

Saint Louis Feeder League (SFL)
CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS
Revision March 2024

CONSTITUTION

Article I Name and Mission Statement

Section 1. This organization shall be known as the Saint Louis Feeder League (SFL)

Section 2. The mission of the Saint Louis Feeder League (SFL) is to grow the game of football in our public high schools through participation and player development at the youth level. All program officials, players, coaches, parents, and spectators will share a collective mission to develop young football players while showing respect to others through good sportsmanship.

Article II Membership and Leadership

Section 1. SFL member organizations may only have players on their roster that either will attend their appropriate high school or would attend if they did not go to a private school. To make an exemption to the boundary requirements, written permission must be given by the respective program administrator no later than August 1st. Players who attend school within a district, but do not reside in the district will have eligibility without obtaining permission from league officials. If a player is denied a waiver to participate in a program outside the player's school district the player's parent or legal guardian can appeal the waiver denial to the SFL.

Section 2. The SFL will be administered by a board consisting of a voting member from each program, a Commissioner, and a Secretary. No program may have more than one vote on any issue, and the Commissioner will only vote in the event of a tie. The Commissioner and Secretary will be elected in January of each year.

Section 3. The duties of the officers are:
Commissioner – Set agenda, call, and preside over all meetings, vote on tie breakers.
Secretary– Communicate records and official league business to all participating programs.

Section 4. The board's duties are to:
a. Establish guidelines and procedures.
b. Establish game schedules.
c. Hear and rule on protests.

Section 5. Four chairs will be established each year and will have the following duties

- a. *Verification Day Chair* - Verification Day will be the day that all participating programs will verify their players.

Duties: Work with scheduling chair to set verification day date before Labor Day, host verification day, organize the joint practices for all grade levels, organize the verification process for that day, collect all documents and organize for distribution to the programs, establish a process for no shows that allows those players to be verified before the first official game

- b. *Scheduling/Officials Chair*-

Duties:

- set the schedule for the league to include Verification Day before Labor Day
- establish a schedule that begins after Labor Day and ends before November 1st
- include a Depth Builder weekend in the middle of the season
- organize the four-team playoff and bowl games for the final 2 weekends of the season
- be the contact person for scheduling referees for all SFL games

- c. *Depth Builder Chair*- This jamboree weekend is for all second string and limited playing time players that need more opportunities to go against like competitors. This will not count as an official game and no teams will keep score. The Depth Builder Weekend should take place near the middle of the season.

Duties:

- Work with scheduling chair to set the depth builder weekend date,
- host depth builder weekend, organize jamboree for all grade levels
- create guidelines for the weekend to give to coaches
- work with official's chair and high school officials to create a program that gives high school students an opportunity to referee the jamborees

- d. *Compliance USA Football Chair*- The Compliance USA Football chair will be the main contact for all compliance issues and will be responsible for all USA Football matters

Duties:

- Establish the league with USA Football by creating and updating the SFL account
- verify that all programs have USA football Heads Up Certification by Verification Day
- attend meetings for USA football on league development
- gather and organize information on any compliance issues brought to the league
- work on establishing sportsmanship guidelines for all coaches, players, administrators, and spectators
- Collect all background checks from individual programs

Section 6. Withdrawal from the SFL

If a member wants to withdraw from SFL, then that association agrees to notify the SFL Board before January 1st of the upcoming season year. Failure to provide this notice will leave this member in poor standing with SFL and will negatively affect references and possible re-admittance to SFL in the future if so desired.

Article III Meetings

Section 1. Meetings will be conducted at the discretion of the board. There will be two types of meetings: administrative and formal. Administrative meetings will be held to discuss rule changes, scheduling, and other league activities and will include all voting members. Formal meetings will be used to discuss rule violations, unsportsmanlike conduct, forfeitures, suspensions, and terminations.

Section 2. Administrative meetings will be held once a month from January-August.

Formal meetings will be on an as needed basis

Section 3. All programs must have a program representative at each formal and administrative meeting

Section 4. Each program has a representative vote for all issues that apply to the grade level that the program is participating in

Article IV Participation

Section 1. Participation in the SFL is determined by the vote of the existing member organizations.

