



Argonaut Jr. Mustangs Participation Handbook

Welcome to Amador County Argonaut Jr. Mustang Youth Football and Cheer (AJM). This handbook was developed to help our adult members and youth participants understand how our organization operates and what is expected of all participants, coaches, members, and volunteers. While we can't cover every contingency, you are asked to follow the spirit, principles and guidelines as stated, to treat others with respect, and allow good sportsmanship to prevail.



AJM was organized by and is operated entirely by volunteer members – your input is welcome!

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Every AJM parent/guardian (hereafter referred to as “member”), player/cheerleader (hereafter referred to as “participant”) is required to read this handbook and abide by the Participation Requirements, Rules & Regulations, and Code of Conduct & Ethics.

All are required to return a Member/Participant Contract signed by both the member(s) and the participant(s), certifying that they read and understand this Handbook, Rules & Regulations, and Code of Conduct & Ethics.

Failure to do so will result in the ineligibility of your child to participate.

AJM ORGANIZATION

AJM is a nonprofit corporation, governed by Bylaws filed with the CA Secretary of State. Please read and download the Bylaws at <https://sites.google.com/a/ajmfootball.com/argonaut-jr-mustangs/home>. AJM is affiliated with the Motherlode Valley Football League (MVFL) <http://mvfl.net/> and is a feeder to the Argonaut High School Football program.

- AJM Football – has four (4) teams, based on rules and regulations established by the MVFL (Varsity, Jr. Varsity, Novice, and Jr. Novice). There is a maximum of 40 players per team. Jr. Novices may have 25 players per team (at the option of AJM).
- AJM Cheer – has four (4) regular squads, similar to football, with up to 30 participants on each, based on age policies established by MVFL.

AJM is operated entirely by volunteers with every activity occurring through their efforts. Directors, coaches, and advisors donate countless hours each season, to ensure a high-quality program for our children. Please treat every volunteer with courtesy and respect. The main levels of volunteer involvement are:

- **Board of Directors** – Volunteers are elected to one (1) year terms by the current Board and are responsible for management of all program operations and oversight of the volunteer network. Other non-voting board officers may be appointed, as needed, per the Bylaws.
- **Football Coaches** – Volunteer coaches manage all AJM practices and games. There is one Head Coach and up to five (5) Assistant Coaches per team: a maximum of six (6) coaches at all levels. Football coaches are the primary instructors for the participants and are responsible for supervision, teaching plays, running drills, and discipline on the field, as well member relations and communications. Direct all issues/questions to the Head Coach before going to the Vice President of Football.
- **Cheer Coaches and Instructors** – There is one (1) Head Coach per level and up to five (5) coach assistants per squad. The adult coaching staff is responsible for discipline, member communications, planning squad events/programs, teambuilding, instructor relations, and squad fundraising. Youth instructors, “Youth Advisors”, are responsible for developing/teaching game and competition routines and strengthening participant skills.

AJM MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

AJM’s mission is to teach competitive football and cheerleading skills to eligible Amador County youth while developing their character through the following six (6) MVFL core principles: (1) trustworthiness, (2) responsibility, (3) fairness, (4) caring, (5) respect, and (6) good citizenship. To achieve this, AJM provides a supervised program under the AJM Rules & Regulations that are attached to this Handbook and which every member and participant is expected to know.

- act with courtesy and respect, particularly when wearing AJM uniforms or apparel,
- perform his/her best at all games and competitions,
- be open to learning what he/she is taught,
- know and follow the AJM Rules and Code of Conduct and Ethics.

AJM Members, Coaches, Directors, and visitors must adhere to the Argonaut High School comprehensive safety plan, which includes no tobacco, alcohol, or drugs on any school grounds. The Board also encourages all participants to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 in the school they attend.

YOUTH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND PRIMARY SPORT

Any Amador County resident is eligible (*per 2/19/23 MVFL meeting making all of Amador County grey for AJB and AJM). Teams that are not filled by eligible participants are open to non-residents under MVFL guidelines and such transfers may be accepted subject to Board approval.

Eligibility and Right to Play Football. No athlete will be denied the right to participate because of culture, language, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, or disability. All participants are registered and rostered on a first-come basis; no tryouts allowed. Once the roster is at capacity, the waitlist may be created following the same

first-come guidelines. Once registered, all participants must follow the current *MVFL Rules and Regulations for Football*, linked at <http://mvfl.net/forms.html>.

- **Eligibility and Right to Participate in Cheer.** No athlete will be denied the right to participate because of culture, language, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, or disability. Each athlete must furnish proof of parent/guardian permission to participate and pay a registration fee. Once registered, all participants must follow the current MVFL Rules for Cheer, linked at <http://mvfl.net/forms.html>.

Primary Sport. While we encourage participants to be active in other sports/activities, they must not take priority over AJM, from the start of “hell week” (generally the last week in July) until the final game of the season. ALL cheer and football-related obligations (fittings, camp, practices, games, special activities) are priority functions over other activities. If you choose to participate in another sport/activity that interferes with the AJM play season, you will be dismissed from the program. Full participation is critical to all teammates; missing practices and training means teammates will not be able to perform 100%.

