Welcome to the 2019 season of Livonia Falcon Cheer!

We are excited to welcome back our veterans and meet and welcome all our new Falcon Families! We look forward to a new season filled with not only hard work and dedication, but lots of fun and special memories as well. We are looking forward to another fun and successful season.

Please take the time to read through the information in this handbook, while there is a lot, it is all important information and will get you and your cheerleader prepared for this coming Falcon Cheer season.

Contact Information

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Communications - Website, Email, Facebook & Remind

Our website is: www.livoniafalconsfootball.com
There is a lot of information posted on the website. Please check out the calendar as well, many dates are already posted there. We will continue to update the website as more dates are scheduled.

Email - Most of our communication is done through email. You will receive emails from both the unit and your squad (emails are above). Make sure to read through all the emails that are sent. Game day details change from week to week, and this is how your coaches will communicate what the girls should wear and/or bring with them.

Facebook - We have an official Facebook page and two Facebook groups. Links are below. Please note, the groups are for current families and coaches only. You will need to answer the questions that come up prior to being approved for the group.

Falcon Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/theOfficialFalconFootballPage/ or Search “Livonia Falcons Football and Cheer”

After you Like our page, you can also chose to Follow our posts, this will make sure you see information posted in your feed!

Families Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/364141257094331 or search “Falcon Families”

Falcon Cheer Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2017FalconCheer/ (or search “2019 Livonia Falcon Cheer”
Remind - Our goal is to have at least one parent on Remind for each football player and cheerleader. Remind is the QUICKEST way for us to reach you for last minute changes or reminders.

Sport Physicals - Due 7/1
The LJAL requires every football player and cheerleader to have a current sports physical in order to participate. Physicals must be dated after April 15th, 2019. They are due July 1st.

The preferred form is the MHSAA physical form. We can also accept the LPS physical form. Please note, they must be dated after 4/15 or it cannot be accepted. Your cheerleader will not be able to participate without a physical on file.

This year, you will upload the physical to your child's sports engine account. Hard copies do not need to be turned in. If you have any trouble with this, please reach out and let me know.

Fundraisers
The Falcons, along with the other LJAL units have one mandatory fundraiser, the annual raffle. Payment for tickets is due at the parent meeting each year. Tickets will be issued at that time. Raffle stubs will be due the week of the raffle, but can be turned in prior.
We do have optional fundraising events that change every year, but could include a dine outs, fun nights out (Athletika or SkyZone/Airtime, etc), dine out nights, and others. If you are interested in getting involved or hosting an event, please reach out to a Football Director.

**Volunteer Requirements**
The LJAL is a volunteer organization and all Families are required to fulfill their Game Day volunteer requirements within their Unit. If these volunteer requirements are not met each season, your families’ veteran status will be lost and season end activities can be limited. Please sign up early as spots do fill quickly!

Parents must sign up to volunteer their time three (3) times during the season. There are a variety of position available on game days. More spots may be added as the season progresses and special events are planned.

Families are required to fulfill their volunteer requirements during the season in order to maintain veteran status. For 2019, this minimum requirement is 3 times. In addition to losing veteran status for not completing a families volunteer requirements there may be other penalties considered by the Directors that may impact end of season participation (i.e, banquet, etc.). This is never a path we wish to pursue so PLEASE complete your volunteer requirements.

**Cheer Uniform**
The Falcons provide a uniform that consists of a skirt and shell. These are picked up at cheer fitting in June. No alterations can be made to uniforms, if you do not find a uniform that fits or an issue arises with your uniform, please speak to the Director.

Please check the skirts and shells after every game. They tend to get dirty during the game while sitting on the track. Uniforms will need to be washed frequently and should be spotless for games. They can be machined washed on a delicate cycle, cold water, hung to dry.

The Cheer skirt and/or cheer shell are NOT to be worn outside of a Falcon sponsored event.

**Cheer Pack**
The cheer pack for 2019 is $140 and contains the additional uniform items your daughter needs for the season. These are ordered to size and are yours to keep at the end of the season.