Section 2. All programs are required to field teams at the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels. Programs that do not have a 5th grade team must get board approval to participate in the SFL and establish a plan for recruiting more 5th grade players for the following season.

Section 3. All programs must participate in the USA heads up football program and have coaches certified by Verification Day

Section 4. All coaches must have background checks on file with their respective organization by Verification Day. Background checks through USA football are acceptable.

Article V Insurance

Section 1. Medical insurance coverage shall be the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians of the participants. The SFL, Commissioner, Secretary, and the participating SFL programs assume no liability for the medical expenses of the participants, players, coaches, officials, and/or spectators.

Section 2. All SFL programs are required to carry insurance that covers liability for their individual organizations.

Section 3. The SFL will carry liability insurance to cover the voting members and board. Insurance costs will be split evenly by all of the SFL member organizations.

Article VI Amendments

Section 1. Amendments must be submitted in writing and be voted on by members present. An amendment must be presented to the league president at least 2 weeks prior to an administrative meeting and placed on the official agenda prior to the meeting. An amendment must receive a simple majority to be passed.

BY LAWS

Article I Funding

Section 1. Each program will be responsible for collecting their own fees for purchases of equipment, insurance and any articles needed to host home games.

Section 2. The home team is responsible for payment of the officials and any home field fee that may occur. Teams will split official costs and field rentals for neutral site games.

Section 3. Each program is required to pay an annual fee for league liability insurance.

Article II Assets

Section 1. All home teams will have their own assets. There are no assets other than this document to be handled by the SFL.

Article III Terminations

Section 1. Players may be terminated or suspended by the programs as directed by the individual program board of directors

Section 2. Board members and coaches may also be terminated or suspended by the programs as directed by the individual program board of directors

Section 3. Major infractions may also be taken under advisement by the SFL board using a formal meeting. Programs may appeal the rulings within five days of the ruling. Intention of the appeal must be made within 24 hours

Section 4. All programs, after appeal is complete, must accept board findings, terminations and/or suspensions.

Article IV Player Eligibility

Section 1. Teams will be grouped by grade with the following age requirements, extrapolated from the MSHSAA rules:

- Jr Flag - On July 1, player must be age 10 or younger
- 5th Grade – On July 1, player must be age 11 or younger.
- 6th Grade – On July 1, player must be age 12 or younger.
- 7th Grade – On July 1, player must be age 13 or younger.
- 8th Grade – On July 1, player must be age 14 or younger.

Section 2. Player verification will take place on Verification Day using the following acceptable documentation.

- a. State ID
- b. Infinite Campus screenshot of a picture, address, and birth date. A birth certificate can be used as proof of age when a birth date is not pictured.

It is the responsibility of each individual program to inform participants of the needed documentation. All players unable to provide acceptable documentation must go through the exemption process to be eligible to participate in the SFL.

Section 3. Exemptions will be considered for players that can prove they will attend their respective program's high school and require a 100% board approved vote to be granted. All exemption documentation must be provided to the SFL board by the July meeting (7/13) for review and vote.

Section 4. Emphasis has been put on enforcement rather than verification based on convenience and with the understanding that the truth always comes out. The use of ineligible players will be taken very seriously by the SFL Board. If a team is found to be using an ineligible player, the head coach of that team will be automatically expelled from the SFL. Ineligible players are automatically expelled from participation in any SFL event for the remainder of the current season. The member organization will be subject to investigation and possible disciplinary actions, including expulsion, if the board finds there is just cause. Games in which an ineligible player participated will be forfeited. Due process will be followed, and all available evidence will be reviewed. Head coaches of respective programs will be notified.

Article V Specific Rules

Section 1. Unless otherwise provided within these rules, the NFHS rule book, complemented by the Missouri State High School Athletic Association (MSHSAA) Freshman game rules and regulations will apply to all League games.

Section 2. Exceptions to MSHSAA rules

- a) The jersey numbers do not restrict player positions or eligible receivers.
 - 8th grade only - ineligible players will wear orange tape on their helmet.
- b) Quarters are 8 minutes.
- c) The ready for play clock is 25 seconds, there is no 40 second clock.
- d) Mercy rule: Starts at a 25-point difference in the second half. There will be no kick offs when the mercy rule is in effect. Everything else is the same as high school.

