

RIPON CHIEFS



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2026 BYLAWS

RIPON CHIEFS FOOTBALL & CHEER, INC.

BYLAWS – 2026

Mission Statement

Our mission is to teach football and cheer to children between the ages of **6 and 14**. Training takes place in an environment based on the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, courage, loyalty, and respect for oneself and others.

We are committed to:

- Providing a safe, structured youth athletic program where all participants can learn, grow, and compete.
- Teaching the fundamentals of football and cheer in a way that builds confidence, discipline, and teamwork.
- Promoting academic achievement alongside athletics and encouraging our athletes to be leaders at home, in school, and in the community.
- Creating a positive environment in which coaches, parents, and volunteers model integrity, accountability, and respect.

The Ripon Chiefs are organized and operated entirely by volunteers. We welcome the involvement and feedback of our families as we work together to provide an outstanding youth sports experience.

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Article 1.0 – Name

Section 1.1 – Corporate Name

The official name of the corporation shall be **RIPON CHIEFS, INC.**, and it will be referred to throughout these bylaws as the **RIPON CHIEFS**.

Section 1.2 – Colors and Mascot

The official colors of the RIPON CHIEFS are **Red, White, and Black**. The official mascot is the **Chief**.

Article 2.0 – Purpose and Objectives

Section 2.1 – Purpose

The RIPON CHIEFS are committed to providing opportunities for community youth to participate in a youth athletic program, striving to inspire youth—regardless of race, creed, or national origin—to practice the ideals of sportsmanship, scholarship, and physical fitness.

Section 2.2 – Objectives

- Make football and cheer fun and educational for all participants.
- Teach lessons that extend beyond playing days, including self-discipline, teamwork, concentration, leadership, and good sportsmanship.
- Support the belief that academics and athletics go hand-in-hand, and encourage strong performance in both areas.
- Provide a safe, structured, and supervised environment for youth sports.

Section 2.3 – Non-Profit Status and Dissolution

The RIPON CHIEFS will be operated as a **non-profit organization**. In the event of dissolution, all remaining assets will be donated to local charities or youth-serving organizations as determined by the Board of Directors.

Article 3.0 – Location and Funds

Section 3.1 – Mailing Address

The official mailing address of RIPON CHIEFS, INC. is:

**P.O. Box 572
Ripon, CA 95366**

The Board may change the mailing address by majority vote as needed.

Section 3.2 – Payments and Receipts

All payments, donations, sponsorships, and fees must be made payable to “**RIPON CHIEFS.**” No payments shall be made out to, or deposited into, personal accounts of individual members, including coaching staff or Board members. All funds collected on behalf of the organization must be turned over to the Treasurer as soon as reasonably possible.

Section 3.3 – Use of Funds

All funds of the RIPON CHIEFS shall be used solely to support the purposes and activities of the organization. Expenditures shall be made in accordance with the Board-approved budget and any additional approvals required under these bylaws.

Section 3.4 – Registration and Volunteer Deposit Policies

Detailed rules governing registration payments, check handling, waitlist placement, and volunteer hours deposit requirements are set forth in **Attachment 5 – Registration Payment & Volunteer Hours Deposit Policies.** Attachment 5 is incorporated by reference into these bylaws and is binding on all participants and families.

Article 4.0 – Organization

Section 4.1 – Corporate Status and Service Area

The RIPON CHIEFS are an incorporated and properly insured youth sports organization. The primary service area is the **Ripon community** and the **Ripon Unified School District.** Athletes residing outside this draw area may participate only with approval from both the RIPON CHIEFS Board and the TVYFL Board, in accordance with league boundaries and eligibility rules.

Section 4.2 – Self-Sufficiency

The organization is a self-sufficient non-profit and will not rely on taxpayer funds. Revenues are generated through registration fees, fundraising, sponsorships, and donations.

Section 4.3 – Affiliation with TVYFL

The RIPON CHIEFS operate a youth football and cheer program for ages **6–14** and are a member of the **Trans Valley Youth Football League (TVYFL)** or its successor. The RIPON CHIEFS will comply with TVYFL bylaws, rules, and policies, provided they are lawful and aligned with the values and mission of the organization.

Section 4.4 – Other Sports Programs

The RIPON CHIEFS may sponsor or oversee other sports or related programs as approved by the Board of Directors, provided such programs support the mission and objectives of the organization.