The cheer pack includes: warm up jacket, warm up pant, boy short, long sleeve crop, shoes, Bow, T-shirt, backpack, and other items for our season!

**Practice Information**
- Practice schedules are posted in advance
- Reduced practice or additional day(s) off will be at the discretion of the coaches and director
- When preparing for Cheerfest, we practice four (4) days per week. Though we try to stick to a constant schedule, we may need to change practice dates or times, or lengthen practice (2.5 hours max)
- The coaches will not leave the field until all girls have been picked up. Please be on time and respectful of your coach’s time.
- As daylight decreases, practice times will be adjusted to start and end earlier.
• In October, we will move to an indoor location. This schedule is often not available to us until the week prior.
• We will advise you in advance of location and any changes to the schedule.
• Parents, if you chose to stay, please stay near the line of cars and not approach the coaches or girls during practice time

Attendance

• Attendance is mandatory and girls must attend all practices. Please arrange appointments for your cheerleader outside of practice time.
• Other sports, extra-curricular activities and school activity nights are not reasons to miss practice. We require your commitment and effort during the football/cheer season. There are consequences for frequently missing practice.
• If practice is to be missed due to illness, a parent or guardian must contact the coach. Please check with your coaches for how they wish to be contacted.
• If a cheerleader is injured and cannot attend practice, a doctor’s note is required before she can return to practice.
• From our LJAL rules: Cheerfest is a competition, row assignments are determined in which best allows success for the team during this competition. Total Absences, arriving late/leaving early, knowledge of the routine and overall child’s performance as determined by the Cheer Coaches, Cheer Directors and/or Coordinator can affect your child’s row assignment for this competition.
• From our SMYFA Rules: Cheerleaders shall be excluded from Cheerfest for missing five or more practices during the cheer season, or at the Unit’s discretion.

Weather Policy for Practice

• If weather is severe, we may cancel practice. Before 4pm, a mass email will be sent out. After 4pm, the first communication will be done via Remind followed by Facebook and Email.
• Practice may end early in the event of severe weather, if this is the case notification will come via Remind.

Practice Attire

• Clothing should be athletic attire, no jeans, ect. Wear athletic shoes that tie, this is for safety as well as cheerleader comfort.
• Dress for the weather. Be sure to bring a sweatshirt and pants as the weather changes. Layers is key as we get later in the season.
• Hair is to be pulled up and out of cheerleaders face at all practices.
• For the security of your items, please remove all jewelry before leaving your house for practice. Coaches will not hold your personal items or be responsible for these items.

Other Practice Guidelines
• If a cheerleader becomes ill at practice, coaches are not permitted to dispense medicine of any kind. Please do not send medication with your child to the field.
• If asthma inhalers are being used for treatment, an authorization form from your doctor needs to be kept on file with the Director. This needs to be turned in prior to the first practice.
• All cheerleaders should remain at the field during practice. You should use the restroom BEFORE practice time. If bathroom needs become excessive, the parent may be asked to remain present during practices.
• Bring water! Water breaks are given regularly during practice, especially during hot weather. You may bring an unbreakable water bottle to practice – with your name on it. Pop and other sweet drinks are NOT allowed.
• There should be no gum chewing, candy, or sweets at practice.
• Please do not bring any games, toys, stuffed animals, ipods, make-up, books, etc. with you to practice.
• Coaches or Directors may close practice to parent viewing at any time. This becomes necessary at times to lessen the distraction of our cheerleaders.

Game Day

Arrival - Coaches will let their squads know what time to arrive to the field. This allows time for warm-ups and pre-game preparations. If you are more than fifteen (15) minutes late to a game, you may sit during the first quarter, at the coach’s discretion. Please let your coach know if your cheerleader will be late or will miss a game. Please eat and use the restroom before arriving to the field.

Start of Game - Cheer bags are to be zipped and hung on the fence line behind cheer area. No cheer bags are to be laying open on the track. Each team lines up at their end zone for introductions of the cheerleaders, football players and coaches. Follow your coach’s instructions for entry onto the field after your name is called.

