

# **BY-LAWS OF RIVER VALLEY YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE, INC.**

Last Updated: January 17, 2023

## **Article I**

### **NAME**

This organization shall be known as the *River Valley Youth Football League, Inc. ("RVYFL")*, hereinafter referred to as "*RVYFL*" or the "*League*".

## **Article II**

### **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the RVYFL is to exemplify, encourage, promote and teach sportsmanship, teamwork and the basic fundamentals of football. Ultimately, the goal is to stimulate the young person's interest in sports while providing constructive recreational use of leisure time.

## **Article III**

### **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1, ADULT MEMBERS:** Any person who has a child enrolled in the program or has an active interest shall be considered a Member of the RVYFL and therefore subject to and governed by its By-Laws.

**Section 2, YOUTH MEMBERS:** Any child meeting the requirements as set forth in the By-Laws or Football Rules of the RVYFL, shall be eligible for participation.

**Section 3, DISQUALIFICATION:** Any member not conforming to the By-Laws of the RVYFL may be disqualified at the discretion of the Board.

**Section 4, OUTSIDE MEMBERSHIP:** Any person that falls outside of the Individual Membership guidelines must be approved by the Board. A football player is prohibited from playing in any other football league on or after August 1<sup>st</sup> up to and including the last game of their Team's season or the Super Bowl game, whichever comes first. If a football player that is in elementary school and meets age and weight requirements but is enrolled in high school or equivalent classes due to being a gifted student, may participate as a member of the RVYFL only if said player does NOT participate in ANY organized high school athletic programs. It is an organization's responsibility to review and must provide a letter from the high school's athletic department stating player is not participating in any high school sports teams. Any violation will be presented to the Rules Committee for interpretation and review before presenting to the entire Board.

## Article IV

### GOVERNMENT

**Section 1, MANAGEMENT:** The RYVFL shall be governed and supervised by and through its Officers and Board of Directors.

**Section 2, COMPOSITION:** The League shall consist of Organizations which the Board of Directors will vote to accept or decline upon request by each Organization. An Organization's membership may be revoked at any time by the current Board of Directors and deposits forfeited. An Organization shall be defined as having one or multiple Teams at any Level under the same Organization name, i.e. Frankfort JV Black and Frankfort JV Blue. All new Organizations are considered to be on probation for the current season and not be allowed to vote. Voting for new Organizations will commence in their 2<sup>nd</sup> season.

**A. EXCEPTION:** The New Lenox Youth Football Association will be exempted and recognized as 2 separate organizations known as the New Lenox Jr. Knights and New Lenox Jr. Warriors. Each organization will receive its own representation, voting rights and splitting of teams within each organization. Any change or deviation of the above will revert the New Lenox Youth Football Association as a single organization and must adhere to the by-laws and rules set forth.

**Section 3, BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** The Board of Directors for the RYVFL, hereinafter referred to as the "Board," shall consist of two (2) members from each Organization. Each Organization is responsible for designating two (2) sitting Board members as representatives at the January meeting. Each Organization shall provide written notification to the Board identifying the Organization's representative to serve on the Board as Directors. An Organization's pair of Directors will collectively submit their votes on behalf of their Organization. The term of office for the Board shall expire December 31st of each calendar year. No director shall receive any direct and/or indirect compensation or derivative benefit for serving on the Board. It is exclusively a volunteer position. Any Conflict of Interest shall be reported to the Board immediately for immediate review and determination and if necessary, further action.

**Section 4, OFFICERS:** The Officers of the RYVFL Board shall consist of a President, a First Vice President, a Second Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The Board shall make all appointments of all Officers and Committee Members. The term of office for each Officer shall expire December 31st of each calendar year. Officers are allowed to vote once if they are also one of the RYVFL Board Directors of an organization. It is the responsibility of the Board to fill all vacancies by appointment. Any person appointed to fill an Officer vacancy shall serve the remainder of that term.

