

CONSTITUTION OF ONTARIO FALL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

(Revised/updated August 2023)

Be it enacted and it is hereby enacted as General By-Laws of Ontario Fall Football League hereinafter called “OFFL” as follows:

ARTICLE 1.0 - DEFINITIONS

1.01 In this Constitution and other by-laws of the league, unless the context otherwise specifies or requires:

- a) **“OFFL”** means the Ontario Fall Football League which is overseen by the Ontario Community Football League (OCFL)
- b) The singular shall include the plural and the plural shall include the singular, the masculine shall include the feminine
- c) **“Member Club”** means an organization/association who has been duly admitted into the membership of the OFFL
- d) **“Executive”** means the elected Officers of the OFFL
- e) **“Division”** specifies age and mode of play, that is 6, 9 or 12 persons aside
- f) **“FO”** means Football Ontario, the provincial sport governing body

ARTICLE 2.0 - OBJECTIVES

2.01 To foster and encourage maximum participation in organized minor football.

2.02 To provide young athletes in Ontario with the opportunity to play football in a competitive environment where they can develop their character, skills and overall physical fitness.

2.03 Young athletes will be taught the fundamentals of football through proper coaching techniques and in a knowledgeable and caring manner that promotes fair play and sportsmanship.

2.04 To provide various levels of competitive play that allow for the improvement of young athletes according to the goals of the Football Canada Long Term Athletic Development (LATD).

ARTICLE 3.0 - MEMBERS OF THE CLUB

3.01 Membership in the OFFL shall be comprised of Member Associations that shall agree to abide by and comply with the OFFL Constitution and By-Laws.

Terms of Admission for Member Clubs are:

- a) A properly organized association of amateur football that is willing to comply with and abide by the Constitution and By-laws of the OFFL.
- b) A centre sanctioned by the FO to operate a spring or fall season football program. The OFFL will align itself always with the most current FO definitions regarding sanctioning.
- c) Willing to act in the best interest of the OFFL, not the best interest of an individual centre and treat with respect all the other members of the league.

a) Associations applying for membership must do so in writing prior to January 31 for admission in the current year. After January 31, the league Executive may accept new associations on a probationary basis with any restrictions they deem appropriate.

3.02 The following are Member requirements:

- a) Any centre making application for membership to the OFFL shall normally be expected to enter the minimum of a team in each of the U10, U12 and U14 divisions for the most favorable consideration.
- b) Applications made with the declared intent of participating at fewer than the aforementioned minimum of U10, U12 and U14 divisions will be accepted on the basis of the best interest of football in general and OFFL in particular at the time of application.
- c) Members who do not meet the basic criteria of one team will be immediately considered no longer a member and is removed from the OFFL's membership list.
- d) A member organization that has lost its membership under Article 3(c) may have their membership status reviewed if they are able to re-enter a team for the following year (season). They must re-affirm that entry for the next year (season) at the Annual General Meeting.
- e) When any centre does not fulfill their membership commitments to the league they are subject to review and possible expulsion by a 2/3 majority vote of the board of directors.

3.03 It is each member organization's responsibility to:

- a) Provide representatives to participate in the OFFL Executive.
- b) Provide its teams with properly approved protective equipment and uniforms.
- c) Participate fully in all OFFL activities; all organizations in the OFFL must receive a minimum eight (8) days notice of any League meeting. Every organization must have at least one (1) member at every OFFL Meeting. For every OFFL meeting that is not attended by the organization, a \$50.00 fine is due. If any organization misses three Board Meetings per year, their membership will be placed under review.
- d) Ensure that all individuals affiliated with that organization are familiar with the OFFL Constitution, By-Laws and Regulations as well as any other restrictions and obligations.

3.04 All members must abide by and act consistent with the by-laws of the league and the membership privileges of any member organization who fails to do so may be revoked. Copies of the by-laws are on file with the league secretary and are available for viewing by any member in good standing of the league. Any member organization may have its membership revoked at any time for conduct detrimental to the OFFL by 2/3 vote of the Member Clubs

3.05 All Associations that are currently members of the OFFL can be found listed in alphabetical order in the by-laws.

3.06 The following membership fees will be assessed for OFFL:

- a) Initial fee for first time entry for an association is \$800.00 (\$300.00 administration plus \$500.00 Performance Bond - see Article 18.02) payable at the time that the OFFL Board of Directors votes for the association's acceptance into an OFFL game schedule. This Initial fee can be reviewed and changed by the OFFL Member Clubs on an ongoing basis.
- b) A yearly fee thereafter of \$300.00 per Member Club payable at the Annual General Meeting.
- c) A yearly \$500.00 fee per team entry to be determined by the Member Clubs payable when the required numbers of players are registered to form a team.

