

Pop Warner Required Equipment List

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 Sports Authority or Academy Sports.

Required Equipment

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

Practice Pants/belt: The pants should fit snugly. 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.

Girdle/Pads: The girdle is worn under both the practice pants and our game pants. You will need to buy a package of pads to put into the girdle. All pads will fit into the girdle except for the knee pads which are inserted into the practice/game pants.

Protective Cup/Athletic Supporter: This is required by Pop Warner. Some girdles have a pocket for the athletic cup, or you can use an athletic supporter/cup. Some feel that the athletic supporter/cup combo is more comfortable as it fits better to the player's body.

Practice Jersey: Be sure that it is big enough to fit over the shoulder pads (but not too big). Check with your team for specific colors if required.

Shoulder Pads: Although there are many styles and brands Pop Warner does not recommend purchasing the most expensive set nor does it recommend purchasing the cheapest. If you have questions regarding the correct size for your player, any coach can assist with sizing.

Chin Strap for the Helmet: We suggest a protective chinstrap, which has a plastic cup that fits under the player's chin. Make sure that you purchase a "youth" chinstrap. For best results, take the helmet and your child to the store with you so you can try the strap on.

Helmet: A properly fitted white helmet is required. If you have a helmet that is not white in color, it can be used during summer practice, but must be painted white prior to the first game. Helmet decals will be issued.

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).

Other Accessories (not required)

There are a lot of football accessories available. Some will enhance your child's experience from a protection stand point, others 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, 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 gloves. They might end up only wearing them in the yard to play catch with their friends. For cold morning games, some type of gloves might be helpful. Check with your coach.

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 can not be tinted in any way. As a program, Central Arkansas Pop Warner would prefer that your child not use a shield. 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 cannot be worn under the helmet. A wrist band is used to wipe your brow, which is hard with a helmet on so they serve no purpose other than looks. We recommend against all of these.

Hopefully, you find this helpful before you spend money on items that you don't need.