- e) During the last two minutes of the half if a team is taking a knee, it is understood that they are running out the clock and will subsequently take a knee for the remaining downs in the series. Running a play thereafter will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- f) Overtime: same as high school except after both teams have had their series of downs and the score is still tied then the game is over and it ends in tie.

Section 3. 5th and 6th Grade Rule Modifications

a. 5th Grade Rule Modifications

- 1. Kickoff: No Kick Offs. The ball will be placed on the 40-yard line.
- 2. Punt: No punts: The ball will be placed 25 yards from the line of scrimmage. If the ball is between the defenses 25 and their goal line, then the ball will be placed at the half the distance point.
- 3. PAT: If kicked the ball is dead. The defense cannot rush.
- 4. Maximum of six (6) defensive players within 5 yards of the line of scrimmage. All other players must be 5 yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap. If the ball is at or inside the defense team's 5-yard line the rule does not apply. (Penalty) Live ball procedure penalty. The offended team has the option to take the results of the play or 5 yards from the previous spot and replay the down.
- 5. One coach on the field: the coach is responsible for getting the players lined up properly and ready to run a play. Once the quarterback starts the cadence the coaches must stop coaching. (Penalty) Live ball procedure penalty. The offended team has the option to take the results of the play or 5 yards from the previous spot and replay the down.

b. 6th Grade Kicking Rule Modifications

- 1. Punt: No rush on Kicker, Play goes live once the Kicker's foot strikes the ball.
- 2. PAT: Dead Play Kick
 - Offense: 2- point conversion, Snap, Hold, Kick. No Rush.
 - 1-point conversion, standard play from the 3-yard line.

Section 4. Quarter Limits- No player may play in more than four quarters on one calendar date. This excludes overtime.

Section 5. Forfeited Games: Forfeited games which are not played, or which are started and not completed will count as wins or losses (with a point differential of + 13 or -13)

Section 6. STANDARD PLAY & GAME TIMES-

- a) **5th thru 8th grades** – Regulation game is Four 8-minute quarters.
- b) **5th Quarter** – Will be played to allow players that have not played in the regulation 4 quarter game. The 5th quarter will consist of 10 offensive plays for each team starting from the 40-yard line, Jamboree Style. 7th and 8th grade teams must play a 5th quarter unless otherwise agreed to by both teams.

Section 7. GAME FIELD REQUIREMENTS-

- Game fields should be clearly lined, have yard markers, end zone markers, and goal post pads, if necessary

Section 8. FILM and VIDEO Games may be filmed, filming of opponent's practices is prohibited.

Section 9. PRACTICE & CAMPS Teams are allowed to hold two weeks (10 days) of summer football camps not to exceed 2 hours per day where attendance is mandatory. Summer football camps can be used as an acclimation period which would allow programs to gradually acclimate to pads. An unlimited number of optional team meetings, get-togethers, conditioning practices and touch or flag games in the off season are permitted provided that players are not in pads or helmets. Tackle games will start the first weekend after Labor Day. The league will follow the mandatory dead week period (first partial week in August) and begin on the first full week in August using the MSHSAA dates. Official practices can begin after the August dead period. All players must have a 3-day acclimation period before they are allowed to practice in full pads.

Section 10. FOOTBALL SIZES & REGULATIONS-

Each program will supply their own game balls. Game balls shall be:

- 5th Grade Junior Size or Pee Wee
- 6th Grade Junior Size or larger
- 7th Grade Youth Size or larger
- 8th Grade Youth Size or larger

Official league footballs shall be the following Nike, Rawlings, Wilson, and Under Armor.

Section 11. PLAYER EQUIPMENT-

- All safety equipment required by MSHSAA must be always worn during games and practices. No tinted visors allowed. Mandatory equipment will consist of football pants with pads, shoulder pads, a helmet with face bar guards, (mask), NOSCE required, numbered jersey front and back and mouthpiece.