- d) If an organization withdraws a team commitment after the commitment date, they will be subject to a \$500.00 fine per team contracted. The organization must also pay the registration fee per team for the original commitment.
- e) Any member organization failing to pay their annual membership fees in accordance with above may, on the 2/3 vote by the Member Clubs, be suspended from membership privileges.

ARTICLE 4 – MEMBER CLUBS

4.01 The Member Clubs shall have ultimate and full operational control of the affairs of the OFFL subject only to the provisions of the Constitution and shall consist of:

- a) *Member Club Representatives* who are appointed by each member association. There must be at least one representative available at each meeting from each Member Club.
- b) A managing *Executive* will be elected by a simple majority vote from the eligible voters at the annual general meeting. Positions will be filled by representatives appointed by each Member Club.

4.02 The Member Clubs shall consist of at least one representative from each member organization. Where a member organization fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without, in the opinion of the board, having a reasonable cause therefore or fails to perform any of the duties allotted to their organization, the Secretary shall advise the relevant club and actions may be sanctioned by the board up to and including suspension from the league until the next Annual General Meeting.

4.03 The Member Clubs shall elect an Executive exclusively from representatives of its members. Where a vacancy occurs on the Executive (other than the President), the Member Clubs will elect from amongst its own representatives to fill the vacancy.

Representatives from a member organization standing for an Executive position must be present to be elected. The newly elected Executive will have all the powers and responsibilities of that office for which he/she has been elected. If it is the position of President, then the Vice President will step into that role and a new Vice President will be elected.

4.04 The Member Clubs may, at its discretion, elect an independent director to sit on the Executive and hold any office on the Executive.

4.05 The Executive of the league's Member Clubs shall manage the league's activities between Member Club meetings but cannot act unilaterally on items that are contrary to the league's Board direction. Any decisions made by the Executive Committee between Board meetings must be presented at the next Board meeting for ratification.

4.06 The Executive Committee shall consist of:

- a) *President* - It shall be the duty of the **President** to preside at meetings of the OFFL Board of Directors. It shall be the responsibility for the President to be the liaison between the Directors and the Executive and will act on the request of the Directors. The President will be the official spokesman and point contact for the OFFL and shall perform such duties as may be required by the Directors.

- b) *Vice-President* - The **Vice-President** will preside at meetings of the OFFL, in the absence of the President and will be responsible for the ongoing operations of the OFFL. The Vice-President will regulate functions, camps, exhibitions and regular & postseason games under the auspices of the OFFL to ensure the integrity of the league is always upheld and perform such duties as may be determined from time to time by the Member Clubs.
- c) *Treasurer* - The **Treasurer** shall be the custodian of the books of account and accounting records of the League required to be kept in a manner acceptable to the Board of Directors and shall at all times be open to inspection by the Member Clubs, prepare and submit a financial statement at each Member Clubs meeting showing the receipts and disbursements, the accounts receivable and the financial position of the OFFL, provide a written report at the Annual Meeting, oversee the financial aspects of the activities performed by any other member of the league charged with accepting or depositing funds on the behalf of the OFFL and perform such other duties as may be determined from time to time by the Member Clubs.
- d) *Secretary* - The **Secretary** shall have the custody of the official records of the league including the insurance documents, and all official correspondence, keep the official record of all meetings, mail, send or email copies of all minutes to all Directors and maintain a league file for membership, give notice of all meetings in the manner prescribed by the Constitution and perform such duties as may be determined from time to time by the Member Clubs.
- e) *Registrar* - The **Registrar** shall inspect the registration records of all members of the league and perform such duties as monitoring registrations, numbers of players on a team, assisting with territory development with new franchises, a written report at the Annual Meeting.
- f) *Eastern Director at Large* - The **Eastern Director at Large** shall perform such duties as may be required by the Executive and/or Member Clubs.
- g) *Western Director at Large* - The **Western Director at Large** shall perform such duties as may be required by the Executive and/or Member Clubs
- h) *Communications Director* – The Communications Director is responsible for crafting and implementing, with the support of the Executive, the Communications Strategy. They work with partners to engage interns to support the mechanics of the portfolio.

4.07 The following specific responsibilities shall be managed by the Executive Committee and other Director committees as required:

- a) Fund Raising
- b) Scheduling
- c) Statistics
- d) Publicity
- e) Misconduct
- f) Trophies and Awards
- g) Post Season Coaches' Workshop and Banquet
- h) Other activities as arise from time to time

4.08 Should the public activities or statements of a Member Club be deemed to be not in the best interests of OFFL, the Executive may, at its' discretion, levy fines, sanctions or other disciplinary rulings, including removal of a member organization's representative with respect to such activities or statements. Such action may be considered at any board meeting or AGM and shall be governed by 2/3 majority of the voting members.