PARTICIPATION AS MEMBER VOLUNTEERS

AJM needs at least 60 volunteers for each home game to staff the snack bar, gates, and Jr. Mustang store, etc. Every member is required to volunteer a minimum of 4 hours for each child in the program, equal to two, 2-hour shifts at home games.

- Documentation of volunteer hours is kept, ensuring compliance. Loss of mandatory child participation rules may be applied if volunteer time is not given.
- Substitutes. Members may allow friends/relatives to work their volunteer hours for them. Approval from the Member Volunteer Coordinator should be obtained prior to the shift. Volunteer substitutes must be at least sixteen (16) years old, or eighteen (18) to handle money.
- Directors, Head and Assistant Coaches with multiple children in AJM will not be required to complete additional volunteer hours, although AJM encourages their spouses to volunteer as needed.
- Timing. Members’ volunteer hours must be completed during the following AJM events: concession stand, home football games (e.g. field preparation), or home post-season football games.
- Volunteer hours will not be counted for events such as football chalk talks, teambuilding parties, or transportation, but may be counted for fundraising events, subject to prior Board approval.
- Request for waiver. Volunteer hours may be waived if a significant need exists, and a request is made in writing with supporting documentation. Requests for a waiver of volunteer hours require Board approval.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE AND REPORTING COMPLAINTS

- AJM Rule 7, Prohibition Against Negative Conduct. No complaints against AJM or any Director, member, coach or participant shall be communicated through slander, malicious rumors, threats, or verbal or social media bashing or maligning. Such conduct is prohibited and may result in discipline, ejection, or suspension.
- AJM Rule 10, Procedure for Communicating Complaints, Violations, Appeals. All concerns, questions, or complaints must be communicated as stated in Rule 10 by: (1) speaking to the Vice President of Football or the Vice President of Cheer depending on the context, as each Vice President is required to hear, address, and resolve team or organizational complaints and violations; (2) if the Vice President (of Football or Cheer) cannot resolve it or if you were unable to report it to them, report it as soon as possible on the Complaint Form on the AJM website, linked at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h-TzYfu92N1C9enMMfDu1DHFkTV5guV/view>. The Vice President can also refer it to the Board President for resolution within 48 hours of the initial report; and if it cannot be resolved, the President will refer it to the full Board for resolution.

COMMITMENT TO THE SCHEDULE AND ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Schedule. Practices are mandatory for all participants, coaches, and instructors and begin on the date specified by MVFL, generally scheduled for all levels of football and cheer (Jr. Novice, Novice, J.V., and Varsity) at designated practice fields, as follows:

- The first two weeks: Practices are five (5) days per week; 6:00 – 8:00pm Monday-Friday (10 hours/week). Film sessions that may occur do not constitute practice, per MVFL rules.
- The second two weeks: Practices will not exceed four per week; 6:00 – 8:00pm Monday-Thursday.
- Remainder of the season: Practices are three (3) per week; 6:00 – 8:00pm Tuesday-Thursday.

Attendance and Absences. AJM Rule 4, *Attendance and Absences* requires attendance at all games and practices. Only five (5) excused absences per season are allowed without Board approval for a justified exception. Football and cheer coaches may remove participation privileges for unexcused absences or a disallowed number of excused absences. You must notify the coach before the practice/game, and only the following are considered excused absences:

- absences accompanied by a doctor’s note, or
- phone call from a parent stating why the participant was sick, or
- phone call from a parent stating a family emergency/funeral.

Details in *Football Participation Expectations* and *Cheer Participation Expectations Addendum* and the on-line calendar.

FEES

All fees must be paid in full at the time of registration.

- Registration Fee. A registration fee for each participant is assessed prior to the beginning of each season, which covers all AJM services provided to all children. If an individual/family has a hardship or is unable to pay, please request assistance from the *Dennis Dalton Foundation* at <https://www.thedennisdaltonfoundation.org/get-involved/apply-for-assistance>.
- Football Fee. There is a registration fee, consisting of a Participation Fee and a Game Jersey Fee.
- Cheer. There is a registration fee. However, no equipment and/or uniform fees are included in the fee. Once the fitting of cheer uniforms has taken place, the money for that uniform is owed and any money already paid for the uniform is not eligible for refund. Cheer uniforms become the property of the participant and any money still owed for a cheer uniform is due and payable even if the participant has decided to leave AJM.
- Returned Checks. A fee of \$25 dollars is charged on returned checks; no personal checks accepted.
- Refund Policy and Guidelines. All refund requests must be submitted in writing/emailed to the AJM Treasurer, stating the Member’s name, date the equipment was purchased or issued, the reason for the request, the amount, and any other relevant information.
 - Refund requests for football or for cheer made prior to the issuing of equipment are eligible for a 100% refund of the Registration Fee.
 - Refund requests made after equipment has been issued require additional approval from the Board and are determined on a case- by-case basis. Missing, lost, damaged equipment may reduce the refund.
 - Football jerseys issued become the property of the participant and are not eligible for refund. Cheer uniforms are not eligible for refund.
 - Dennis Dalton Foundation scholarship money is not refundable.
 - Once a refund request is approved, the Treasurer will mail the check to the address on file, unless previous arrangements are made by the Board or Treasurer.

