

**Bob Morgan Athletics**  
**13116 Tollway Drive**  
**Baton Rouge, LA 70816**  
**(225) 755-6638**  
**[www.bobmorganathletics.com](http://www.bobmorganathletics.com)**

## **Instructional Tackle Football: Sept. 10- Oct. 20**

**Bob Morgan Athletics** has taught team sports to children in the Baton Rouge area since 1985. Combining instruction and practice with weekly games, **BMA** uses athletics to develop each child socially, emotionally, and morally in a peer-group accepted physical activity. In this program, every child at every level learns and plays—all the time. For more information on **BMA** and its programs, call Bob Morgan at 755-6638 or check the website at [www.bobmorganathletics.com](http://www.bobmorganathletics.com) . Tackle football begins September 10; registration is now in progress.

**Equipment Information:** Each player needs a properly fitted helmet with chinstrap and mouthpiece (sold separately-- buy a spare), shoulder pads, pants and pads, and athletic shoes (turf shoes work well-- no metal cleats). Any color of helmet and pants is acceptable. Practice shirts and game shirts will be supplied.

**Proper Fit:** Properly fitted equipment is a major factor in keeping athletes safe. The coaches at our football program will verify that the equipment you bring is suitable for play, but you want to buy the right stuff the first time. Whether you are buying new or using older gear, be sure that every piece fits properly. The helmet, the shoulder pads, and the pants/pad combo will prevent most injuries if properly fitted.

Ideally, sporting goods stores that sell equipment can help you fit it, but the clerk may not be any more familiar with the gear than the average parent. So, be an active participant when you shop-- don't simply accept equipment. Verify the return policy in case something doesn't fit. Keep receipts.

**Helmet:** There are a variety of helmet styles on the market. Some can be custom-fitted by changing some or all of the inside pads. Others have adjustable air bladders. Fitting charts are only a starting point-- most are specific to a particular brand or model. Chin straps usually come with the helmet; be sure that the strap adjusts to fit the athlete.

Regardless of the brand, there are certain indicators that a helmet fits properly.

- First try the helmet on without the jaw pads. Make sure that it can't be pulled down over the eyes. Crown should fit well even without jaw pads in place.
- Add jaw pads and chin strap; adjust chin strap to child. Make sure that helmet can be put on and taken off. Place the pointer fingers in the holes by the ears, and place the thumbs under the jaw pads. Pull the helmet open and make sure that it can be removed and replaced. Younger players may need help "opening" a new helmet.
- The eyebrows should be about one inch below the front edge of the helmet. If the helmet sits higher or lower, it needs to be adjusted; you might need a different size. The helmet should not slip forward or backward on head when all pads are in place.
- The helmet should fit snugly on the head; when you try to rotate it, it should move only if the head moves.
- If player is between sizes, fit for snugness. Try to fit the smaller shell rather than going with a helmet that is too big.
- When helmet is removed, there should be no red marks or other signs of chafing. You should not need Vaseline or other lubricants to get helmet on and off.

***If you are using a "pre-owned" helmet, check these points as well:***

- Examine closely for cracks. Many cracks are caused by over-tightening of screws. Don't use a helmet with a cracked shell.
- Examine all mounting rivets, screws, snaps for breakage or looseness or rust damage. Repair as needed.
- Check pads closely. Sweat can cause stiffness and corrosion. Repair or replace damaged pads.

***Some don'ts:***

- Once fitted, the helmet should not be used as a seat. Sitting on it can affect the fit.
- Follow directions to learn proper technique. Butting, ramming, and spearing are illegal; they are also dangerous.

**Mouthpiece:** Boil a new mouthpiece in a flavored liquid for about 15 seconds; when it is soft (and somewhat cooled!), have athlete bite into it for fit. Attach the mouthpiece to the helmet-- it is essential equipment!

If a player wears braces, check with the orthodontist about a special mouthpiece.

**Shoulder Pads:** Shoulder pads are usually marked with appropriate weight of player (i.e., 60-85 pounds). Because body weight can be distributed in any

number of ways, try on shoulder pads to check fit. Pads should be fitted over a snug t-shirt. Lace all laces and hook all straps.

- Be sure that point of shoulder is covered by the inner flap of the pads. You can check that by raising the first flap that extends over the shoulder. The next layer of padding should cover the point of the shoulder by at least two inches.
- Have player move arms and turn body. Pads should not bounce around.
- Have player raise arms over head. Pads should not pinch the neck.

**Pants and pads:** Pants and pads are often sold separately. You may need some basic instruction in fitting pads into the various pockets and slots in the pants.

- Make sure that all pads are in place when checking fit on pants: two hip pads, two thigh pads, two knee pads, one tailbone pad.
- The pants should lace and belt securely. Waist should fit well. Pants should fit snugly, without any sagging.
- Make sure the knee pads actually cover the knee cap when the player is kneeling down. If pants are too short, knee pad will work up the leg and the knee will not be protected. For a very small child, you may need to tape the pants legs so that the knee pads do not fit around the ankles.
- Washing tip: Remove pads before washing. Some players see super-clean pants as a sign of not playing hard, so ask before you treat for stains! Do not use chlorine bleach on football pants, and do not put pants in the dryer. Bleach and heat will destroy the elasticity of the pants.

***Shoes:*** Buy turf shoes, not metal cleats.

***Practical Suggestion:*** Put a box of large garbage bags in the trunk of your car. On a muddy, wet day, have the player step in to the bag, pull it up to his or her armpits, and sit carefully in the car. Saves a lot of cleaning of car seats and floors!



Thanks to our sponsor Academy Sports for supporting kids and kids' athletics!