

# 4-RIVERS YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS

Last Revised 3-4-21

## CONSTITUTION

### Article I Name and Mission Statement

- Section 1.** This organization will be known as Four Rivers Youth Football League (4-Rivers YFL)
- Section 2.** The mission of 4-Rivers YFL is to teach and develop the physical skills and knowledge necessary to play the game of football, to develop social skills which promote acceptable standards of behavior and positive relationships with others, and to develop attitudes and appreciations that will encourage participation in and enjoyment of football and team sports in the future.

### Article II Membership and Leadership

- Section 1.** Participation in the 4-Rivers YFL will include all eligible children in grades 3-8 who live within the boundaries established by their communities. Official boundaries are those of the public school district. Boundaries do not apply to districts not having a 4-Rivers YFL entry. To make an exception to the boundary requirements written permission must be given by July 1<sup>st</sup> by the town administrator of the resident player to participate in a program not in his school district. Players who attend school within a district, but do not reside in the district will have eligibility within both districts 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 Executive Board of the Four Rivers YFL.
- Section 2.** All towns involved may develop their own Constitution and By Laws. They may also develop a voting quorum and a Board of Directors. They must however follow the rules listed in this document for all 4-Rivers YFL events.
- Section 3.** The 4-Rivers YFL will be administered by a board consisting of a voting member from each town and an executive board consisting of a President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer. All officers are voting members and serve a one year term. No town may have more than one vote on any issue.
- Section 4.** The duties of the officers are:
- President – Set agenda, call and preside over all meetings, co-sign checks.
- Vice-President – Fill-in in the absence of the President, assist the President in the general administration of the league.
- Secretary/Treasurer – Communicate records and official league business to all participating towns. Home team is responsible to report final scores to the designated league official collect all league fees, keep financial records.
- Section 5.** The board's duties are to:
- Establish guidelines and procedures.
  - Establish game schedules.
  - Hear and rule on protests.

- d. Obtain/maintain incorporation status with the state of Missouri
- e. Obtain/maintain board member insurance
- f. Obtain/maintain 501c3 status with the IRS.

**Section 6.** All participating members when voted in will serve a mandatory 3 year commitment to the league. Withdrawal from membership of the league will result in a mandatory ban of 5 years before the town can rejoin the league.

### **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. Formal meetings will be used to discuss rule violations, unsportsmanlike conduct, forfeitures, suspensions and terminations.

**Section 2.** Administrative meetings will be held 3 times a year. Once to discuss/organize the upcoming season, once to discuss scheduling and once to review/discuss the recently completed season.

Formal meetings will be held on an as needed basis.

**Section 3.** Each member town must have a representative at 2 out of 3 administrative meetings. If a town is not represented they will forfeit their voting privileges for one year.

**Section 4.** Each member club has a representative vote for all issues that apply to the grade level that the club is participating in. (Jan. 2018)

### **Article IV Participation**

**Section 1.** Participation in 4-Rivers YFL is determined by the vote of the board.

### **Article V Insurance**

**Section 1.** Medical insurance coverage shall be the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians of the participants. The board of 4-Rivers YFL and the participating towns assume no liability for the medical expenses of the participants, players, coaches, officials, and/or spectators.

**Section 2.** All coaches and administrators are encouraged to be certified by a recognized and reputable national organization.

### **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 town is responsible to pay an annual league fee for each team entered. Fee is determined by the board and payable at the scheduling meeting.
- Section 2.** Each individual town will be responsible for collecting their own league fees for purchases of equipment, insurance and any articles needed to host home games.
- Section 3.** The home league may conduct a concession stand provided it does not sell items labeled as over 18 (example: cigarettes, alcohol). The home team is responsible for payment of the officials and any home field fee that may occur.
- Section 4.** The home league may charge an entrance fee of \$3 for adults, students are free.

### **Article II      Assets**

- Section 1.** All home teams will have their own assets. There are no assets other than this document and a petty cash account to be handled by the 4-Rivers YFL.

### **Article III      Terminations**

- Section 1.** Players may be terminated or suspended by the home town as directed by the home town board of directors.
- Section 2.** Board members and coaches of the home town may also be terminated by the home town board of directors.
- Section 3.** Major infractions may also be taken under advisement by the 4-Rivers YFL board using a formal meeting. Home town boards may appeal the rulings within seven days of the ruling. Intention of the appeal must be made within 24 hours.
- Section 4.** Local leagues, after appeal is complete, must accept board findings, terminations and/or suspensions.