Section 4.5 – Team Structure, Age Divisions, and Roster Limits

Section 4.5.1 – Football Squads and Age Ranges

- Junior Novice: Ages 6, 7, 8 (age 6 on or before August 1).
- Novice: Ages 9 and 10 (age on or before August 1).
- Junior Varsity (JV): Ages 11 and 12 (age on or before August 1).
- Varsity: Ages 13 and 14 (age on or before August 1).

All age ranges are subject to TVYFL rules and any annual updates to league age cutoffs.

Section 4.5.2 – Football Roster Caps and Waitlists

The maximum roster size for any football squad (Junior Novice, Novice, JV, Varsity) is **thirty (30) active players**. In addition, each football squad may maintain an official waitlist of up to **five (5) players**. Once a squad has **30 active players** and **5 players** on its waitlist, registration for that level is considered full and no additional players may be added without Board approval.

The Board of Directors may set a lower roster cap or waitlist size for a given season or squad based on coaching resources, field capacity, or safety considerations. Any exception to the **30-player** maximum or **5-player** waitlist must be approved by a majority vote of the Board and must remain consistent with TVYFL roster rules.

Section 4.5.3 – Cheer Squads

Cheer squads will be organized by age and/or alignment with football squads as determined by the Cheer Director and Board, in compliance with TVYFL rules and safety standards.

Section 4.6 – Player Evaluation, Returning Players, and Registration

Section 4.6.1 – Purpose

Any evaluation process used by the RIPON CHIEFS is intended solely to:

- Ensure player safety and appropriate placement,
- Support competitive balance within our single-team structure at each level, and
- Honor returning players and athletes moving up from within the program.

Evaluations may not be used to discriminate unlawfully or to exclude eligible athletes without a legitimate safety or roster-capacity reason.

Section 4.6.2 – Off-Season Evaluations

During the **off-season**, the RIPON CHIEFS may hold voluntary evaluation sessions to assess fundamental skills, effort, attitude, and coachability; identify athletes ready to move up to the next level; and provide coaches with information for the upcoming season's install and depth charts. Participation in evaluations does **not** guarantee team placement, starting positions, or playing time.

Section 4.6.3 – Returning Players and Internal Move-Ups

Subject to TVYFL eligibility rules and roster caps, **returning players in good standing** from the prior season will be given priority consideration for roster spots. Athletes moving up from a younger RIPON CHIEFS squad

(for example, from Junior Novice to Novice) are prioritized ahead of brand-new external players, provided they are in good standing and meet safety/eligibility requirements. Returning status does **not** guarantee placement if roster caps, safety concerns, or league rules prevent it.

Section 4.6.4 – Registration and Roster Decisions

The RIPON CHIEFS will announce **public registration dates** each year. Registration for each football level will remain open until either:

- (a) the roster reaches **thirty (30) active players** and the official waitlist reaches **five (5) players, or**
- (b) a **registration deadline** set by the Board passes.

If the number of registered and eligible players exceeds 30 for a level, additional players (up to 5) will be placed on that level's official waitlist in the order they complete registration requirements (forms, payments, etc.). As spots open prior to league certification deadlines, players will be moved from the waitlist to the active roster in waitlist order. Families whose athletes cannot be placed on the active roster or official waitlist because both are full will be notified and refunded according to Board policy.

Article 5.0 – Board of Directors

Section 5.1 – Composition, Terms, and Elections

The business and affairs of the corporation shall be conducted by a Board of Directors consisting of up to **thirteen (13) directors**, including officers and directors listed in this Article.

Board terms are **one (1) year**, running from **January 1 through December 31**, and are renewable annually for members who remain in good standing. Nominations for Board positions shall occur in **October**, with elections and renewals held in **November**. Role changes (for example, moving from Equipment Director to Treasurer) require a Board vote and follow the same election procedures.

Section 5.2 – Executive Board and No-Couples Rule

The **Executive Board** consists of the **President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer**. No two individuals who are spouses, domestic partners, or in an equivalent intimate relationship may serve simultaneously on the Executive Board. They may serve on the Board in non-executive roles as allowed by Board vote.

Section 5.3 – Resignation and Removal

A Board member may resign at any time by providing written or electronic notice to the President and Secretary. A Board member may be removed for cause—including but not limited to violation of the Code of Conduct, unsportsmanlike behavior, illegal activity, chronic non-attendance, or failure to perform duties—by a **three-fourths (3/4)** vote of a quorum of the Board, which must include at least **three (3) officers**, including the President or Vice President.