FUNDRAISING PARTICIPATON

- Football and Cheer may have mandatory fundraisers determined by AJM Board.
- AJM encourages Individual, Family and Corporate/Business sponsors. However, this sponsorship does not affect your volunteer hours requirement as required by AJM Rule 5, *Member Volunteers*.
- All fundraising is managed by the Fundraising Coordinator pursuant to the Bylaws.

Fundraising efforts organized by AJM may be made available to assist members and participants with some required football uniform elements and required cheerleader uniform elements that are paid for by members/participants and are not subject to refund.

ENTRY – CERTIFICATION FOR PARTICIPATION

- **Football.** All participants must certify their age/grade/weight category by the jamboree (MVFL Rulebook). Final rosters are given to the football coaches after jamboree.
- **Cheer.** All participants will be required to attend a clinic and/or camp, in which they are taught cheer/dance routines and instructed and assisted in aerial tumbling skills and safety. Additional clinics may be offered.

CHEER COACH SELECTION PROCESS

Cheer coaches supervise youth instructors, called “Youth Advisors,” and manage participant squad activities and communications. The selection process includes:

- **Timing.** All members and prior season coaches may apply at season end.
- **Requirements:** good communication skills, demonstrated teamwork experience, willingness to work well with other coaches, and understanding the needs of the age group with which they will work.
- **Interviews.** Coach applicants who were not actively involved in the prior season will be interviewed by the Board. While we consider the advantages of the prior coaching staff moving up with participants, we also encourage new coaches to apply and bring ideas and energy to further benefit the team.
- **Head coach decision.** The Board reviews all applications and will select the head coaches.
- **Assistant coach decision.** Newly appointed head coaches may select an assistant coach from the approved applicant pool.

CHEER YOUTH ADVISOR SELECTION PROCESS

Youth Advisors are generally high school students with extensive cheer experience that qualifies them for instructing younger children. The minimum age to instruct is ninth (9) grade. Applications are prioritized as follows:

- Returning instructors who wish to move up with their squad.
- Returning Youth Advisors who instructed in a prior year and wish to move to another squad vacancy.
- Argonaut High School cheerleaders who did not previously instruct.
- Jr. Mustang Varsity cheerleaders who will be in high school the following season.
- Other cheerleaders, such as those from all-star teams.

The Vice President of Cheer may deny approval of an application from any instructor exhibiting attendance or behavior problems during the prior season.

FOOTBALL COACH SELECTION PROCESS

Football coaches provide all instruction and training for the participants. Their selection includes:

- **Timing.** All members, prior season coaches and interested persons are invited to apply at season end.
- **Requirements:** good communication skills, demonstrated teamwork experience, a willingness to work well with other coaches, and understanding the needs of the age group with which they will work. For a full list of a coach’s requirements/expectations, review the coach’s application; talk to the Vice President of Football.
- **Interviews for head coach.** If the applicant was not a coach in the prior season, or if there is more than one head coach applicant for a team, the Board will interview all applicants, even those from the prior season. However, when a returning head coach from the prior season is in good standing and would be returning at the same level, the Board reserves the right not to interview other candidates.
- **Conflict of Interest.** If there is a conflict of interest (e.g., one of the interviewers is applying for a head or assistant coach position for the same team) then other Directors will be selected to conduct the interview.
- **Assistant Coaches.** All Assistant Coaches are selected by the Head Coach from the pool of applicants approved by the Board.

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS: FOOTBALL AND CHEER

AJM has the following practice, game day, and competition uniform requirements as established by the MVFL.

- Everyone in an AJM uniform, participants, and coaches must conduct themselves with pride and respect.
- Any game or competition uniform, whether owned by the participant or by AJM, is not to be worn outside of games or competition at any time, including:

- Football: pants, pads, helmets, practice jersey
- Cheer: skirts, vests, body liners, shoes, cheer socks, bows.

Uniform Exceptions. Football players are encouraged to wear home jerseys to school on Fridays before each game. Cheerleaders are encouraged to wear the full uniform to school on Fridays before each game, subject to school permission. Participants are also encouraged to wear their jerseys and/or uniforms to all high school home games.

AJM Uniform Requirements Football/Cheer	AJM Provided (to be returned)	AJM Provided (to be kept)	Parent Provided (to be kept)
<u>Football</u>			
helmet	x		
chin strap	x		
shoulder pads	x		
padded practice pants	x		
padded game pants	x		
practice jersey	x		
game jersey		x	
rubber cleats			
equipment bag			
extra pads			
game socks		x	
hip pads/girdle belt			
mouth guard		x	
camp wear			
briefs			
socks			
<u>Cheer</u>			
skirt			
green and gold pom poms		x	
pink pom poms	x		
vest			
body liner			
personalized warm-up shoes			
camp wear			

FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

1. Practice Attire

After conditioning week, participants are required to wear practice pants, pads, cleats, full length socks, belt, and helmet with chinstrap, mouthpiece, and practice jersey. Players must wear designated practice jerseys only. If you forget or lose your mouthpiece and if the Equipment Manager has an extra, you may purchase another mouthpiece.

- Cleats must conform to the MVF rule standards. Game pants may NOT be worn to practice.
- If you do not have proper protective gear for practice, you may be suspended from practice, which will be treated as an unexcused absence.
- No jewelry (rings, earrings, necklaces, etc.) may be worn during practice or games.

