



Visalia football programs build link

Youth league divides into four, creating feeder teams for the city's high schools.

By Nick Giannandrea / The Bee
03/28/08 07:59:49

VISALIA -- Football coaches in Visalia have long looked with a touch of envy toward Clovis Unified, where middle school teams use the same playbooks as the high schools they feed into.

Visalia finally has a feeder program of its own.

After years of little cooperation between Visalia's four public high school programs and its oldest youth football league, the two have joined forces.

Visalia Youth Tackle Football has expanded to four groups of teams -- bantam (7- to 8-year-olds), pee wee (8-10), juniors (10-12) and seniors (12-14) -- that separate its players by the same boundaries used by the high schools. And the teams are running the playbooks of the high schools in their district.

"We basically feel in order to develop the high school programs, we needed to get involved, similar to what Clovis does," said Visalia Youth Tackle Football board member Marcello Garcia, who coaches the senior Pioneers. "We want to run the high school programs. It will help the kids and it will help the high schools."

Visalia's four public school coaches -- El Diamante's Mark Rogers, Golden West's Mark Salazar, Mt. Whitney's Robert Dougherty and Redwood's John Yavasile -- now sit on the board of Visalia Youth Tackle Football.

Their input will go into league decisions, and their playbooks will be absorbed by players they will eventually coach.

"They will be learning our system early," Dougherty said. "We think it's a real big step in the right direction. It's a big advantage for kids to play in our system as they are coming up."

The high school coaches have already had clinics to teach the youth coaches the high school's offensive and defensive plays, and its techniques. The high school coaches also will hold camps for the youth players.

"It's a big undertaking, but we think it's going to pay off for us down the road," Dougherty said. "It's no secret why Woodlake was so good years back. It's because they were running the wing-T from Pop Warner up."

Sign-ups

Visalia Youth Tackle Football is holding sign-ups from 6-8 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays through April 17.

Details: www.visaliayouthfootball.net or (559) 804-0110.

West Yosemite Youth Football League is taking sign-ups through May at various times and locations around Visalia.

Details: (559) 972-6867.

Search Archives, or Search News Web Search powered by **YAHOO!** SEARCH

News Sports Business Life Entertainment Calendar Blogs Opinion Obits Classifieds Cars Homes Jobs Shopping

Contact Us | Text Only | Site Map | RSS | Subscribe | Advertise

FresnoBee.com | ClovisIndependent.com | VidaEnElValle.com | SierraStar.com | CentralValley.com | FresnoFamous.com

© Copyright 2008 The Fresno Bee | [Help](#) | [Your Privacy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Child Protection](#)

