any other participants. I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
- I will not use any social media communication channels (email, texting, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok etc.) to communicate any offensive, abusive or insulting remarks towards any other player, coaches, team managers, executives, officials and fans of Niagara Spears or opposing teams.

Medical Form Release:

I hereby acknowledge that I understand the sport of football exposes potential risk to my child/myself. I am not aware of any injury or illness or other health related issues that would restrict myself/my child ability to participate in any camps, practices, games or events with Niagara Spears. I voluntarily assume all risks associated with participating in the Niagara Varsity Football Program to my child/myself. I further state in the event of any injury my child/myself sustains, this consent shall be a bar to any and all claims against the Niagara Varsity Football Club, it's directors, officers, coaches and volunteers. I further state that I consent to receiving medical attention from any qualified person if and when such medical attention is deemed necessary by a member of the Niagara Varsity Football Club, its coaches or staff. I give the Niagara Spears Team Managers and Trainers permission to view and carry my/my child's information as it pertains to the health and safety of me/my child, as well as allowing and offering the fastest medical treatment to myself/child in the event of an accident

or injury.

Release of Information (U16 & U18)

I give the Niagara Varsity Football Club permission to pass along my child/my information on the Niagara Spears registration AS WELL AS personal phone number and personal email address to USport (Canadian Universities) and/or CJFL (Canadian Junior Football League) recruits and/or coaches for possible recruiting into USport or CJFL.

Media:

I consent to the use of my/my child's name, picture, and video as part of Niagara Varsity Football Club to be used in newspapers, magazines, television, and online that will reflect both myself/ my child and the Niagara Varsity Football Club in a positive matter. I agree that I shall fully and forever have no claim against the Niagara Varsity Football Club and its members due to this publication. I also agree that I/my child will not publicly display any derogatory, racist, defamatory comments, on any social media (including, but not limited to: All Canadian GridIron, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok ect.) against any and all Niagara Spears, Ontario Provincial Football Club and Lakeshore Football Officials Association members, teams, coaches, players, executives and staff. I acknowledge and represent that I am over the age of 18, that I understand these terms, and that I have signed knowingly and voluntarily on behalf of myself /child.



I hereby acknowledge that I and my athlete have read and understand the 2024 Player and Parent Agreement. By signing this agreement myself and my athlete understand the fees associated with playing, what is expected from us in terms of equipment, utilizing the Athletic Trainer, Player Evaluation and play time, using social media, conflict resolution and overall Niagara Spears expectations.

I consent to release of medical information to support my athlete, release of information to USport or CJFL teams, and understand that my athletes name or picture could be used in media or print in a positive manner.

I also promise to follow the Parent/Fan Code of Conduct and ensure my athlete does as well.

I understand that if I choose not to abide by anything included in this agreement it could result in my suspension from Niagara Spears and Ontario Summer Football League events and season.

Parent Signature

Player Signature

Date