This letter is addressed to all of our Conestoga Generals and Radnor Young Raiders families. As many of you may have heard there has been a lot of talk around the possibility of our two organizations uniting to create one entity. After much discussion and teamwork between the boards of the Young Raiders and the Generals it is with great excitement that we would like to officially announce our merger which will come into effect on December 1!

We would like to use this letter to go through a few of the points used to frame out our decision while also acknowledging that there will be many questions and even possibly a few concerns from our families that will be addressed over time. First and foremost, “why are we merging?” The answer is simple…we need to come together in order to provide the best experience and opportunities for our kids. Our individual organizations both have quality players and coaches and by bringing that talent together (both in football and cheer) we can create a more dynamic environment and become much more competitive together than we would ever be apart.

Over the past 4 months our discussions have orbited around 3 key factors that we needed to define in order to create this better experience for our kids. These factors boil down to Safety, Competitiveness and Culture. We will address each these points individually:

1. **Safety** – Football is a contact sport and while Cheer may not have players tackling each other, it is still in many ways a contact sport and injuries are very real. The simple fact is that Conestoga and Radnor are two of the smallest programs in Bux-Mont Pop Warner and as smaller programs we do not have the ability to build our tackle and cheer rosters by size, age, experience and ability. Currently, we have to construct teams based on age and size only which means, more often than not, we have newer, less experienced players going against seasoned teams throughout Bux-Mont. In football especially, this can lead to safety issues for novice players who are going against more aggressive and experienced players. While we have looked at leagues outside of Pop Warner, such as Bert Bell, we still believe that Pop Warner maintains the best rules and guidelines for our organization. Now with the combined numbers of Conestoga and Radnor, we will be able to better fit players onto teams that meet their experience level and not just slot them in based on age and size.
2. **Competitiveness** – While many in the sports world believe that winning is everything, we believe the most important thing is the ability to compete. Wins and losses are the result of the ability to compete and as individual organizations, our football teams specifically, have not been able to compete. This is frustrating to families, coaches and, most importantly, to the players. Bux Mont and Pop Warner divide each age group/weight class into conferences in an attempt to have as many competitive games as possible. This actually works well for those organizations that can field different division teams at each weight class (ie: JPW Div 1, Div 2, Div 3, Div 4) because you can build each team based on ability. For example, Lenape Valley had four JPW teams this year which allowed them to build more complete, competitive teams at each level. This creates an environment that allows for players to get better against more equal competition both in practice and in games which in turn creates more fun for them throughout the season.
3. **Culture** - Conestoga and Radnor are a natural fit because many of our kids play on other sports teams together. We also share the common goal of teaching the lessons inherent to cheer and football of teamwork, discipline, accountability and responsibility. These lessons are building blocks for our children that will be used throughout their lives in sports, school, business and even parenting. By doing this in a safe and fun environment, kids will remember these lessons for years as we are sure many of you who played youth sports remember things your coaches told you. As we stated above, the emphasis is creating teams and squads that have the ability to compete. We do not define ourselves by the number of “championships” we have and because of that we won’t bend rules or ethics to achieve the almighty win. What we will do is create a culture of competing so that when our teams take the field or squads take the floor, they know that we are here to compete. If we are successful doing that, the wins and losses will take care of themselves.

Now, there are going to be many questions that need to be answered and in due time we will be able to answer them all. In the short term, here are some important takeaways:

1. Our new organization will still act as feeder systems into Radnor and Conestoga High Schools. Both schools are in total support of this merger and are being updated as new details are finalized. There are many precedents for us to model after such as Lenape Valley and Downingtown whose combined youth sports feed into multiple high schools.
2. The internal flag program that has been run through Conestoga will continue being run in-house under the new organization and will be organized by location and school as we have done in the past. Practice times and fields will remain the same.
3. The Tiny-Mite cheer squads will also be organized by school and location.
4. All tackle and competitive cheer squads will be blended together and individuals will be placed on teams that most accurately fit their age, size, experience and skill set.
5. For both tackle and competitive cheer squads, practice times will be split on a pre-arranged schedule between the current fields of Radnor and Conestoga.
6. Home tackle games will be played at both Radnor and Conestoga facilities.
7. All head coaches for tackle, cheer and flag will be determined by the Head Coach Selection Committee or the “HCSC.” This committee will be comprised of 4 members with two being from Radnor and two from Conestoga.
8. *There will be a meeting for Radnor parents to discuss the merger on Sunday, November 12 at 5:00 at the Radnor Township building. There will also be a meeting for Conestoga parents at the Tredyffrin Township building on Sunday, November 12 at 7:00.*

The leadership structure of the organization consists of an Executive Board (comprised of 7 voting members) and a general non-voting board consisting of such vital positions such as Directors of Cheer, Flag and Tackle. Those that serve on the Executive Board *cannot* be coaches at any level in the organization. This is to ensure they have the time and focus needed to manage our new organization but this restriction does not apply to the other general board positions.

The new executive board is comprised of 3 Conestoga Board members and 3 Radnor Board members. The seventh board member is the President who does not vote on issues in front of the board other than to break a tie. The new Executive Board has been nominated and voted on unanimously by both of the current Radnor and Conestoga board and they are:

President – Ryan Gray

VP Operations – Cheri Griffiths

VP of Administration – Kristin Nevins

Secretary – Melissa Morgan

Treasurer – Henry Faragalli

League Rep – Adam Mackey

Equipment – Tim Brown

We are very lucky to have these seven individuals who are willing to work together to create this new organization and they will be looking to our communities for your support as well.

Which leads nicely to this one, last glaring detail that we have not determined yet… what is the name of our new organization? It was decided that this is a great opportunity to reach out into the community and bring everyone into the decision process. We will be sending everyone on the Radnor and Conestoga mailing lists a Survey Monkey where you can submit your ideas. This email should be going out on Monday, November 13th and will close on Friday, November 17th. The Executive Board will review all submissions and select their top 3 choices. Those three choices will be sent out via another Survey Monkey on Monday, November 20th and will close on Monday, November 27th (we are adding a little extra time due to Thanksgiving). The winning name will be announced on Thursday November 30th and the person who submitted the name will receive free registration for 2018 and $100 in new gear from the team store!

Please reach out to us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Ryan Gray Jason Wilder

President – Radnor Young Raiders President – Conestoga Generals