4.09 Members of the Member Clubs and their families shall not enter into any business arrangement with OFFL in which they are interested directly or indirectly, except with the unanimous consent of the Executive.

4.10 No Member of the Executive shall be paid or kind for service rendered in their capacity as an Executive of OFFL. Any party including Executive and Member Clubs can and shall be reimbursed for legitimate approved expenses while carrying out their duties on behalf of OFFL.

4.11 No representative of a Member Club is eligible to be elected to the office of President unless the member has previously served at least one term as an Executive of OFFL and is a current team executive of a Member Club.

ARTICLE 5.0 - MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

5.01 There shall be three (3) types of meetings of the OFFL:

- a) Annual General Meeting
- b) Member Club Meetings as called by the OFFL President
- c) Executive Committee Meetings

5.02 The Annual General Meeting shall be held on or within seven (7) days of the second weekend of February each year. The agenda to be the responsibility of the outgoing Executive Committee:

- a) Notification of this meeting and an agenda is to be sent by the secretary to each organization two (2) weeks prior to the annual general meeting.
- b) All representatives may have speaking privileges at the annual general meeting, but voting privileges are restricted to one vote for each member organization regardless of the number of representatives at the meeting.
- c) Adoption of general motions and Constitutional, By-Laws and/or Playing Rules amendments require a 2/3 majority.
- d) Attendance at meetings shall be open to interested observers or invited guests where the President grants permission.

5.03 Where notice of a meeting is communicated to the Member Clubs it will be deemed to be received generally by the members of the league. The accidental omission to any member or the non-receipt of notice by any member shall not invalidate any resolution passed or any proceedings taken at the meeting.

5.04 Any proposed amendments to the Constitution, By-Laws and/or Playing Rules must be submitted in writing to the President of the league at least thirty (30) days prior to any meeting of the club and provided to the member associations at least twenty-one (21) days.

5.05 An executive committee meeting must be called at the request of at least two separate members of the executive committee or by the president. A quorum for a meeting of the Executive is 2/3.

5.06 The Executive shall meet each month, at a centres designated meeting place or via on line medium such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The selected location will be decided upon at the previous meeting. The president shall chair such meetings, or in his/her absence, the Vice President or Registrar will chair the meeting. Any decisions arising out of a properly called board meeting shall be binding on the league and member clubs.

5.07 The President may call a meeting of the league membership whenever they deem necessary and shall notify each Member Club either verbally or in writing. The President may call a meeting of the league membership when requested to do so by four (4) or more Member Clubs

5.08 A quorum for a meeting of the Member Clubs shall consist of a simple majority of all members of the Member Clubs in good standing and three (3) Executive Members.

5.09 Changes to the Constitution, By-Laws and/or Playing Rules can only be made at a Member Clubs meeting. A Motion for changes can be made at any meeting and voted upon unless such vote is objected to by any member organization. In the case of such objection, a Notice of Motion for changes must be made and voted on at the next scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE 6.0 - VOTING PRIVILEGES

6.01 Each organization shall have voting privileges of one (1) vote at any meeting.

6.02 Voting positions are provided to member organizations based on being current on all fees, monetary obligations and financial penalties within ninety (90) days prior to the meeting.

6.03 Members must be in attendance to exercise their voting privileges. **Proxy votes are not allowed.**

ARTICLE 7.0 - FINANCES

7.01 Only the President, Vice-President and the Treasurer are authorized to sign cheques in the name of the OFFL. The signature of the Treasurer and one of the shall be required on all cheques.

7.02 The fiscal year end of the OFFL shall be the 31st day of December.

7.03 The financial records shall be properly reviewed annually and the financial statement shall be presented at the annual general meeting. The Treasurer shall provide a report of the league's financial condition at each regular monthly board meeting.

7.04 Members with signing authority may not be related to the Treasurer.

7.05 Cheques made payable to any member who has signing authority must have cheques signed by two other signing authorities.

7.06 The treasurer shall issue a receipt to evidence any monies received by the club and a duplicate receipt shall be kept and recorded by the treasurer.