**Section 5, OFFICER DUTIES:** The Officers shall perform the duties and exercise the powers prescribed by the Articles of Incorporation set forth in these By-Laws. These duties and powers shall include, but are not limited to the following:

**A. PRESIDENT:** The President shall act as Chairperson of the Board and Ex-Officio Member of all committees. The President shall be responsible for conducting the affairs of the RYVFL and for executing and enforcing the policies established by the Board. In addition, the President shall be responsible for

interpreting, applying, and ensuring that all current League members are at all relevant times in compliance with these by-laws. The President shall have the authority to co-sign checks. If the President is not a member of an organization, the President is allowed to vote when there is a tie. During the season, it is the responsibility of the President to preliminarily rule on any issues involving the application of League Rules until the Rules Committee can address said issue. The President's preliminary interpretation of the Leagues Rules shall control until the issue is further addressed by the Rules Committee. The President is deemed to have a conflict of interest and is therefore disqualified from participating directly and/or indirectly in any issue involving rules where the President's Organization or a parent, player, coach or administrator from the President's Organization is either the subject of the rule's application or the party seeking the interpretation/application of a rule. If such a conflict of interest arises, the First Vice President shall assume the President's role herein. In the event the First Vice President is conflicted or otherwise is unable to assume this responsibility, the Second Vice President shall assume the President's role as set forth herein.

**B. VICE-PRESIDENTS:** The First Vice President shall work with other Officers and be the Chairperson of the Rules Committee. The First Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President. The Second Vice President shall assume the duties of the First Vice President in his absence. Both Vice-Presidents shall carry out such assignments as may be delegated by the President

**C. SECRETARY:** The Secretary shall maintain a register of Members and Directors, record and prepare minutes of each meeting, inform members of said meetings, and maintain a record of the league's activities. The Secretary shall be responsible for Board correspondence.

**D. TREASURER:** The Treasurer has the authority to co-sign checks and disperse League funds as directed and approved by the Board. The Treasurer shall maintain financial records, prepare budgets, and present financial reports at each Board meeting, as well as an annual report at the January meeting.

**E. RULES COMMITTEE:** The Rules Committee exists to address and expedite the resolution of conflicts that occur throughout the year. The Rules Committee will oversee problems with officials, coaches, disciplinary matters, rules violations, etc. The Rules Committee will investigate and if warranted, bring the issue to the Board for consideration. This Rules Committee will consist of three (3) Board of Directors, along with an alternate Director, in case of any conflicts of interest that may arise. The First Vice President shall be the Chairperson of the Rules Committee to manage and organize but not vote. In the event of a conflict of interest, the Second Vice President shall assume the Chairperson duties.

Their duties shall include:

1. Gather any information needed regarding the conflict from any and all parties involved.
2. Discuss the matter amongst the Rules Committee members in person or by conference call.
3. The Rules Committee will then make recommendations to the Board to its findings as to whether the issue at hand is valid or invalid and recommend the appropriate resolution.

4. The Board will then vote to accept or reject the recommendations of the Rules Committee. If accepted, the decision is final. If the Board rejects the recommendation of the Rules Committee, then the Board may proceed to vote on the matter if there is a motion and a second to proceed on the matter. The Board decision will be considered final.

**Section 6, DISCIPLINARY ACTION:** The Board shall have the power to impose, on a case-by-case basis, any disciplinary action it deems necessary and appropriate for those who fail to abide by these By-laws. Disciplinary action, if taken, can range from a written reprimand to being permanently barred from participation or association with the League. The League through its Board of Directors have the right to ask anyone who violates these by-laws to immediately leave a game, practice, or event, and may be barred from attending any other League sponsored game, practice or event until further notice by the Board. The Board may convene at such a time when the events can be reviewed, and an appropriate disciplinary action determined. Decisions by the Board are final.

**Section 7, MEMBERSHIP FEES:** Membership fees will be assessed on a yearly basis and determined by the Treasurer during the creation of the Annual Budget. Fees will vary year to year and mostly be dependent upon rosters sizes for both football players and cheerleaders by each Organization. A \$500 deposit per Organization is required at the January meeting in order to be considered an Organization in good standing and afforded voting rights. A remaining balance due will be determined by the Treasurer that will be due by each Organization and must be paid at the scheduled time given. A playoff budget will be determined for fees that the League will distribute to playoff host and Super Bowl expenses that will be collected from each Organization. Any Organization not in good standing may have its membership revoked by the Board.

## **Article V**

### **DEFINITION OF TEAMS**

**Section 1, LEVEL:** The league shall consist of 4 levels of play, Superlightweight, Lightweight, Junior Varsity and Varsity. Levels are outlined in the document named Age and Weight Matrix defined by the Board. Each Organization can submit one or more Teams at one or more levels to participate. The number of Teams an Organization submits is valid only for that season and does not imply or enforce that the Organization to submit the same number of teams the following season.