Section 12. PAT Point after Touchdown

- Kicks are worth 2 points on point after touchdowns
- A non-kicking play from scrimmage is worth 1 point. The 25 second clock will be enforced on this play.

Section 13. Sidelines from the 25 to 25-yard lines must be restricted to coaches and team officials only. All coaches must wear an official coach's shirt issued to them by their member organization and must be USA heads up certified. Other team officials should be identified to the referees before the start of the game. Varsity players in their jerseys are allowed to help coach. Failure to observe this rule will result in a sideline warning followed by a 15-yard penalty for subsequent infractions.

Section 14. EJECTIONS - Any player or coach ejected from a game will be automatically suspended from their team's next scheduled game. The player may attend the game but will not be allowed to dress out. The coach may attend but will not be allowed on the sideline. Any player ejected from a game shall be reported to the head coach by the referee, and any ejected player or coach shall not remain on the sidelines for the remainder of the game. Any player or coach ejected should be reported to the home team coordinator by the referees, and subsequently to the SFL by that coordinator. A failure to properly report the ejection does not nullify the suspension for the next game.

Section 15. JR FLAG- all Jr flag games will follow the [NFL FLAG RULES](#) High school players from the host team will officiate the games.

Article VI Host Sites

Section 1. COORDINATORS-The home team's coordinator, or an appointed alternate, will be on-site during all home games, and will identify themselves to the referees. That coordinator is SFL's representative and has the final say regarding rule interpretations for that day. The referees will follow the decision of the coordinator in charge. There is no scheduled rainout date. In the event of a rainout, coordinators should work together to make up games that are missed due to weather

Section 2. TRAINERS- All host sites will provide a trainer for all games. The home team coordinator will be responsible for securing trainers for all games.

Section 3. Chain Gang- The home team is to provide a chain gang. The chains will be on the home sideline.

Article VII Post Season

Section 1. The post season will consist of the top 4 teams at each grade in a playoff format of 1 vs 4 and 2 vs 3 with the winners playing the next week for a championship game. Beyond that, Bowl Games will be played wherein team 5 will play team 6, 7 vs 8 and so on for the remaining teams. The top four will consist of the conference winners and the next two teams based on tie-breaker formula.

Section 2. Tie Breaker Procedure

- 1) Overall Record. Best % of wins: 7-1 (88%) is better than 6-1 (86%) or 4-3 (57%) is better than 4-4 (50%).
- 2) Head-to-head record. Only works when comparing two teams.
- 3) Record against common opponents
- 4) Scoring system against common opponents
- 5) Total Scoring system
- 6) Playoff Game. Only applies when there are two teams and only to determine a place in the playoffs. Example: two first place teams 7-0 in the same division.
- 7) Coin toss (three teams). Three coins, odd man out. The remaining two teams will play a game to determine a place in the playoffs, same as (6).

If three or more teams are tied and one team has lost to both of the other two, that team is automatically removed from consideration. Or, if one team has beaten both the other teams then that team makes it in, and the remaining two teams will go back to (2) Head-to-Head record and proceed through the Tie Breaker Procedure.

- When three or more teams are tied, and no team is eliminated due to the above (*) you must determine who the top seeded team is by using the Tie Breaker Procedure which in this case starts at (3) Record against common opponents. After the top team is determined then take the remaining two teams and go back to (2) Head-to-Head record and proceed through the Tie Breaker Procedure.

Article VIII Sportsmanship

Section 1.

The intent of this rule is to prohibit teams from running up the score and to encourage coaches to utilize other less skilled players on their team when they are playing against an inferior opponent. NO KILL RULE IN EFFECT. If at any time, there is a 25-point differential the winning team is encouraged to utilize second or third string players to prevent running up the score.

Section 2. During the MERCY RULE:

A Mercy Rule shall be enforced. The home scoreboard shall not reflect the true score beyond the 25-point differential to show respect and good sportsmanship. The actual score will be submitted to the league even though it is not reflected on the scoreboard. After the second half a RUNNING CLOCK will begin once a team reaches a 25-point differential. NO MORE KICKOFFS and the ball is placed on the 40-yard line.