2. **Game Day Attire.** All participants must wear game pants, AJM socks, cleats, shoulder pads, girdle and pads, pads for pants, belt, and helmet with chinstrap, mouthpiece, and jersey. Socks pulled over cleats, tape around belts, or anything else used for decorative purposes are not allowed when in uniform on game days.
3. **Game Participation Play Rules**
 - All game participants must certify before each game. MVFL rules require that any participant who does not certify will be suspended from that game.
 - Participants are required to arrive 90 minutes before the scheduled start of their game to weigh in, certify, and warm up.
 - Participants are required to arrive on time and bring all equipment, and to retrieve it after the game.
 - Failure to bring all required equipment to games or practices, or late arrival at the same, will result in the player being benched and to remain at the game on the sidelines for the duration of the game.
4. **Mandatory Play Rules**
All Members, participants, parents, and coaches shall follow the MVFL Play Rules and Conduct Rules for football, in addition to the AJM Rules. Failure to do so will result in appropriate disciplinary action, penalties, or ejection. Every “eligible” participant suited up for a game is allowed a designated amount of minimum play at each game under the current Motherlode Valley Football League, *MVFL Rules and Regulations Football* at <http://mvfl.net/forms.html>.
5. **Participation in Playoffs**
The MVFL Rule Book outlines playoff requirements for football. Qualifying teams are invited to participate based on season record and other criteria and move up through three levels of playoffs (including the championship game), provided that they continue to win.

PARTICIPATION IN CAMPS: FOOTBALL AND CHEER

To reduce the risk of injury and increase proficiency, participants and coaches are strongly encouraged to participate in provided camps and clinics.

- **Football** A non-contact football camp will be hosted annually by the Argonaut High School Football Program. Registered participants will be notified of other camps in the area, should they become available. Should a participant desire to participate in additional camps they must submit their request to the VP of Football for approval and the Equipment Manager will arrange for the issuance of necessary equipment.
- **Cheer** A cheer and stunt camp led by a competitive cheer organization will be hosted annually by AJM. In addition, additional stunt camps may be scheduled as needed.
- **Coaches/Instructors** As required by MVFL, coaches and instructors will be required to attend a hosted clinic in accordance with MVFL Bylaws.

SAFETY: FOOTBALL AND CHEER

Every child’s safety is our highest priority. The following safety measures are required:

- **Food and water.** Coaches, instructors, board members and participants may not eat on the field during practice. Water breaks will be taken as needed, and all participants are responsible for bringing labeled water bottles to each practice and game. Water bottles should not be shared between participants. No sodas are allowed during practices or games; no fluids other than water are permitted on the sidelines at any fields with synthetic turf.
- **Physicals.** Every participant is required to provide proof of a physical dated after January 1 of the current year by a medical doctor prior to the first week of practice, at family expense. Children may see their own doctor.
- **Conditioning.** Conditioning exercises are part of each practice, to ensure participants can keep up with the rigors of their sport.
- **Equipment.** Required equipment is evaluated by outside vendors to ensure quality and safety. Cheerleaders will stunt only on grass or mats that are at least 1/2” thick.
- **Special Needs.** If determined by members, coaches, or the Board that a participant has special needs or lacks the necessary capability to protect themselves or other participants during practices or games, the participant may be removed from physical contact or simulation play conditions. An alternative practice environment may be

created for involvement, but the Mandatory Play Rules will be altered or dropped. This determination will come from the Board and must be requested in writing.

- **Support devices.** Casts or braces with extensive metal or hard plastic may not be worn during practice or games.
- **No Jewelry.** No jewelry may be worn by football players or by cheerleaders to avoid risks of injury and ensure safety.
- **Certification.** Cheer stunt groups will not be allowed to advance until they have consistently demonstrated proficiency. Stunt groups will not be mixed unless they have been evaluated for proficiency and certified in all possible stunt group combinations.
- **The Presence of Medical Personnel.** A certified medical person on duty will manage injuries during games.
- **Injuries.** Only certified personnel can manage injuries, which may include deferring to a licensed medical professional. In the event of any injury, members who are licensed medical professionals should identify themselves to the staff person in charge but should not intervene until asked. Injuries during practice will be managed by a coach or board member familiar with First Aid. Participants with injuries to the head, neck or back will not be moved and an ambulance will be summoned to the field. Participants with other injuries who state they are unable to continue with practice will be taken to the sidelines and monitored.
- **Doctor's Clearance.** Any injury that results in a participant not being able to continue in a practice or a game must provide a doctor's clearance for approval to resume future participation.
- **Medical Concerns.** If at any time any coach suspects a medical problem, documentation will be required to clear up the problem.