### **Article IV      Players**

- Section 1.** In order to participate on or against teams in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade division, a player may not have reached 10 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of the current season.
- In order to participate on or against teams in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade division, a player may not have reached 11 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of the current season.
- In order to participate on or against teams in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade division, a player may not have reached 12 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of the current season.
- In order to participate on or against teams in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade division, a player may not have reached 13 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of the current season.
- In order to participate on or against teams in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade division, a player may not have reached 14 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of the current season.

In order to participate on or against teams in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade division, a player may not have reached 15 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of the current season.

ID cards must be available at the playing field on request by the opposing coach or town representative.

**Section 2.** State issued or federally issued (8-15-15) identification cards are mandatory for all players. They cannot be any kind of school issued identification i.e. library cards, student ID cards, etc.

The coach must have an original I.D. card at his disposal at every game, not a copy. If there is a question of age and or identity of a player the card must be presented to the head coach of the opposing team.

If a coach cannot produce a card for said player that player will in turn become ineligible to play that game or any following game until a card can be procured.

The card must be witnessed by the coach making the initial inquiry to satisfy this rule. (You cannot go by another coach's word)

## **Article V      Specific Rules**

**Section 1.** Local leagues will collect their own registration forms, fees, and copies of birth certificates.

**Section 2.** Official practices may begin on or after the last Monday of July.

**Section 3.** All cancellations would be made by the host team with a minimum of 24 hours notice as a courtesy to the traveling teams except for adverse weather conditions. Board ruling on any action taken.

**Section 4.** 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams may be made up of both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, no high school students allowed. 7<sup>th</sup> grade teams may be made up of 7<sup>th</sup> grade and lower students only. 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams may be made up of 6<sup>th</sup> grade and lower students only. 5<sup>th</sup> grade teams may be made up of 5<sup>th</sup> grade and lower students only. 4<sup>th</sup> grade teams may be made up of 4<sup>th</sup> grade through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students only. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teams may be made up of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students only. Players may only play up one grade level.

Dual participation at different levels is the discretion of the home board.

**Section 5.** Each team must have at least 15 players by August 20<sup>th</sup> to be recognized as a team. (1-30-14) Maximum roster size is 35, everyone dresses and everyone plays. Players cannot sit out to maintain the 35 man roster limit. Rosters must be turned in to the league President by August 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Section 6.** City expansion is possible if the city meets and agrees to all 4-Rivers YFL league rules. A mandatory 2 year probation period will be applied to all new members.

**Section 7.** Playoffs – A championship playoff will be held at the conclusion of each season based on a format agreed by all league members. Individual trophies or medals will be presented to the members of the championship and second place teams.

(1-30-14) All teams will play a 6 game regular season schedule. Any “bye week” make-up games should be played as soon as possible and not during the last week of the season. An exception will be made for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams who may

play a 7 game regular season with the top 6 teams in a championship playoff and the remaining teams in a consolation bracket. After the 6 game regular season all teams receive a 7<sup>th</sup> game in a ceded playoff. The top 8 teams will compete in a championship bracket, the teams below the 8<sup>th</sup> seed will compete in a consolation bracket. The tournament format to be determined by league membership. If 2 number #1 seeds play each other for the championship in an East/West bracket playoff the home team will be decided on a rotational basis with the East #1 seed hosting on even years and the West #1 seed hosting on odd years. (February 2019)

(1-30-14) All playoff games will be played on consecutive weekends, weather permitting.

To seed our post-season tournament, the following circumstances will determine seeding.

1. Overall Record – The team with the better won-lost record is seeded higher.
2. Head-to-Head Competition – If 2 teams have the same record and have played each other the team who won the head-to-head meeting will be seeded higher.
3. Victory Count – If 2 or more teams are tied with the same record and have not played each other we will look at total victory count of the teams they beat. Each team will get 1 point for every victory a team they beat had. For example, if you beat a team that ended up 4 – 3 you would get +4 points, etc. Points can only be acquired through victories.
4. Strength of Schedule – If 2 or more teams are still tied after the previous 3 tie-breakers we will look at strength of schedule by adding up all the victories of the teams they played regardless of if they beat them or not.
5. Flip of Coin – If 2 teams are still tied after the previous 4 tie-breakers we will flip a coin to determine who receives the higher seed.