ARTICLE 8.0 - SAFETY AND LIABILITY

8.01 Any damage or injury or loss suffered by any person or organization because of any direct or indirect actions of the league or of anyone acting on the leagues behalf, shall be the sole liability of the league and no member of the league shall be held personally liable. No members of the league are authorized to act on behalf of the league without the formal consent of the league, granted by the majority vote of the Board of Directors. Any member or person purportedly acting on behalf of the league without necessary authorization does so strictly at his own risk and liability. Should the league contribute or loan property or equipment to individuals or organizations, such is done with the understanding that the receiver will utilize the property at his own risk and agrees not to hold the league or any members thereof liable for damages that may result from any defect or shortcoming in the foresaid property.

8.02 No team shall participate in a game scheduled without the presence of a qualified person to tend to any medical or athletic injuries.

8.03 Members shall adhere to equipment manufacturer's recommendations for equipment testing, refurbishing and replacement.

8.04 Members shall have adequately trained or experienced personnel supervise the fitting of player equipment issued by the Members.

ARTICLE 9.0 - LEAGUE RESPONSIBILITIES

9.01 OFFL will be responsible to:

- a) Provide as many games as schedule permits per tier/division.
- b) Provide trophies for the championship & runner-up teams.
- c) Host the league Championships at a site to be determined by the Competition Committee along with the Executive
- d) Provide assistance and co-ordinate recruitment.
- e) Schedule the OFFL Championship Day(s) to be no later than the second weekend in November.

ARTICLE 10.0 – GENERAL

10.01 The OFFL Constitution and By-laws as shown in this book are intended as a general guide and cannot specifically cover each situation that may arise, the President in regular or special meetings, with a quorum of the OFFL Member Clubs, will have authority to interpret and decide to the best of their judgment about all the circumstances or any special case, any matter pertaining to any and all clauses contained herein. Their decision shall be final. The OFFL Member Clubs may appoint an Advisory Committee comprised of past presidents, and other members to advise on matters presented.

10.02 Any member who fails to uphold the rulings and enforce the decisions of the OFFL will leave said member open to suspension/expulsion by the OFFL Executive and/or Member Clubs.

10.03 A catalogue of OFFL approved forms for requesting and/or recording of information to be submitted to the OFFL Office is included as an appendix in the Constitution. Forms will be reviewed and updated annually.

10.04 Error or Omission in Notice - No error or omission in giving notice of an annual or special meeting or any adjourned meeting, whether annual or special, of the OFFL shall invalidate such meeting or make void any proceedings taken there at and any voting delegates may at any time waive notice of any such meetings and may ratify, approve and confirm any or all proceedings taken or had thereat. For the purposes of sending notice to any delegate or Director for any meeting or otherwise, the address of any voting delegate or Director shall be their last address recorded on the books of OFFL.

ARTICLE 11.0 – APPEAL PROCESS

11.01 Once the Vice-President has investigated and rendered a ruling (e.g. suspension, deeming a player ineligible, game protest, etc.), the team involved can render a protest within 24 hours of receiving the ruling to the Vice-President along with a payment of \$200.00 to cover the cost of the appeal process. The Member Club's representative must clearly state the grounds of protest and any additional information, which may be pertinent to render a new decision. The Vice-President will then re- evaluate the information provided and send it to the President to form a floating appeal committee comprised of three independent unbiased members to render a ruling.

11.02 Once the President receives the appeal, he/she will form an appeals committee to hear and rule on the appeal within 24 hours. The appeals committee ruling will be declared as final.

ARTICLE 12.0 – LEGAL COUNSEL

12.01 At each Annual General Meeting, the OFFL shall appoint, if deemed necessary by the Member Clubs, legal counsel to hold office until he/she is re-appointed, or their successor is appointed at the next Annual General Meeting.

12.02 The legal counsel may attend general meetings and may ask to attend OFFL Executive meetings.

ARTICLE 13.0 – LIABILITY

13.01 No member shall be held personally liable for any damages or injury or loss suffered by any person, club or organization because of any direct or indirect actions of OFFL or of anyone on the OFFL's behalf. No members of the OFFL are authorized to act on behalf of the OFFL without the formal consent of the OFFL, granted by a majority vote by the OFFL Member Clubs. Any members or person purportedly acting on behalf of the OFFL without necessary authorization does do strictly at his/her own risk and liability.

13.02 Should the OFFL contribute or loan property or equipment to individuals or organizations, such is done with the understanding that the receiver will utilize the property at his/her own risk and agreed not to hold OFFL or any members thereof liable for damages that may result from any defect or shortcoming in the foresaid property.