CHEER PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS ADDENDUM

1. **Cheer Program Purpose, Commitment, and Communication Expectations.**
 - The purpose of the Cheer Program is to support the AJM Football teams by leading cheers and raising the level of fan support. Be advised that this is highly physical, which may involve a risk of physical injury.
 - Every participant must cheer at every game, always scheduled on Saturdays. There is an entrance fee for all games (excluding cheerleaders and football players). Each parent is responsible for transporting their child to games, home or away. Any carpool arrangements are the parent's responsibility.
 - All communication, including location and game day details, will be through the GROUPME app by level. Please ensure you are added to the Team chat; if not, please talk with your Head Coach. We do not have group or individual text messages unless a private or sensitive matter needs to be discussed.
 - Do not discuss routines or formations with the instructors; direct questions to the VP of Cheer.
2. **Practice Expectations and Dates.** See calendar of scheduled dates on the GROUPME.APP. Practice dates generally begin the fourth week of July, continuing through the season as follows:
 - First two (2) Weeks: Schedule is 5 days/week Monday-Friday
 - Second two (2) weeks: Schedule is 4 days/week, Monday -Thursday
 - Remainder of the season: Schedule is 3 days/week, Tuesday-Thursday
3. **Practice Times / Location / Necessary Items.**
 - All practice is from 6:00pm - 8:00pm at Argonaut High School.
 - There is a mandatory practice uniform. Refer to the calendar to know exactly what your child must wear.

- Warm-ups must be in your child's cheer bag; some nights get chilly.
 - There are two pairs of cheer shoes: one for practice and one for games. Please have them wear the correct ones. Cheer shoes must be worn at practice. NO EXCEPTIONS.
 - If your child comes to practice and does not have the correct attire, she will have to run it off and may receive demerits; excessive demerits can result in sitting out a halftime performance.
4. **Food and Water.**
- Eating is to be done before or after your child's game or practice. They have 10-15 minutes before each game to get something to eat. However, they will not be given time to eat during the game or halftime, so please make sure your cheerleader has eaten before she gets to the game. No food or gum is allowed on the tracks or the field at any games or practices.
 - Each cheerleader must bring a 1-gallon water jug of drinking water to each game. No Gatorade is allowed on the tracks or fields. Also, make sure your child has plenty of water at practices; we do not carry extra water.
5. **Chain of Command.** If you have any questions or concerns, please follow the chain of command: (1) speak to the Head Coach, (2) speak to the Co-Vice Presidents of Cheer, and (3) if not resolved, submit the complaint form on the AJM website at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h-TzYfu92N1C9enMMfDu1DHFkTV5guV/view> to the AJM Board President. Contact information:
- Co-Vice President of Cheer: Jamie Monge 916-617-8189
 - Co-Vice President of Cheer: Alex Wojnar 916-531-1155
6. **Respect, Sportsmanship, Behavior and Program Representation.** As required by AJM Rule 7, Prohibition Against Negative Conduct, the following behavior is expected:
- Show respect. A child must always show respect for coaches, youth advisors, teaching staff and other members of the squad, and for the uniform and the AJM team she represents.
 - Being disrespectful to coaches, youth advisors, teaching staff and other team members will result in consequences at the coach's discretion (i.e., extra conditioning, sitting during a portion of the game or sitting out of the halftime performance).
 - No negative conduct. Rude, abusive, unrestrained, offensive, or unruly conduct, including foul language, lying, stealing or other negative behavior is subject to consequences under AJM Rule 7, *Prohibition Against Negative Conduct* at the coach's discretion and may result in dismissal.
 - All Cheer team participants/members are responsible for their conduct. Team participants are highly visible in the community, and all actions and behavior are under constant observation.
 - No prohibited substances. Any individual found to be in possession of or using alcohol, tobacco or drugs is subject to immediate dismissal from the AJM Cheer program.
 - No boyfriends or friends are allowed at practice or special events. If they come to games, no public display of affection is allowed.
 - Practice under supervision. Physical risk-taking conduct, including stunting, is to be done at practice only with the supervision of a coach. Please do not allow your child to stunt at home or school. Stunting incorrectly or irresponsibly could potentially cause injury.
7. **Cheer Practice Expectations.** As required in AJM Rule 4, Attendance and Absences, attendance at all practices and games is required unless excused.
- Hair must be pulled back, out of the face, including long bangs and side bangs. ALL jewelry must be removed (even earrings and body rings).
 - Everyone MUST wear proper attire for practice, meaning assigned practice uniform shirts and shorts, spankies, sports bra, no-show white socks and practice pair of cheer shoes.
 - Bring your own water bottle - REQUIRED. If you cannot afford one, please notify your coach.

- No cell phones are allowed to be used during practice or games, unless it's an emergency. Phones should be off or on silent. Parents should call the child's head coach if there is an emergency.
- Don't be late. All cheerleaders must arrive at the scheduled time and place specified by the coaches. Once stretching and warming up has begun, you will be considered late and will receive a demerit.
- Warm-ups/conditioning are mandatory. Cheerleading is an athletic and aerobic sport. Participation in all warm-up exercises, running laps, conditioning, stunting, etc. is required unless previously excused by a doctor's note.
- If your child is sick, do not come to practice; contact a coach before practice for an excused absence.
- Prompt pick up after practice. Please be prompt when picking up your child at the end of practice in consideration of coaches who are volunteering their time.
- Security. All cheerleaders must stay together as a squad; do not wander off. If you need to go to the restroom or anywhere else, use the buddy system, and tell your coach where you are going.
- Proper clothing. Show up to practice ready to go in proper clothing, shoes and hair pulled up. If you are not ready to go when practice starts, you will receive a demerit.
- If you are absent from any practice where new material is being taught, it is your responsibility to catch up and learn the material on your own time and come to the following practice prepared.
- Do not take a coach's correction "personally;" they are helping you and everyone avoid mistakes and injury.