### Playoff Seeding Clarification

Play on the field will supersede all other tie-breaker policies when considering playoff seeding.

A team that beat an opponent with an equal record cannot be seeded below that team.

Example:

Team A 6-1

Team B 6-1

Team C 6-1

Team A beat Team B, but did not play Team C.

Team B beat Team C, but lost to team A.

Team C lost to Team B, but did not play Team A.

The seeding would be: A

B

C

Because team A beat team B and would have to be ahead of B. B beat C and would have to be ahead of C. C would be third because they lost to B and did not play A. Play on the field would supersede all other tie-breaker policies.

**Section 8.** Games are to be scheduled for play on Saturdays with Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays as make-up days. Unless agreed upon by the two towns game order will be 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> with game times at 10:00 a.m., 11:30

a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 2:30 p.m.

**Section 9.** The Four Rivers Youth Football League makes it their policy to encourage full background checks for any and all coaches and/or personnel involved in this league for the safety and well-being of all kids in our program. However as far as being in control of such background checks we cannot and will not be liable for such checks as an association, but must rely on all towns that are members in the Four Rivers Youth Football League to do their own checks. It is to be expected that in the execution of this check any and all factors found to be detrimental to the safety or well-being of any child would exclude a candidate from coaching and/or being involved in that town's program.

In as much as any coach found by the Executive Board or General membership to be detrimental to this league will be barred from participating in any league activities including games.

The league's goal in this matter is to assure the well-being of all children in this program to the best of its ability.

**Section 10.** (1-30-14) All clubs (leagues/towns) who are members of Four Rivers Youth Football League must have league certification as a USA Football Heads-Up Tackling league. Deadline to be certified is 1 week prior to opening day of the current season.

## Article VI Game Rules

**Section 1.** All Missouri High School rules will be used except as listed. The “mercy” rule is a 35-point lead in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half which will result in a running clock.

**Section 2.** Ball carrying weights – measured without helmet, shoulder pads, and shoes. Pants and pant pads must be worn. The home team provides a reliable game scale. Once voted on ball carrier weights are set for a mandatory 3-year period. **There is no fudge rule.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 85 lbs**

**4<sup>th</sup> – 100 lbs**

**5<sup>th</sup> – 115 lbs (March 2021)**

**6<sup>th</sup> – 130 lbs (March 2021)**

**7<sup>th</sup> – No weight restrictions (January 2018)**

**8<sup>th</sup> – No weight restrictions (January 2018)**

A player cannot carry the ball until weighed or checked by the opposing coach.

Ball carriers must have a “clean” helmet, ineligible ball carriers must have a prominent strip down the center of the helmet.

An overweight offensive player may **not receive** the ball, but may recover a turnover. An overweight player may play at the end position on the offensive line or in the backfield, but may not advance the ball. A punter can be an ineligible ball carrier, but cannot advance the ball in the case of a fumble or muff, or advance the ball by pass or run.

An overweight defensive player MAY intercept or recover a turnover by the offense and advance the ball. (8-16-17)

All team members are subject to a mandatory weigh-in and ID check that must be completed 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. Either the host coach or the visiting coach can initiate the weigh-in/ID check process. The opposing

coaches must present a numerical team roster to each other at this time. Players must line up with jerseys on and helmets in their possession; ID's in hand and be presented to the opposing coach for selection to check weight. (November 2015)

If a player is not present at the time of the official weigh-in they can be brought to the opposing coach for check in at any time prior to the start of the game. If the player arrives after captains have been called, he must wait to play until checked in at half time unless the opposing coach clears the player to play prior to half time.

- Section 3.** Time limits for games will be:
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8 minutes per quarter with the clock stopping at all normal dead balls.** (January 2018)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> – 8 minutes per quarter with the clock stopping at all normal dead balls.** (January 2018)
  - 5<sup>th</sup> – 8 minutes per quarter with the clock stopping at all normal dead balls.**
  - 6<sup>th</sup> – 8 minutes per quarter with the clock stopping at all normal dead balls.**
  - 7<sup>th</sup> – 9 minutes per quarter with the clock stopping at all normal dead balls.**
  - 8<sup>th</sup> – 9 minutes per quarter with the clock stopping at all normal dead balls.**

The home team should provide a reliable time keeper.