Section 5.4 – Vacancies

Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by a **majority vote** of the remaining Board members. Newly appointed directors become voting members after attending **two (2)** Board meetings.

Section 5.5 – Eligibility and Experience Requirements

The President should have at least **two (2) years** of prior experience with the RIPON CHIEFS program (as a Board member, coach, or volunteer). The Vice President should have at least **one (1) year** of prior experience. These requirements may be waived by a majority vote of the Board if no qualified candidates are available or in the best interest of the organization. All Board members must remain in good standing, including adherence to the Code of Conduct and attendance expectations.

Section 5.6 – Meetings and Procedures

The Board shall meet at least **once per month from January through November**. Special meetings may be called by the President, another officer, or any combination of **seven (7)** Board members including at least **two (2)** officers.

At least **forty-eight (48) hours'** notice of a special meeting shall be given, including the time, location, scope, purpose, and agenda. No business outside the stated scope shall be conducted. Officers may hold separate planning meetings in **January** (budget) and **February/March** (bylaws and policy reviews). Unless otherwise specified, meetings will be conducted in accordance with **Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition)** as a guideline. Meeting minutes will be recorded by the Secretary (or designee) and distributed to the Board in a timely manner.

Section 5.7 – Quorum and Voting

A **quorum** for conducting official business consists of at least **seven (7) Board members**, including at least **two (2) officers**, one of whom must be the President or Vice President. Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, decisions require a **simple majority** of those present and voting.

Section 5.8 – Fiduciary Duties and Financial Oversight

The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to approve **annual budgets** and major expenditures, ensure accurate financial reporting, and regularly review financial statements. Dual signatures on checks and disbursements should be used where practical. The Treasurer shall provide periodic financial reports for Board review.

Section 5.9 – Attendance Expectations for Board Members

Board members are expected to attend monthly meetings and key events (registrations, equipment handouts, home games, fundraisers). **Excessive unexcused absences** (for example, **three consecutive missed meetings** without notice) may result in removal from the Board and ineligibility for renewal the following season.

Section 5.10 – Code of Conduct and Good Standing

All Board members must sign and abide by the **Code of Conduct** each season. Violations may result in warnings, suspension, or removal from the Board and may affect eligibility to coach or volunteer.

Section 5.11 – Transparency

The Board will maintain and, upon reasonable request, make available financial records, meeting minutes, and major decisions, with appropriate privacy protections. At least **once per year**, the Board will provide a summary of organizational activities and finances to the membership.

Section 5.12 – Proxy Voting and Event Participation

For routine business (not including elections, removals, or bylaw amendments), **proxy votes** may be submitted electronically when a member cannot attend a meeting, provided the proxy clearly states the motion and the member's vote and is received before the vote.

Board members are expected to support key events. Failure to participate in these events without notice on **three (3) occasions** may result in removal from the Board and ineligibility for renewal.

Section 5.13 – Background Checks

All Board members, coaches, assistant coaches, and designated volunteers must complete league-approved **background checks at least every two (2) years** or as otherwise required by TVYFL policy. Individuals who fail background screening may not hold Board, coaching, or direct-contact volunteer positions.

Article 6.0 – Officers

Section 6.1 – Executive Officers

President

- Presides over Board and officer meetings.
- Serves as primary liaison to TVYFL, schools, and community partners.
- Oversees day-to-day operations and ensures enforcement of bylaws and policies.
- Has authority, with Board approval where required, to sign contracts and commitments on behalf of the RIPON CHIEFS.

Vice President

- Assists the President and acts in the President's place when needed.
- Oversees specific committees or projects as delegated.
- Helps coordinate cross-functional efforts such as game-day operations and volunteer coordination.

Secretary

- Records minutes for all Board meetings.
- Maintains official records, bylaws, and policy documents.
- Handles organizational correspondence and maintains Board contact lists.
- Prepares and distributes Board agendas and minutes in a timely manner.

Treasurer

- Manages all financial transactions, banking, and accounting.
- Prepares and presents financial reports to the Board.
- Ensures that dual signatures are used as required and that all disbursements are properly documented.
- Coordinates any required financial filings related to non-profit status and taxes.

Section 6.2 – Additional Officers and Directors

Additional positions may include, but are not limited to: **Athletic Director, Cheer Director, Equipment Director, Parent Liaison, Media Director, Merchandise Director, Events/Fundraising Director, Concessions Director, and At-Large Directors**. Specific duties for each position will be defined by Board policy and may be updated as needed.

