

# Thumb Area Football League



## Article I – NAME, PURPOSE, INTENT

### Section 1- Name

Incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan, we shall be known as the Thumb Area Football League and for further reference in this constitution will also be referred to as TAFLL, a non-profit organization.

### Section 2- Purpose

The purpose of the organization shall be to provide and promote, through properly qualified guidance and supervision, a clean and wholesome youth football and cheerleading program in the Greater Thumb Area of Michigan. We offer this opportunity to youth at ages before they can be involved in the various middle school programs. Our aim is not to compete with school programs, but complement them. The Corporation is organized for charitable and educational advancement purposes, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

### Section 3- Intent

It is our intent to teach the basic skills of football and cheerleading, to teach proper conduct and sportsmanship and ultimately, to positively affect the development of our children.

## Article II- MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1- Membership

Voting membership shall consist of the board of directors.

### Section 2- Eligibility

All children that live in the Greater Thumb area (defined in Article VI- Section 2) from the ages of 7-13 with Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) status for that year are eligible to participate in the Thumb Area Football League. We do support 7<sup>th</sup> grade programs where the schools have eliminated from their systems. In addition, any persons interested in TAFLL are eligible to actively participate in the promotion of its purpose.

### Section 3- Expulsion

Expulsion of a region, team, coach, officer, or an individual from TAFLL shall be by approved action of the board of directors. Such region, team, coach, or individual can request and shall be given a hearing before the quorum body (2/3) of the board of directors upon written notice to the board of directors.

## Article III – GOVERNANCE

### Section 1 – Authority

The governance and interpretation of this constitution and this organization shall be vested in the board of directors. The directors are the policy-making body and may exercise all the powers and authority granted to the Corporation by law. All decisions and/or rulings by this body are final.

### Section 2 – By-Laws

All by-laws and rules (this constitution) governing the league shall require adoption by the board of directors. Subsequently, this constitution shall be reviewed each year by all directors and approved at a meeting to be held prior to the first regularly scheduled games.

This constitution shall be prepared and presented by members of the board of directors.

#### Section 3 – Board of Directors

The board of director’s purpose is to govern the league and promote its “purpose” by guiding the league in the direction that will best benefit member areas and the participating players. All board of directors shall represent the Thumb Area Football League in a forthright, responsible manner.

#### Section 4- Number, Selection, and Tenure

The board of directors consists of the offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Marketing, Director of Equipment, Director of Cheerleading and one Community Director each representing eligible communities, and such other Directors as the board of directors may designate. If any positions are not filled refer to Article IV, Section 1.4. New directors must be approved by the board at a board of directors meeting by a two-thirds majority vote. The term of service for each director shall be two (2) years. Directors can have additional terms, if elected by a two-thirds majority approval by the current board of directors. Resignations of a director are effective upon receipt by the Secretary of the Corporation of written notice. A member of the board of directors may not coach unless otherwise approved by a vote of the board of directors.

#### Section 5 – Meetings, Notice and Quorum

The board of directors shall meet at least three (3) times per year, or as required to meet the needs and issues of the league, at an agreed upon time and place. An official board meeting requires that each board member have written notice at least one week in advance. There must be at least two-thirds of the total number of directors (a quorum) to hold a meeting. A copy of the minutes from the previous meeting will be sent to each board member for review before the next meeting.

#### **Section 6 – Order of Business**

All regular meetings shall be conducted from a prepared agenda, which must include, as a minimum, provisions for:

1. Call to order

2. Roll call
3. Approval of minutes of the preceding meeting
4. Correspondence
5. Director, Committee and Community reports
6. Unfinished business
7. New business
8. Adjournment

#### **Section 7 – Voting**

All decisions or rulings requiring a vote shall be considered approved with a two-thirds vote of the directors in attendance (except as otherwise noted in these by-laws). At all meetings, except for the election or dismissal of directors, all votes shall be by voice or show of hand. For election or dismissal of directors, ballots shall be provided and there shall not appear any place on the ballot that might tend to indicate the person who cast the ballot. At any regular or special meeting, if a majority so requires, any question may be voted upon in the manner and style provided for election of directors. At all votes by ballot the President shall appoint a committee of two (2) who shall act as “Inspectors of Election” and who shall certify the results in the minutes of that meeting.

#### **Section 8 – Committees**

The board of directors may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the directors in office, establish committees of the board composed of at least two (2) persons, which may include non-board members. The board may make such provisions for appointment of the chair of committees; establish procedures to govern their activities, and delegate authority as may be necessary or desirable for the efficient management of the business activities of the Corporation. Each committee needs to appoint a chair and a secretary to keep minutes of the meeting.