- Section 4.** Participation – Teams shall:
- a. Dress all eligible players for each game. No more than 35 eligible players may be dressed.
  - b. Play each dressed eligible player. Ineligible players must be stated to the opposing coach before each game.
  - c. Players cannot be “double rostered” and participate in the 4-Rivers YFL and another league during the same season. (11-7-16)

- Section 5.** In case of a tie at the end of regulation the tie will be broken by placing the ball at the 10-yard line with each team receiving 4 downs on alternating possessions. There is no limit to the number of overtime periods.

- Section 6.** The home team must provide 1 state sanctioned referee for each game unless the league has provided state sanctioned officials through a recognized officials association. If certified officials are not able to be obtained the game can be played as scheduled if both opposing coaches agree to conduct the game with the officials that are available.

- Section 7.** No alcohol is allowed on the grounds during 4-Rivers YFL games. The home team is responsible for enforcing this and all league policies.

- Section 8.** Punting for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade levels will be a free punt with no live returns. Kicker must be at least 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage when ball is kicked. Receiving team may have up to 3 receivers deep and only has to make contact with the ball to down it – there is no chance of a turnover on a punt attempt. (January 2018) Overweight Players can punt and receive because they cannot be advanced.

Punting for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels will be according to high school rules unless otherwise noted in the by-laws.

3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade levels will not have kick offs. The team that wins the toss can elect to

take the ball on their 35-yard line, or defer. Subsequent kickoffs will be handled the same, possessions beginning at the 35-yard line.

Kickoffs for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels will be live according to high school rules unless otherwise noted in the by-laws and from the 40-yard line.

**Section 9.** At the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grade levels on defense there can only be a maximum of 6 men on the line of scrimmage from defensive end to defensive end at the snap of the ball. A defensive back may move up to cover a split receiver. All other defensive players must be 1 and ½ yards off the defensive lineman's tail i.e. out of the "box." At the snap of the ball all players can flow to the ball. Violation of this rule will be enforced as encroachment.

**Section 10.** A PeeWee size (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>) (February 2019) Junior size (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>) or Youth size (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>) non rubber ball will be provided for each game by the home team, however a team can choose to use their own ball on offense if arranged with the game officials and opposing coach prior to kickoff.

**Section 11.** One coach is allowed to be on the field and in the huddle at the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade level only.

**Section 12.** National and state high school rules concerning jersey numbers do not apply to 4-Rivers YFL games with the exception that there cannot be duplicate numbers from the same team on the field at the same time. (November 2015)

**Section 13.** On point after attempts following a touchdown. A successful run or pass into the end zone will result in 1 point. A successful kick through the uprights will result in 2 points.

PAT attempts in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade levels as a kick only are a dead ball play with no rush. (February 2019)

PAT attempts are live as in all other grade levels. (January 2018)

**Section 14.** (1-30-14) All players must have jerseys with prominent numbers on front and back.

## **Article VII    Infraction of Rules**

**Section 1.** Violations of rules and ensuring appropriate action shall be determined and enforced by the voting members of 4-Rivers YFL.

**Violation:** Team not showing for game, playing a player determined ineligible, not playing all eligible players.

**Action:** Forfeit of game.

**Violation:** Inappropriate action by coach.

**Action:** Reprimand and probation to removal.

**Violation:** Inappropriate action by player.

**Action:** Addressed on a case by case basis.

**Violation:** Inappropriate action by fan/parent.

**Action:** Home team is responsible for crowd control.

**Violation:** Not adhering to Constitution and By Laws of 4-Rivers YFL, not adhering to rulings of the voting members.

**Action:** Forfeit of league standing. Return to league pending administrative



hearing.

**Violation:** Teams not fulfilling the schedule obligations.

**Action:** Town will be placed on one-year probation. If forfeitures occur during a probation year, town will be suspended from 4-Rivers YFL for a period of one year. To be reinstated must petition the board for membership.

Protests must be in writing to the President within 48 hours of game. A protest fee of \$50 must be included with the written protest. The league President will notify officers who will determine if a protest is warranted. Board must render a ruling within one week of game. If the protest is denied the protest fee is forfeited.

### **Grievance Procedure**

A protest or grievance with the Four-Rivers YFL must be approved by the home town board and brought to the Four-Rivers YFL board for consideration. The Four-Rivers YFL Board will not hear protests or grievances from individuals unless approved by the home town board.

If an individual coach, parent, spectator would like to register a complaint with the league they must go through the director of their hometown board.