Game Day Weather Policy - The referee will decide whether or not a game should be played in inclement weather, and will consider the health and safety of the participants. As long as the game continues, the cheerleaders will be expected to cheer. We do cheer in the rain!

Game Day Attire - Cheerleaders should arrive to the field ready to cheer.

Coaches will send an email prior to game day with the week’s attire and hairstyle. This must be followed for your cheerleader to participate in that games sideline and halftime cheer.

All cheerleaders are to be in identical uniform at all times on the field. All crops on/off, all cold weather pants on/off, all cold weather jackets on/off. This is the coach’s discretion when to add/remove items as a team. If an item is forgotten, your cheerleader will not be able to cheer until it is found or brought to the field. We ask that cheer pack items remain in your cheerleaders backpack at all times so that they are ready no matter the weather!

If you plan to stay at the field after your game, your cheerleader must change out of the shell. You may wear items from your cheer pack (pants, jacket)
Please note: Earrings and other jewelry are not allowed. It must be removed prior to practice, games, and Cheerfest.

**Food** - There will be no eating or drinking while you are actively cheering at your game. Water breaks will be given at the coach’s discretion; more often on hot days. You should bring a water bottle, or even two (2), to be kept in your bag, for use during break time during the game.

Snack should be consumed in the short time available during halftime. Each cheerleader will be assigned a game to bring a one-time contribution of a snack for the team during halftime. Snack can be dropped off to the coach before the game begins. Snacks must be neat, healthy and individually packaged (ie., granola bars, goldfish, pretzels, cheese sticks). Please avoid messy snacks such as Cheetos, Doritos, cupcakes, etc.

The cheerleaders will not be allowed to leave the track during half time. If they need to use the restroom, a coach must be notified before leaving the track.

**End of Game** – Every cheerleader is to take part in the handshake after the game. Coaches will give their team direction on how to line up. Remind your cheerleader to be respectful and show great sportsmanship at all times.

Do not leave until you are dismissed by your coach, they may have announcements or other information for you. Gather all your trash, water bottle(s) and cheer bag. Please try to do this quickly and do not cross in front of active cheering team on the sideline.

**Field and Track Area** - The track area in front of the stands is designated for the cheerleaders, and only uniformed cheerleaders for the game taking place, coaches, directors and Jr coaches are to be in that area. Cheerleaders are not to enter the track area unless it is their time to cheer or they are going to meet at the end zone to cheer oncoming athletes.

Family members (adults or children) are not to be on the track at any time unless event requires them to be there (injury, illness, Family Day)

**Other Cheer Rules & Guidelines**

- All participants must abide by the rules and code of conduct set out by the SMYFA, the LJAL, and the Falcon Unit.
- Participants are expected to participate in all scheduled events. We will cheer at all games, including the playoffs and Super Bowl if the Falcon teams make it through.

**Respect**

- Cheerleaders will show respect to their coaches, junior coaches, and each other. Coaches will treat cheerleaders and junior coaches with respect.
- Please remember the directors, coaches and junior coaches are all volunteers.
- Continual disciplinary actions will result in dismissal from the squad.
• Cell Phones will be allowed to be brought to practice and games, but they must be stored in the cheerleader’s bag and used in case of emergency only.
• Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Immediate dismissal from squad may result.

**Sportsmanship**

• We expect ALL of our cheerleaders to be cooperative and polite at all times.
• THE USE OF OPPOSING TEAM’S NAME IN CHEER, BANNER OR POSTER IS PROHIBITED.
• There shall be no negative comments made on any social media sites regarding any teammates, players or teams. Disciplinary action will result.
• No cheering for individual players. We cheer for our team as a whole.
• Any cheerleader that uses abusive language, gestures, or issue any person threat toward any participant on or off the playing field shall be deemed in violation of the league sportsmanship rules.

If you have any questions about these rules or anything else, please reach out.