13.03 Every Member Club or Executive of the OFFL or any other person who has undertaken any liability on behalf of the OFFL shall be indemnified and saved harmless out of the funds of the OFFL, from and against,

a) all costs, charges and expenses whatsoever which such Director, Officer or other person sustains or incurs in or about any action, suit or proceeding that is brought, commenced or prosecuted against him/her, for or in respect of any act, deed, matter or whatsoever made, done or permitted by him/her in or about the execution of the duties of his/her office or in respect of any such liability;

b) all other costs, charges and expenses that he/she sustains or incurs in or about or in relation to the affairs thereof, except such costs, charges or expenses as are occasioned by his/her own act, neglect or default if such act, neglect is both willful and wrongful.

13.04 No Member Club or Executive for the time being of OFFL shall be liable for the acts, receipts, neglect or defaults of any other Member Club or Executive or employee or for joining in any receipt or act for conformity or for any loss, damage or expense happening to OFFL through the insufficiency or deficiency of any security in or upon which any of the monies of or belong to OFFL shall be placed out or invested or for any loss or damage arising from bankruptcy, insolvency, or fortuitous act or any person, firm or corporation including any person, firm or corporation with whom monies, securities or other assets belonging to OFFL of for any other loss, damage or misfortune whatever which may happen in the execution of the duties of his/her respective office or trust or in relation thereto unless the same shall happen by or through his/her own act, neglect or default if such act, neglect or default is both willful and wrongful.

ARTICLE 14.0 – SUSPENSIONS/SANCTIONS

14.01 All members will recognize suspensions and sanctions set forth by other football organizations. No player, coach or volunteer can participate in any OFFL game or event while under suspension by another football organization.

ARTICLE 15.0 – FAIR PLAY STATEMENT

15.01 The OFFL Code of Ethics has been developed to protect and promote the best interests of the game. Its primary purpose is to clarify and distinguish ethical and approved professional practices from those, which are detrimental, and to promote the principles of fair play in football. Its secondary purpose is to emphasize the purpose and value of football, and to stress proper function of all those involved in relation to schools, public and the players. The ultimate success of the principles and standards of the Code depends upon the football coaches, administrators, and players of the game. Individuals should never place the value of a win above that of instilling the highest desirable ideals and character traits in the players. The safety and welfare of the players should always be uppermost in their minds, and they must never be sacrificed for any personal prestige or selfish glory.

15.02 In teaching the game of football, coaches must realize that there are certain rules designed to protect the player and provide common standards for determining a winner and loser. Any attempts to beat these rules, or take unfair advantage of an opponent, or to teach deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct have no place in the game of football, nor have any coaches, guilty of such teaching, the right to call themselves coaches.

15.03 All member clubs on the OFFL agree to abide by the code of conduct set out in the ByLaws.

ARTICLE 16.0 – GENDER EQUITY/ACCESS TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILTY STATEMENT

16.01 OFFL prompts the principles of Gender Equity throughout its organizations and volunteer committees, by demonstrating a commitment to equity and access for women as athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and leaders. Representation of OFFL’s committees and member organization administrations is of paramount importance to reflect the individuals participating in tackle football programs in Ontario.

16.02 Access to all programs and committees are to be provided on a fair and equitable basis to all individuals wishing to volunteer their time and effort. Approval to participate in any program or committee will be based on the individual’s ability to contribute to the program or committee and not on his/her gender, ethnicity, color, religion, or physical ability. OFFL is totally committed to a complete range of opportunities and choices to achieve personal, social and economic benefits from all our programs.

ARTICLE 17.0 – DRUG FREE STATEMENT

17.01 It is the position of OFFL to oppose the use of Banned and Restricted Doping Classes and Methods and to be proactive in education to discourage their use. This position is since banned substances, which artificially enhance performance in training and competition, are harmful to health, ethically wrong, and ultimately a threat to amateur sport today.

17.02 OFFL is unequivocally opposed to the use by amateur football athletes of any Banned and Restricted Doping Classes and Methods in contravention to the rules and is equally opposed to any encouragement of the usage of such substances by individuals in positions of leadership, such as coaches, medical practitioners, sports scientists, the athletes themselves, or by any other members of the OFFL.

17.03 OFFL and its member associations agree to adopt and follow the Canadian Policy on Penalties for Doping Sport and the Canadian Doping Control Regulations as endorsed and provided by Sport Canada Centre for Ethics in Sport.

ARTICLE 18.0 – CONTRACT & PERFORMANCE BOND

18.01 Each team will enter into contract with the league to ensure that the team follows the rules as stated in the Constitution of the league and league playing rules while always holding the league in high esteem. Failure to do so can result in penalties assessed by the Commission, which may include suspension of the team.

18.02 A performance bond of \$500 must be posted by each team at the annual meeting of the OFFL. This bond will remain on deposit with the OFFL until the club leaves the league.