**Section 2, AGE AND WEIGHT MATRIX:** The Age and Weight Matrix defines how the levels are structured. Ages are as of August 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year. Variations or exceptions to this structure must be approved by the Board. Weight allowance as defined in the Age and Weight Matrix is active the fifth (5th) week of the season. For this purpose, the season starts when the first game is played and counting begins at that time, i.e. if the first game is August 24<sup>th</sup>, this is considered week 1. Other rule variations are defined in the Age and Weight Matrix Chart.

**Section 3, ROSTERS:** Organizations may be allowed to have any combination of Teams at any Level with a roster cap of forty-four (44) before having to split a level into multiple Teams. A minimum roster of thirty (30) players must be established before a waiting list may be started. No new players may be added to a team roster after the second game of the season. An organization may request to add a player to a team if that team has less than twenty-two (22) players on its roster. The Board will then conduct a vote on the request.

**Section 4, BOUNDARIES:** If any Player was on a RYVFL roster the previous season, the Player needs written approval from both organization's RYVFL Board Member to switch organizations the following season. If you do not secure approval from both, that Player must stay with same organization or sit out for one (1) year. If a Player was not on an RYVFL roster, the Player is fair game for all RYVFL Organization consideration. If a player moves their residency into the new town/village/city, approval is not needed but actual residency must be established. It is the responsibility of an Organization to review any boundaries issues within their registered members. Any violation will be reviewed by the Rules Committee.

**Section 5, SPLIT TEAMS:** An Organization may request to the Board to split a Level into multiple Teams. The deadline to split teams is June 1<sup>st</sup> in order to plan for the start of the season. Rules for splitting teams will be as follows:

**A.** Once a split is approved by the Board, all players will be placed in a draft pool. Coaches will pick one-by-one until the pool of draft players is exhausted or if each Team reaches a maximum roster size defined in these by-laws. Upon reaching maximum roster sizes, players must be placed on a waiting list in the order they registered. When a position opens on a Team, the next player at the top of the waiting list shall be taken.

**B.** An Organization's draft day must be announced to the Board either in person or by email and be readily made available for any Director to be present, if they wish to attend.

**C.** If an Organization chooses to do so, an evaluation practice of all players in the draft will be allowed during the first two weeks of practice. The draft shall be a one-by-one pick until all Teams' roster sizes are achieved or the draft pool exhausted. All drafts must be completed by Saturday of the second week of practice and rosters submitted to the league by Sunday of the second week of practice.

**D.** Drafts are to be fair and Teams are not to "talent loaded" over another.

## Article VI

### MEETINGS

**Section 1, MANAGEMENT:** All meetings of the Board will be conducted in accordance with “The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure”

**Section 2, REGULAR MEETINGS:** Meetings or virtual meetings of the directors of the RVYFL shall be held monthly at such date, time and place as the Board may designate, for the purpose of electing Board Directors and Officers, considering reports of the affairs of the RVYFL and transacting such business as may be properly brought before the meeting.

**Section 3, SPECIAL MEETINGS:** Special meetings or special virtual meetings of the Directors of the RVYFL shall be held whenever called by the President, which request shall specify the purpose of such meeting.

**Section 4, VOTING & QUORUM:** Each Organization will begin the season with 1 vote per Organization. A majority of the Board entitled to vote will constitute a quorum for transaction of business. A majority vote will govern for all non-By-law votes. There shall be no proxy voting. All voting is done by either voice, show of hands or written when at a meeting or electronically within 24 hours if held virtually or by email by designated Board of Director, or in their absence, the listed alternate Board of Director, casts one vote per organization. Only an Organization in good standing will be allowed to vote.

**Section 5, MINUTES:** Minutes of all meetings shall be taken by the Secretary and then distributed within 48 hours to the Board to review and approve at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

**Section 6, ATTENDANCE:** Designated Board of Director, or in their absence, the listed alternate must attend all regular or special meetings. A fifty dollar (\$50) fine will be assessed to an organization without a representative at a RVYFL meeting. Second time is one hundred dollars (\$100), third time is two hundred dollars (\$200), fourth time is one (1) year probation, and fifth time, the organization is removed from the league.