#### **Section 9 – Nominating Committee**

There shall be a nominating committee, composed of the President and at least two (2) other members of the board of directors. Each member of the committee shall have one (1) vote and decision shall be made by the majority.

### **Section 10 – Dismissal of a Board Member**

A director shall be terminated from the board due to excess absences and/or more than two unexcused absences from board meetings in a year. A notification by the Secretary, with a copy of the meeting minutes, will be sent to all board members who missed a meeting. In addition, any report concerning unsportsmanlike, irresponsible, unethical or illegal conduct including willful violation of TAFL rules, will be looked at in a serious manner by the President (or Vice-President if the President is the one in question or is not available). If any director commits or has committed a felony, he/she will be removed from the board. The President and Vice-President, together, can temporarily relieve a director from their position until the issue is settled or corrected.

### **Section 11 – Due Process**

Following the report of the misconduct of a board member, if any two (2) members of the board feel it is warranted that further action is needed, the President will convene a special meeting where both sides of the issue will be heard. The board of directors (less the director in question) will discuss the issue in depth. If a corrective action is not agreed upon, a secret vote on dismissing the director will be taken, tallied by the “Inspectors of Election”, with the director in question being informed of the results by the President.

### **Section 12 - Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended or revised with previous notice and a two-thirds vote of the board of directors. Due to the serious nature and possible ramifications of amending this constitution, it is advised to have ample discussion, seek past board members input, and consider the help of other qualified professionals or legal assistance.

### **Section 13 – Directors at Games**

The TAFL will have at least one director at each game to be a designated field director. At games, the designated field director shall have the authority, within his/her best judgment, to act upon or make decisions over any situation or interpretation that may arise, within the confines of this constitution and in the best interest of the TAFL. The

board of directors will vote on which director should be designated at each field at an official meeting of the board.

### **Section 14 - Coach Meetings and Clinics**

All directors of the board will attend at least one (1) of the scheduled coach’s meetings and the TAFL official’s clinic.

### **Section 15 – Officials at Games**

The board may appoint any individual to the position of official at the TAFL games.

### **Section 16 – Compensation of Directors**

The Corporation may pay compensation to its directors for services rendered to the corporation by vote of the board of directors.

### **Section 17 – Dissolution of TAFL**

If the TAFL should dissolve, all monies and equipment shall go to creditors first and the remainder going to a charitable organization. The President and Treasurer are responsible for all dissolution activities reporting all activities to the Secretary for documentation.

## **Article IV – DUTIES OF DIRECTORS**

Because of the wide range of activities and responsibilities needed to run TAFL, these duties are listed as a guideline and must not be considered inclusive of all duties that a director must perform (duties listed are not prioritized).

### **Section 1- The President shall:**

1. Oversee league direction, growth and operations.
2. Preside over all league meetings with at least one annual league meeting.
3. Develop meeting agendas.
4. Delegate authority for various tasks to directors.
5. Formulate special committees to study any problem area of concern to league members.

6. Establish yearly calendar of events in conjunction with directors.
7. Audit all year-end financial reports.
8. Maintain communications with the Thumb Area Football League, school athletic directors, vendors, etc.
9. Approve all head coaching positions.
10. Oversee draft for team selection.
11. Solicit parental involvement in league activities.
12. Attend league games and consult with field directors regarding parent and coach conduct and officiating.
13. Handle parental inquiries and complaints.
14. Attempt to resolve any problems or mediate any disputes at the request of the field director.
15. Recommend policy and by-law changes to the board.
16. Develop the schedule, in conjunction with appropriate directors, of all league games.
17. Approve team roster with other directors.
18. Chair the coaches meeting and officials' clinic. Contact all coaches prior to meetings.
19. Preside over the nomination committee.
20. Call and chair regular and special board meetings.
21. Assign directors to attend team meetings as official league representatives.

Section 2- The Vice-President Shall:

1. Attempt to resolve any problems or mediate any disputes at the request of the field director.
2. Oversee the progress of special committees to study any problem area of concern to league members.
3. Handle all details necessary to organize the registration process and sign-up of players and cheerleaders for teams.
4. Facilitate the registration process in various communities. Ensure that community directors have arranged for the following:
  - a. Secure registration site
  - b. Supply manpower needs (at least five) at sign-ups
  - c. Organize forms, supplies and tables needed
  - d. Arrange for football equipment and scales (with the equipment director).
  - e. Verify Treasurer gets monies and receipts.