8. Game Attendance Expectations.

- All team members must be present at least one hour prior to games. If you do not arrive one hour before the game, you will not be able to participate in the halftime routine. Stunt groups will not be rearranged that day, so if you are late, your whole stunt group may be pulled from stunting, but not dancing. As soon as stretching begins, you are late.
- Pick up your cheerleader from the lower level (we give our football players good luck treats and paint cars).
- If you are absent from a THURSDAY practice, excused or unexcused, you will be removed from the halftime routine at the following game, but you are still required to come to the game and cheer.
- If you have more than 5 unexcused absences at practice, you will be removed from that week's halftime routine at the game. Each unexcused absence thereafter will cause removal from further routines.
- Negative conduct – such as showing up to practice unable, unwilling, or unprepared to practice, or your parent not calling your coach before practice to let them know you are sick or had a family emergency is an unexcused absence.
- Attending without the proper uniform is also an unexcused absence.
- All squads are required by AJM to cheer at all games regardless of weather. If the football team plays, the cheerleaders cheer.
- If you are injured or unable to cheer, but still wish to attend the game you must wear your uniform and stay with your squad.
- You are not allowed on the game field unless you are authorized to cheer or provide support at half time.
- Cheerleaders are to attend playoff games for their respective teams unless they are involved in competition.

9. Personal Appearance and Uniform Expectations.

- Practices. All participants must wear the official practice uniform, including cheer shoes (without loops or buckles) with socks (no nylons) and shoelaces (always required).
- Games. All participants must wear skirt (or warm-up pants), vest, shell (or shell and body liner), socks, shoes, briefs, and game bow, as directed by individual coaches. White socks only, no colors can be shown.
- Warm-ups and a change of clothes should always be in your cheer bag.
- You must maintain a well-groomed appearance.
- Make-up must look NATURAL.
- Hair must be in a HIGH ponytail, and bangs clipped back. Bow is required in your hair at every game.

- Hair colors such as pink, blue, green, etc. are NOT allowed; natural colors only.
- No dark or bright nail polishes are allowed; only green, white, yellow, or clear. Nails should not extend beyond the end of fingers.
- No jewelry, including body pierced rings.
- Uniforms must be clean, wrinkle-free, and shoes washed and clean before each game.
- Always wear your spankies under your skirt and warm-up pants.
- No undershirts are allowed to be showing under either practice or game uniform. Sports bras are required at practices and games; no halter sports bras; no colored straps showing.

10. Cheer Attitude Expectations. To maintain a strong, positive, and supportive cheer program, we expect everyone to set a good example and display a positive attitude toward the coaching staff and each other. This means no bad attitudes, back talking, rolling of the eyes, or other forms of disrespect toward the coaching staff or team members. As stated in AJM Rule 7, Prohibition Against Negative Conduct, the coaching staff has the right to discipline anyone engaged in such conduct. Therefore, please maintain and display a cooperative, pleasant, or caring attitude even if you may not “feel like it.” If you are put into a stunting position or dance line-up that you are not happy about, please do not give your coach or others an attitude. Be patient; you can talk to your coach about your concerns on the side when there is an opportunity.



ARGONAUT JUNIOR MUSTANGS

RULES AND REGULATIONS

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Duly adopted by AJM Board of Directors on 12/11/2023

ARTICLE I - PLAY RULES

Rule 1. Required Play Rules and Discipline for Violations.

All members, participants, coaches and directors shall follow the current updated Motherlode Valley Football League, *MVFL Rules and Regulations Football* and for *Cheer* at <http://mvfl.net/forms.html>, in addition to the current AJM Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, and Participation Handbook. Game rules and procedures follow the rules of the National Federation for State High School Associations (NFHSA), the nation's leader in high school sports.

Failure to follow the Rules will result in appropriate disciplinary action, which, at the discretion of the Board, may include the actions below, depending on the nature of the violation and whether it is deemed to be detrimental to the safety, fair play, or respect for others, (also in the AJM Code of Conduct & Ethics).

- 1) Monetary fines
- 2) Temporary suspension
- 3) Temporary or Permanent termination
- 4) Ejection from a Game
- 5) Cheer Demerit Process resulting in disqualification from participation.

Rule 2. Eligibility and Mandatory Play.

Any individual residing within the boundaries of Amador County is eligible and will have priority at the time of registration, per 2/19/23 MVFL meeting making all of Amador County grey for AJB and AJM. Proof of residency is required at registration. An individual who receives a transfer by MVFL under MVFL Bylaws is also eligible if approved by the AJM Board.

Every "eligible" athlete suited up for a game must play a minimum of five (5) plays in that game. The responsible Coach who fails to conform to the Mandatory Play Rule is subject to discipline under the disciplinary process in AJM Rule 1 above and under the MVFL Rules and Regulations Football.

Rule 3. Right to Play.

No eligible participant will be denied the right to participate because of ethnicity, race, religion, culture, language, gender, ethnicity or disability. All participants must be registered and rostered on a first come basis; no tryouts are allowed. Once the roster is at capacity, a waitlist may be created following the same guidelines.

Rule 4. Attendance and Absences.