## Article VII

### ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION

**SECTION 1:** Registration of players is allowed at any time. NO TRYOUTS are permitted under any circumstances. Any organization that violates the registration process by selecting players based on ability rather than on a first come basis shall be placed on one (1) year probation and will not participate in that year’s playoffs.

## Article VIII

### CODE OF CONDUCT

**Section 1, OBJECTIVE:** In promoting the ethics, safety, and spirit of youth football and cheerleading, RVYFL has adopted a Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct is binding upon all members, including the Board, football and cheer coaches, football players, cheerleaders, parents and guardians, volunteers and spectators. Any member found in violation of this Code of Conduct is subject to review by the Rules Committee with possible appropriate disciplinary action.

**Section 2, PROHIBITED CONDUCT:** Conduct of any kind which is considered detrimental to the RVYFL or any of its members will not be tolerated. Such unacceptable conduct shall include, but is not limited to, participation in any of the following behavior: profanity, fighting; verbal abuse; bullying of any kind or verbally abusing or threatening any official or opponent; use of racial, religious, gender-related or ethnic slurs; inappropriate comments or actions that may be construed as sexual harassment; profanity; obscene gestures; intentional and violent fouls; taunting; "trash talk"; baiting; cheating; throwing or abusing equipment; and, physical intimidation or abuse of an official or opponent.

No use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal narcotics or controlled dangerous narcotics of any kind during practices, games or organization sponsored events. (Illinois State Law prohibits smoking on any school property).

Cooking on grills (Tailgating) is prohibited.

**Section 3, HATE SPEECH:** If any member including official hear someone using hate speech such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc by any player, coach or fan, during a game, the punishment is a 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty on offending team and mandatory ejection of player, coach or fan.

If hate speech is alleged, the player or coach must bring it to the attention of the officials. The officials will stop the game on a change of possession or other opportune stoppage (they will not stop it mid drive) and bring the coaches together to inform both of the alleged issue. Then, with the official present, that player's coach will ask the alleged offender if he used the hate speech that has been alleged. If the player, coach or fan affirms the allegation, they will be penalized with an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and ejected from the game. If the alleged offender denies the allegation, then there will be no penalty, but a report will be generated to advise the Board of the alleged incident.

If hate speech becomes a repeated problem and is proven, the organization in question will be removed from the League and forfeit the remainder of their games.

**Section 4, ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITY:** It is the Organization's responsibility to explain and enforce the League's Code of Conduct. The Organization is also responsible to explain to their coaches and players that hate speech will not be tolerated in the League. It is the responsibility of the coaches and officials to do their part to keep the game free of hate speech and provide a safe environment for

everyone. Explain in age-appropriate terms to coaches and players the definition of hate speech. Explain the rules involving hate speech, and the consequences of using hate speech. A plan for dealing with hate speech now and in the future.

**Section 5, REPORTING VIOLATIONS:** Anyone witnessing or having knowledge of conduct believed to be in violation of this Code of Conduct should report the same to the Board. The Board shall consider all such reports and violators will be subject to disciplinary action by the Board as stated below.

**Section 6, CODE OF CONDUCT DISCIPLINARY ACTION:** The Board shall have the power to impose, on a case-by-case basis, any disciplinary action it deems necessary and appropriate for those who fail to abide by this Code of Conduct. Disciplinary action, if taken, can range from a written reprimand to being permanently barred from participation or association with the League. Anyone who violates this Code of Conduct can be asked to immediately leave a game, practice, or event, and may be barred from attending any other League sponsored game, practice or event until further notice by the Board. The League through its Board of Directors have the right to ask and, if necessary, have removed from a game, practice or event, anyone who is deemed to be in violation of this Code of Conduct. The Board may convene at such a time when the events can be reviewed, and an appropriate disciplinary action determined. Decisions by the Board are final.

## **Article IX**

### **FOOTBALL RULES**

**SECTION 1:** Football Rules shall be created and voted upon by the Board and be subject to changes set forth within said document independent of these By-Laws.

## **Article X**

### **AMENDMENTS**

**SECTION 1:** By-law changes must be presented to all Organizations for due consideration. A By-Law change must be voted upon by all Organizations in good standing. A 80% vote by all Organizations is required for a by-law change.

## **Article XI**

### **DISSOLUTION**

**SECTION 1:** In case of dissolution of the League, all assets will be divided equally amongst current Organizations in good standing.