- f. Verify Secretary gets all folders and forms from each registration site.
5. Develop game schedule in conjunction with the President.
6. Oversee the duties of the equipment and cheerleading directors.
7. Oversee that each community has use of facilities for each game/competition.
8. Serve in the capacity of the league President in the event of absence or resignation by the President.
9. Order and distribute awards for all football players and cheerleaders.
10. Plan the end-of-the-year coaches' banquet (date, time, place, food, etc.).
11. Attend all meetings of the league.

Section 3- The Secretary shall:

1. Keep the minutes of all league meetings and distribute these minutes among the directors.
2. Input player information from registration forms to player database for record keeping and team sorting purposes.
3. Keeps a file of all records pertaining to league business (meetings, advertisements, corporation papers, etc.) and all past records.
4. Distribute each game schedule and roster with participant's contact and medical information to community directors (who will give to the appropriate coaches).
5. Originate all correspondence as required.
  - a. Draft letters for potential sponsors.
  - b. Send thank you letters to paid sponsors.
  - c. Send letters to pre-registered participants before registration for updates.
6. Email game scores to newspapers in all communities.
7. Prepare year-end report, which summarizes the year's accomplishments, and areas that may be improved upon based on input from league directors and other interested parties.
8. Attend all meetings of the league.

Section 4- The Treasurer shall:

1. Work closely with an accountant to help maintain proper accounting and reporting of the league's financial operations. (As

the treasurer position continually changes, using the same accountant will help keep accounting records more accurate, allow financial reporting to be consistent from year to year, and will make past financial data available.)

2. Deposit all monies (from registration, fund-raising, rebates, etc.).
3. Issue receipts (oversee receipts written for registration)
4. Collect receipts for every expense.
5. Write checks.
6. Maintain banking and receipt supplies.
7. Oversee concession sales.
8. Oversee Purchase Order (P.O.) system.
9. Give accountant all income and expense information.
10. Setup, reconcile and maintain bank and credit accounts.
11. Organize and file all financial records.
12. Be responsible for all federal, state and local financial reporting and applicable forms.
13. Present profit/loss and balance sheet reports at every board of directors meeting.
14. Make the directors aware of problems, discrepancies or mistakes (as soon as possible).
15. Have a director (or another qualified person) verify/initial the amounts of money being received and deposited, petty cash and money used for cash purchases.
16. Oversee all financial operations.
18. Attend all meetings of the league.

Section 5- The Marketing Director (Fundraising/P.R.) shall:

1. Create and distribute advertisements for each community newspaper and/or television.
2. Create, copy and distribute flyers for registration to each Community Director.
3. Create and prepare, for duplication, the programs to be sold at football games.
  - a. Work closely with the Secretary and Treasurer to communicate with sponsors.
  - b. Work closely with community directors to collect all data needed from sponsors for programs and team clothing.
4. Oversee all league fundraisers.

- a. Plan and coordinate team and player photo session through the league.
  - b. Arrange for distribution of photo packages to community directors.
  - c. Set up and oversee all league fundraisers.
6. Attend all meetings of the league.

Section 6- The Equipment Director shall:

1. Oversee and order all league equipment.
2. Ensure all games have sideline markers, end zone flags, footballs, etc.
3. Ensure referees are scheduled (at least 2 per game).
4. Ensure fields are playable or, (after consulting the President or designee), call the game.
5. Oversee that each community director has ensured that:
  - a. All fields are lined.
  - b. All fields are safe from potholes, debris, rocks, etc.
  - c. All game fields are left clean of trash.
6. Be responsible for getting stadiums for the playoffs where necessary.
7. Oversee team clothing fundraiser committee.
8. Before the scheduled "Community Picnic", supply all community directors with the player's necessary equipment and supplies as agreed in the current year board of director's decisions.
9. Arrange for referees for league games with head official and President.
10. Collect and report all game results to the Secretary in a timely fashion.
11. Provide every team and every referee with a copy of the TAFL rules.
12. At games, make sure all players are wearing all required pads and equipment.
13. Report any operational problems or concerns to the league.
14. Attend all meetings of the league.