Copies of the SMYFA and LJAL Cheerleading Rules can be found on the Falcon website.
LJAL FOOTBALL & CHEER CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Player/Participant or Parent/Guardian of a child registered with Livonia Junior Athletic League (“LJAL”) Football or Cheer, it is your obligation to adhere and abide by the Codes of Conduct as set forth in the LJAL Bylaws, as well as the following Codes of Conduct. Failure to do so may result in an ejection, suspension and/or expulsion. Any individual suspended is prohibited from participating in any league, unit or team activity for the duration of said suspension.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PLAYERS/PARTICIPANTS

As a Football Player or Cheerleader, I understand that I represent the Southeast Michigan Youth Football Association (“SMYFA”); the LJAL and my Unit. Accordingly, I understand and agree that:

- At all times, I will conduct myself in an appropriate manner both on and off the field of play, and regardless of whether I am at a SMYFA, LJAL or Unit sponsored event.
- The use of profanity, inappropriate language or gestures will NOT be tolerated.
- Engaging in fighting, hitting/kicking, teasing, taunting, name-calling or bullying of any other individual will NOT be tolerated.
- At all times, I will treat all coaches, my teammates, my opponents, game officials/referees and all league officials with respect, and will refrain from acting in such a way that would not represent myself, my team or my league in a positive way.
- I will not utilize social media (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, MySpace, etc.) to criticize, harass, taunt, bully or otherwise provide negative comments or feedback about any player/participant, coach, referee or game official, league official, LJAL, SMYFA or my Unit. I agree that I will immediately delete any post/comment at the request of a league or Unit official/director.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

As a Parent or Guardian of a LJAL Football Player or Cheerleader, I understand that I represent the Southeast Michigan Youth Football Association (“SMYFA”); the LJAL and my Unit. Accordingly, I understand and agree that:

- I will do my best to make athletic participation for my child and others a positive experience, by encouraging good sportsmanship and demonstrating positive support for all players and participants, coaches, game officials/referees and league officials.
- I will not openly question the judgment or honesty of a referee or game official.
- I will accept the results of each game, and encourage my child to show sportsmanship in victory and in defeat.
- I will conduct myself in a positive manner at the practice field and during games. I will avoid the use of profanity, vulgar, lewd or obscene language or gestures. I agree to maintain an environment that is DRUG, TOBACCO and ALCOHOL free at all LJAL, SMYFA or Unit events.
- I will not harass, taunt or make verbal threats against any player, coach, referee, game or league official.
- I will not utilize social media (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, MySpace, etc.) to criticize, harass, taunt, bully or otherwise provide negative comments or feedback about any
player/participant, coach, referee or game official, league official, the LJAL, the SMYFA or my Unit. I agree that I will immediately delete any post/comment at the request of a league or Unit official/director.

- I will utilize the “chain of command” in addressing any and all coaching issues, negative or positive, by first discussing the issue with the head coach, and then, if need be, with a director for my Unit. In doing so, I also agree to adhere to the “24-hour” rule, wherein I will wait 24 hours before addressing any issues with my child’s head coach. I further agree that I will direct all comments or criticisms directed to any coach, parent, referee/game official, or league official away from and outside the presence of any LJAL player/participant.

- All practices are mandatory and unexcused absences could result in lost playing time or participation in games or other league events.

- I will drop off and pick up my player/cheerleader from practices and games at the time designated by my child’s Unit and/or coach.

- I will supply all necessary information and documentation for my child to play/participate on or before the deadline as determined by my Unit.

- There is no refund policy for the LJAL, and should a decision be made that my child will not participate or complete the season, no refund will be given.

- I will return all equipment/uniforms at the time and location as determined by my Unit and in the same condition in which it was received. Failure to do so could result in lost registration fees from other sports or void future participation, until the issue is satisfactorily resolved by my Unit and/or Sports Commissioner. Equipment/uniforms that are damaged beyond normal wear and tear, may be subject to a replacement fee.

- I understand that in order for my child to maintain his or her veteran status, he or she must end the season in good standing. Good standing is defined as having participated through the completion of the season, having paid all fees, met all fundraising and volunteer requirements, and returned all equipment in the same condition by the due date as determined by my Unit.