Article 7.0 – Coaching Staff

Section 7.1 – Selection and Approval

Head Coaches are selected by the Board following an application and interview process. Assistant coaches are recommended by the Head Coach and must be approved by the Board or its designee. All coaches must complete required background checks and league-mandated training or certifications.

Section 7.2 – General Duties

Coaches are responsible for:

- Teaching proper fundamentals and safe techniques.
- Modeling sportsmanship and adherence to the Code of Conduct.
- Communicating clearly with players and parents regarding expectations, schedules, and team rules.
- Ensuring compliance with TVYFL play-count rules and the RIPON CHIEFS' minimum play policies.

Section 7.3 – Conduct Standards

Coaches shall avoid being alone in an unsupervised one-on-one situation with a child whenever reasonably avoidable; refrain from unsportsmanlike conduct, harassment, abusive language, or any form of discrimination; not use tobacco products, alcohol, or illegal drugs in the presence of children or while participating in official team or squad events; and adhere to all safety rules, promptly reporting injuries or serious concerns to the Athletic Director and Board.

Section 7.4 – Reporting Requirements

Any Board member, coach, or assistant must promptly report suspected abuse or misconduct, serious safety incidents, or violations of these bylaws or the Code of Conduct that jeopardize the health or well-being of a player or cheerleader.

Article 8.0 – Bylaws: Review and Amendments

Section 8.1 – Annual Review

The Officers shall review these bylaws **annually**, typically during the **February** meeting, to ensure alignment with laws and TVYFL league rules. Proposed changes will be shared with the full Board and considered at the **March** officers meeting. Bylaw changes require a **three-fourths (3/4) majority vote** of the Officers present.

Section 8.2 – Frequency of Amendments

Bylaws will ordinarily be amended **once per year** during the March officers meeting. In emergencies involving player safety or legal/league compliance, amendments may be considered sooner by the Officers and Board.

Article 9.0 – Summary of Updates from 2023 Bylaws

The **2026 bylaws** incorporate several changes from the original RIPON CHIEFS bylaws adopted in **2023**. This section is provided as a quick reference only; if there is any conflict between this summary and the body of the bylaws, the main Articles and Attachments control.

- Added a **Mission Statement** section to the front of the bylaws so that the governing document clearly reflects the program’s values and goals.
- Clarified organizational language to state that RIPON CHIEFS are an incorporated and insured youth sports organization serving the Ripon community and Ripon Unified School District, with procedures for accepting out-of-area players subject to Board and TVYFL approval.
- Introduced explicit football roster caps of **30 active players per squad**, with up to **5 additional players** on an official waitlist, and clarified how waitlists are managed.

Updated the age cut-off date reference to August 1 (subject to TVYFL annual rules) to better align participants by school-year cohort and improve age equity and safety.

- Created a new section on player evaluations, returning players, and internal move-ups to prioritize athletes already in the program while maintaining safety and roster-cap compliance.
- Updated Board of Directors terms from rolling three-year terms to **one-year renewable terms** to support annual engagement, accountability, and clearer expectations for service.
- Added a **“no-couples” rule** for the Executive Board so that spouses or equivalent partners cannot serve together as President, Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer at the same time.
- Clarified expectations for Board attendance at meetings and key events, including the impact of chronic absences on eligibility for renewal, and specified when electronic proxy votes may be used for routine business.
- Strengthened language regarding fiduciary duties, financial oversight, transparency, and background checks for Board members, coaches, and key volunteers.
- Consolidated and simplified officer and director role descriptions while preserving the core responsibilities from the previous bylaws.
- Reorganized the coaching staff article to emphasize selection, duties, conduct standards, and mandatory reporting obligations in line with TVYFL expectations.
- Removed the unused **Allstars** article from the prior bylaws; all All-Star guidance is now handled through league and program documents rather than the bylaws themselves.

- Added **Attachment 4 – 2026 Practice & Game-Week Attendance Policy** to centralize attendance expectations and game-eligibility rules for players and families.
 - Added Attachment 5 – Registration Payment & Volunteer Hours Deposit Policies, including full-payment requirements at registration, waitlist handling, returned-check procedures, and the volunteer hours requirement with check deposits (8 hours = 4 checks; 10 hours = 5 checks). The attachment also clarifies that serving a volunteer shift does not waive standard game entry fees.
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Attachment 1 – Participation Handbook

The Participation Handbook provides detailed information on welcome and mission, program philosophy and objectives, player, parent, and volunteer expectations, practice and game schedules, attendance expectations, safety guidelines, equipment policies, and program FAQs. The Handbook is incorporated by reference into these bylaws and may be updated by the Board as needed.