Attendance at all games and practices is mandatory; only five (5) excused absences per season are allowed without Board approval for a justified exception. Football and cheer coaches may impose demerits or remove participation privileges for unexcused or a disallowed number of excused absences or for failure to notify the coach in advance. Provided that a parent/guardian notifies the coach before the practice or game, excused absences are:

- absences accompanied by a doctor's note, or
- phone call from a member stating why the participant was sick, or
- phone call from a member stating a family emergency/funeral.

Rule 5. Member Volunteers.

Every member is required to volunteer a minimum of 4 hours for each of their children who are in the program (football and cheer), equal to two, 2-hour shifts at home football games, except that Board Members and Head and Assistant Coaches with multiple children in AJM are not required to complete additional volunteer hours.

Members may have friends/relatives work their volunteer hours for them, subject to approval from the Member Volunteer Coordinator prior to the shift. A member may also “buy out” his/her volunteer hours for \$50/hour, subject to agreement with the Member Volunteer Coordinator. Documentation of volunteer hours will be kept by the Member Volunteer Coordinator to ensure compliance. Failure to complete the volunteer hours may result in the loss of privileges, such as, mandatory play participation for the child of such member.

Rule 6. Protective Equipment.

All participants must wear full protective safety equipment at all games and all contact practice sessions. No participant will be permitted to play in a game or in practice without such equipment. AJM will furnish such protective equipment and will check, repair, and certify it annually or bi-annually if not used in the previous year.

ARTICLE II - CONDUCT RULES

Rule 7. Prohibition Against Negative Conduct.

All unsportsmanlike conduct by members, coaches, participants or visitors including but not limited to any of the following, is prohibited, and may result in disciplinary actions defined in AJM Rule 1 for violations:

- Any physical or verbal abuse, including significant profanity and foul language;
- Racial epithets, negative innuendos regarding a person’s race, religion or ethnicity;
- Disrespect for, or confrontation with officials, coaches, instructors, and volunteers;
- Divisive conduct, slander, malicious rumors, threats associated with or related to AJM;
- Verbal or Social Media bashing or maligning AJM, any members, coaches, participants or other teams;
- Lying, back-talking coaches or instructors or other negative behavior;
- Stealing, assaulting others, intentional acts or omission placing others at risk.

Rule 8. Prohibition Against Tobacco, Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking.

Members of AJM, Coaches, Board Members, and Visitors shall adhere to the Argonaut High School comprehensive safety plan, which includes no tobacco, no drugs, no alcohol and no smoking on any school grounds. Possession of, or using alcohol, tobacco, or drugs will be cause for immediate ejection from the school grounds and/or other disciplinary action as defined in AJM Rule 1.

Rule 9. Use of Track or Cheer Area; Unattended Children.

No member or non-participant child is allowed on the track, in the cheer area, or on the sideline of the field during use or before or after games without an AJM badge.

Siblings of participants or other children must always be supervised by their parent or guardian and must not be left unattended. Failure to comply or control unattended children which results in activities posing a risk to themselves or others is a violation and may result in disciplinary action as defined in AJM Rule 1.

Rule 10. Procedure for Communicating Complaints; Violation Appeals.

Communicating Complaints. Any concern or complaint may be communicated by a member only by the following process:

- Verbally or by phone to the Vice President of Football or Vice President of Cheer during or immediately after the game. Each Vice President has authority to resolve it, or to report it to the President, who also has authority to resolve it.
- If it is not resolved by the Vice President or President within 48 hours of the date the complaint was made, then state the concern and all information about the incident on the AJM Complaint form at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h-TzYfu92N1C9enMMfDu1DHFkKTV5guV/view> and submit it to the Board President for the consideration and final decision of the Board.

Violation Appeals. Any appeal from a disciplinary action (other than ejection of a participant from a game) imposed by the Board Vice President or President during or after a game may be appealed by a Member for consideration and a hearing before the Board of Directors upon submission of the appeal in writing on the AJM Complaint/Appeal Form at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h-TzYfu92N1C9enMMfDu1DHFkKTV5guV/view>.

The Member shall state all facts establishing that the incident or violation did not occur in the manner reported, was not harmful to others, and the penalty was excessive under the circumstances.

Final decisions will be made by the Board pursuant to the AJM Bylaws.

CERTIFICATE OF THE PRESIDENT

The undersigned President of the corporation known as the Argonaut Junior Mustangs, Incorporated, hereby certifies that the above and foregoing Rules and Regulations were duly adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Directors at the meeting on December 11, 2023, and that they now constitute the official Rules of this organization.

ARGONAUT JUNIOR MUSTANGS, INCORPORATED, a California nonprofit mutual benefit corporation.

President Beau Gillman
Beau Gillman

Date 12/11/2023



AJM PARTICIPANT CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS PLEDGE

As a parent/guardian, I agree to read this code of conduct and ethics pledge to my children, sign and date below, and submit it to the coach or Vice President of Football or Cheer, and that my failure to do so will disallow participation in the AJM program by my children.

