



Bulldogs Football: Playing Time

Dear Parents/ Guardians:

Playing time is an issue in football that arises nearly every season, on every team. The coaching staff understands that players want to play and that parents want to see their child on the field during games. The truth is that playing time will not be equal and there will, inevitably, be games in which not every player gets to play.

My coaching philosophy is that team goals take priority over individual goals. The senior and junior rosters will carry between 38 and 53 players each after roster deletions are made. Based on those numbers, it is unrealistic to divide game time equally. The coaching staff will refer to the following criteria when deciding on playing time:

1. **Skill level:** Players must be able to help the team win. Winning is a team goal and as such, takes precedence over any individual goal a player might have. Winning is not more important than sportsmanship and integrity but it is my experience that teams who tend to have the most fun and memorable seasons do their fair share of winning football games.
2. **Effort/ Attitude:** Players are expected to be at every practice with a positive attitude and giving their very best effort on each play. Effort and attitude also extend beyond the football field and into the classroom, school, home and community. Missing practice demonstrates a negative attitude and a lack of effort. And most importantly, it hurts the team as a whole.
3. **Knowledge/ Understanding:** Football is a game of preparation. Players must be mentally as well as physically prepared. If a player is unclear about assignments and game plan, then it is a detriment to the team.

Coaches will consider team benefits as well as what is best for the individual player when deciding on final rosters. Thus, there will be grade eleven players playing for a second year on the junior team, and there is a possibility of grade ten players making the senior team. Players are required to play on the roster that coaches assign them to. It is disrespectful to the team and to the younger players for a grade eleven to opt to play junior football for individual accolades. Our responsibility as coaches is to ensure that we are growing

and developing our players and the entire program. The majority of learning, development and growth occur in practice. Individuals who are capable of playing senior level football stunt their own growth as a football player by playing junior, and more importantly, they hinder the growth and development of younger, less experienced players.

Family members should support and encourage your son no matter how many minutes of playing time he receives each game. Players contribute in ways that cannot be judged entirely on how many plays they were on the field for. In order to be a successful team, players are needed to run scout teams in practice, provide support and motivation on the sidelines, and we need proud, respectable Bulldog football players in the classrooms and community.

If you have questions or concerns about playing time, discuss them with your son. They should first ask their unit coach what they can do to earn more time during games. If concerns still persist, the player should come to me as the head coach. Finally, if there is an ongoing issue, then parents can contact me in a respectful, courteous manner at an appropriate time. I will not discuss individual concerns immediately following a game. I suggest that parents with concerns following a game, go home and speak to their son and follow the steps outlined above before contacting the head coach. Remember, your son has signed up to be part of a *Team*. The success of the *Team* should always be priority before individual wants or accolades. If we all put *Team first*, we will experience success this season.

Sincerely,

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