Attachment 2 – Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct outlines expectations and standards for coaches, players, parents, and Board members; prohibited behaviors; and consequences for violations. All participants, parents/guardians, coaches, and Board members must sign and follow the Code of Conduct each season.

Attachment 3 – Hold Harmless Agreement

The Hold Harmless Agreement includes acknowledgment of the inherent risks in tackle football and cheer, transportation-related liability release provisions, and agreements to abide by program rules and safety directives. Parents/guardians must sign this agreement as part of the registration packet.

Attachment 4 – 2026 Practice & Game-Week Attendance Policy

A. General

Ripon Chiefs practices are different each week, and the weekly install changes with each opponent. New skills are learned, problem areas are corrected, and new plays and stunts are taught. A player who misses practice is at a competitive and safety disadvantage.

B. Attendance Standard

Players are expected to attend **all scheduled practices** in a game week. A typical game week consists of:

- **Four-day practice week: 8 hours** of practice.
- **Three-day practice week: 6 hours** of practice.

C. Illness and Doctor's Notes

If a player misses practice due to illness, a **doctor's note** is required for that absence to be considered **excused**.

D. Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

Excused absences include:

- Illness with a doctor's note.
- School-related academic events or mandatory school functions.
- Church/religious obligations.
- Family emergencies, as determined by the Board.
- **Pre-arranged absences approved in advance by the Head Coach.**

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to: skipping practice without notifying the Head Coach; missing practice for non-essential activities (social events, non-school sports conflicts, etc.); and repeated tardiness or leaving early without prior approval. Any absence not clearly falling into the excused categories is considered **unexcused** unless the Board, as a whole, determines otherwise.

E. Game-Week Eligibility Rules

Per game week:

- **One (1) unexcused practice absence** makes the player **ineligible to participate** in that week's game.
- **Two (2) excused practice absences** in the same week (even with no unexcused absences) make the player **ineligible to participate** in that week's game.
- **League minimums still apply:** TVYFL minimum practice requirements must always be met. Failure to meet league minimums means the player may not participate in that week's game, regardless of the excused/unexcused breakdown above.

F. Equipment and Participation

To be counted as **present**, the player must arrive **on time**, be **fully dressed in required equipment**, and **participate fully** in practice unless restricted by a doctor or coach. Refusing to participate or consistently sitting out without medical justification may be treated as a partial or full **unexcused absence**.

G. Acknowledgment

This policy will be included in the Participation Handbook and acknowledged by parents and players at the start of the season.

Attachment 5 – Registration Payment & Volunteer Hours Deposit Policies

1. Registration Payment Policy

Full Payment Due at Registration.

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

No Post-Dated Checks.

Post-dated checks will **not** be accepted under any circumstances.

Waitlist Placement.

If full payment is not available at the time of registration, the player will be placed on a **waitlist** until payment is received in full.

Returned (Bounced) Checks.

If a registration check is returned for insufficient funds, a new form of payment must be submitted within **72 hours**. Failure to do so may result in the player being removed from the **active roster** until payment is resolved.

2. Volunteer Hours Deposit Policy

Volunteer Hours Requirement.

Each family is required to complete the designated volunteer hours for the season.

- Families with one player must complete 8 volunteer hours.
- Families with two or more players must complete 10 volunteer hours.

Volunteer Deposit Checks.

To ensure compliance, the following checks are required at the start of the season:

- 8 volunteer hours: Four (4) checks in the amount of \$200 each
- 10 volunteer hours: Five (5) checks in the amount of \$200 each

Return/Destruction of Checks.

Checks will be returned or shredded on the day the volunteer shift is completed.

Failure to Report.

Failure to report for a scheduled volunteer shift will result in the corresponding check being cashed within 72 hours.

Returned (Bounced) Checks.

If any volunteer deposit check is returned for insufficient funds, the family must submit a new form of payment within 72 hours. Failure to do so may result in the player being ineligible to participate until payment is resolved.

Game Entry Fees for Volunteers.

Serving a volunteer shift does not waive standard gate admission. Volunteers are still required to pay for game entry, even when working a shift.
