

# Press Release

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## For Immediate Release

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**Shrewsbury, Mass.** – Shrewsbury American Youth Football & Cheer Organization (SAYFCO) proudly announces its decision to move to the All-American Division of American Youth Football. The All-American Division is a grade-based football program, which means that participants in the same grade and of similar age will play together. The main difference of the All-American Division from the National Division (in which the Shrewsbury Patriots played last season) is that a child's weight no longer will factor into the decision regarding his/her team placement. The SAYFCO General Association Committee (GAC) reached its decision at its March meeting. The GAC believes that the All-American Division of AYF will provide consistency and continuity for the players and teams through the 8th grade and into high school. Following the vote, SAYFCO board members and coaches have been busy making calls to registered participants to share the news prior to a public announcement. The response to a grade-based approach has been overwhelmingly favorable.

“There has been a lot of support for a grade-based program because it makes common sense,” said Scott Ladner, President of SAYFCO, “and the children within our organization seem excited at the prospect of playing with their peers. Under the National Division, some heavier children were prevented from playing in their own age group due to weight restrictions imposed. On the flip side, children who qualified as ‘older/lighter’ were often placed on squads with younger kids.”

In making its decision, the SAYFCO GAC reviewed an often-cited research study conducted by the Mayo Clinic, which concluded that age is a greater factor in football injuries than weight. The conclusions from that study are supported by the lower insurance rates for grade-based football programs relative to programs that have older/lighter players playing with and against younger children. “In the end, we decided that keeping peers together in a grade-based program was the best direction for the youth in our organization,” stated Ladner.

As part of the All-American Division, the Shrewsbury Patriots will offer football teams at the following levels: Tiny Mite (Kindergarten & First Grade), Mitey Mite (Second & Third Grades), Fourth Grade, Fifth Grade, Sixth Grade, Seventh Grade and Eighth Grade.

“We are thrilled about the decision and look forward to joining other Central Mass organizations that made similar decisions last season,” added Ladner. As a member of the All-American Division, the Patriots may have the opportunity to face Milford, Shrewsbury’s Thanksgiving Day rival. “Milford could not be more excited now that Shrewsbury will be joining the All-American Division,” stated Anthony Fallon, President of Milford Youth Football and Cheer. “Milford had a great year playing in the grade-based program last year. The kids have thrived playing with their peers and we are now able to develop into a team before moving onto high school. We could not imagine going back to play in the National Division again.”

Other Central Mass AYF programs have also announced their decisions to join the All-American Division for the 2010 season, including Clinton, Lunenburg, and Worcester. In addition, Framingham and Natick of the Bay State Conference announced their decisions to move to the grade-based program. “The grade-based approach to team formation has taken a strong foothold in the Northeast and seems to be part of a larger national trend. With the positive feedback we have received from teams participating in the All-American Division last year as well as from returning players and new registrants, we are very excited for the 2010 season. For anyone who would like to learn more, SAYFCO will be hosting an Informational/Registration Night in April,” concluded Ladner.

The Shrewsbury Patriots will be hosting an Informational/Registration Event at Floral Street School on Tuesday, April 13<sup>th</sup> from 7-9pm

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**Shrewsbury American Youth Football & Cheer Organization (SAYFCO)** is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization operated by volunteers. A proud member of Central Mass Youth Football & Cheer Conference of American Youth Football, SAYFCO’s mission is to provide an equal opportunity for all children to participate in a safe, competitively-balanced and organized setting. Founded in 2009, SAYFCO offers football and cheer programs to Shrewsbury boys and girls, ages 5 through 14. In its inaugural season, the Shrewsbury Patriots grew to serve over 230 Shrewsbury youth, making it one of the largest youth football & cheer organizations in Central Mass. For more information about the program, visit the SAYFCO’s web site ([www.SAYFCO.org](http://www.SAYFCO.org)).