- 1) **Hard work and Attendance.** I understand that being a member of the football or cheer team requires hard work. This includes coming to every practice and game on time, listening carefully to my coaches, and learning and memorizing plays (offensive and defensive) or cheer routines, and rules. If I don't try to learn them, it is bad for the team and may put other players or cheerleaders in danger. If I am late too many times or miss too many practices, I could be disciplined and suspended from a game by my coach.
- 2) **Uniforms are important.** I understand that AJM uniforms are to be worn by me, as a participant, with pride and respect at every practice and every game and at school on Fridays. I will follow the AJM Rules and Handbook about them exactly. I know that it is my job to keep my uniform and equipment clean and in good repair, before every game. As a football player, I will also follow the rules requiring me to use safety equipment.
- 3) **Positive attitude.** If I become upset at a practice or a game or when I am in uniform, I will not have a negative attitude, argue with the coach or others, use bad language, or fight. I will instead report the problem to the coach.
- 4) **Sportsmanship.** I know that as a participant, I must be a good "sportsman," which means I must respect and be kind to others, in what I say and in what I do. I will not hurt others, say bad words, or lie to them (or about them), and I will not make fun of them in any way. I understand that saying bad things about anyone in AJM, including coaches, other players cheerleaders, referees, and other teams, is against the rules and will result in my discipline.
- 5) **Games.** I will follow all MVFL Play rules and ethics for participants at every game. I will also follow the instructions of the coach, and I will not engage in any inappropriate behavior that may disrupt or the game or other participants. I understand that targeting (illegal helmet contact, late hits) will not be tolerated and may result in expulsion for the season.
- 6) **Disciplinary Process for Violations.** If I violate any rules, I understand that I could be disciplined by a private conversation with my coach, a documented meeting with my coach and my parents, game suspension, or permanently being dropped from the roster.

AJM Player/Cheerleader Code of Conduct & Ethics Pledge Acknowledgment

I have read the Argonaut Jr. Mustangs Handbook (including Cheer Addendum as applicable) and this Participant Code of Conduct & Ethics Pledge, and I understand the obligations and physical risk associated with the football and cheer program. I realize that if I do not abide by the AJM and MVFL Bylaws, Rules, and Handbook, disciplinary action or suspension from the team could result. I also realize that breaking the rules or a poor attitude toward the coach, team members, or anyone is harmful to others and could also result in my discipline or suspension.

Participant Name (Printed)

Participant Signature

Parent Name (Printed)

Parent Signature

Date _____



AJM MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS PLEDGE

I agree that AJM's purposes for youth are achieved only with the participation and cooperation of all parents, adults, and youth volunteers, and that my participation requires me to agree with and sign this *Code of Conduct and Ethics Pledge* for the success, safety, and well-being of all involved.

Adult Code of Conduct

- Support Program and Rules.** I understand that once my child/children are eligible and registered as participants, we are AJM members obligated to support the AJM program to teach and encourage teamwork, good sportsmanship, fair play, safety, and love of the sport. I will assist teaching my children the AJM Rules and MVFL play rules and AJM Handbook expectations that must be followed.
- Health and Safety.** I will adhere to the Argonaut High School comprehensive safety plan, which includes no tobacco, no drugs, no alcohol and no smoking (including e-cigarettes and vape pens) on any school grounds, and I understand that use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs is cause for immediate ejection from the grounds and other disciplinary action as stated in AJM Rule 8 *Prohibition Against Tobacco, Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking*. I understand that the MVFL will not tolerate any form of abuse of children (physical, verbal, emotional, ethical or sexual) and acknowledge that it will be immediately reported to the proper authorities.
- Commitment to Attendance.** I understand that attendance by my child/children is mandatory at all games and practices, and only five (5) excused absences per season are allowed without Board approval for a justifiable exception, and that football and cheer coaches may impose demerits or remove participation privileges for unexcused or disallowed number of absences.
- Responsible Supervision.** I agree to carefully supervise my non-participant child/children and ensure that they remain only in designated areas during all practices and games, never on the field, sidelines, or locker rooms, or areas posing a risk to themselves or others as required under AJM Rule 9 *Use of Track or Cheer Area; Unattended Children* and MVFL Rules.
- Sportsmanlike Attitude.** I will keep a positive attitude and refrain from open criticisms, foul language, derogatory comments, or racial epithets (including innuendos regarding a person's race or religion). I understand that any such negative language or conduct toward or about others, including coaches, participants, referees, directors, and other teams, is prohibited and may result in discipline, penalties, demerits, or ejection as stated in AJM Rule 7, *Prohibition Against Negative Conduct*.
- Responsible Communication.** I understand that I must communicate concerns, questions or complaints to the Vice President of Football or Vice President of Cheer, depending on context, and will not complain on social media or to other persons, so as to avoid any slander or disparagement of AJM, its members or participants. I understand that if the Vice President cannot resolve it, then he/she will refer it to the Board President for resolution within 48 hours of the initial report, and if it cannot be resolved, the President will refer it to the Board for consideration and resolution.

Ethics Pledge

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child/children in this program. I agree to honor the ethical obligations to all participants, members and the public. I pledge to comply with all AJM and MVFL Bylaws, Rules, and this Code of Conduct and Ethics Pledge. I agree that the AJM Board in its sole discretion may hold me accountable for so doing. I further agree that my accountability to the AJM Board for any breach or violation may include penalties, ejection, suspension, expulsion, ineligibility, or disbarment of myself and/or my children from participation.

Member Name (Please Print)

Member Signature

Date