**Section 7- The Community Director shall:**

1. Register participants
  - a. Secure registration site.
  - b. Supply manpower needs (at least five) at sign-ups.
  - c. Organize forms, supplies and tables needed (with Vice President & Secretary).
  - d. Arrange for football equipment and scales (with the equipment director).
  - e. Transport monies and receipts to the Treasurer after registration.
  - f. Transport all folders and forms to the Secretary after registration.
2. Size participants for equipment and uniforms.
3. Create list of all equipment and uniforms needed and give to equipment director.
4. Create a coaching pool (verifying final choices with President). Assist coaches with any needs.
5. Acquire team sponsors (verifying information with marketing director).
6. Report to the president on all teams: team names, team colors, coach's names, and a complete roster (including names, ages and if they are a returning player).
7. Acquire two football field(s), facilities, as needed, and prepare for competition (act as liaison for TAFL).
8. Acquire adequate football field(s), facilities, as needed, and prepare for competition (act as liaison for TAFL).
9. Facilitate the running of your own community concessions (act as liaison for TAFL).
10. Act as liaison for TAFL fundraisers.
11. Set up and run the "Community Picnic" for your community teams.
  - a. Coach meeting
  - b. Pass out equipment
  - c. Parent meeting/ "team parent" representative
12. Distribute and collect all equipment from your community teams (work closely with equipment director for return of equipment).
13. Attend TAFL community events to ensure availability to community teams, parents and coaches.

14. Investigate and report all injuries requiring medical treatment to TAFL.
15. Attend all meetings of the league.
16. Collect and report all game results for host games to the Secretary in a timely fashion.

**Section 8- The Cheerleading Director shall:**

1. Oversee all league cheerleading operations.
2. Assist registration committee.
3. Oversee the ordering of equipment and uniforms for cheerleaders using P.O. system (work closely with equipment director).
4. Oversee all cheerleading practice and game schedules (assist coaches with any needs).
5. Assist equipment director with team clothing fundraiser for cheerleaders.
6. Organize and run the cheer coaches' meeting.
7. Chair the cheerleading rules committee.
8. Oversee and enforce all cheerleading rules and guidelines.
9. Attend all meetings of the league.

**Article V- INDEMNIFICATION**

**Section 1- Indemnification**

Every member of the board of directors of the Corporation may be indemnified by the Corporation against all expenses and liabilities, including counsel fees, reasonably incurred or imposed upon such members of the board in connection with any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit or proceeding to which she/he may become involved by reason of his/her being or having been a member of the board of the Corporation, or any settlement thereof, unless adjudged therein to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of her/his duties. Provided, however, that in the event of a settlement the indemnification herein shall apply only when the board approves such settlement and reimbursement as being in the best interest of the Corporation. The foregoing right of indemnification shall be in addition and not exclusive of all other rights, which such member of the board is entitled.

## Article VI - PLAYER PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY

### Section 1- Age

To participate in the TAFL, the youth must have attained the age of seven (7) before November 1<sup>st</sup> to participate that season. Any player whose birthday occurs before November 1<sup>st</sup> of the current season shall play at that age level in which he/she turns on said birthday. No participant may turn 14 before November 1<sup>st</sup> of the current season.

**Certificate of Age** - Each youth wishing to participate in the TAFL must certify his/her birth date by one or more of the following:

1. Birth Certificate (or a certified copy thereof).
2. Hospital record of birth.

Documents must be submitted and verified at the time of registration. In the event that a formal proof of age is not available, the community director shall gather all documentary evidence (i.e. baptismal record, school record, etc.), establish a just age, and submit proof to the board of directors for their decision as to eligibility.

### Section 2- Residence Requirements

Each youth wishing to participate in the TAFL shall reside in the area defined as the Greater Thumb Area on the day of the first game, but need not be a student of the public school system. The Greater Thumb Area is defined as the area of Michigan east of I-75 to Bay City and north of M-59 (Hall-Rd.).

### Section 3 - Player Registration Fees

1. Registration fees shall be determined by the board of directors before the first registration each year and shall be publicized.
2. Player registration fees shall be paid by each player at the time of registration. Failure to pay the entire fee may result in ineligibility for the participant.
3. The board of directors may approve to waive a youth's registration fee in case of hardship.
4. Registration and uniform fees will not be refunded if a participant decides to drop out of the TAFL program.

5. If a community has a player who hasn't paid their registration balance by the first game, they will not be allowed to play. The community is then responsible for paying TAFL the unpaid balance and has to recoup the cost from the player.

### Section 4 - Parental Approval and Release

To participate in the TAFL the parent/guardian of the participant shall sign a proper release form, medical-insurance information form and player-contact information form. These forms shall be approved by the board of directors and completed fully by the parent/guardian at the time of registration. The participant is not eligible and cannot practice or play games until all forms are properly completed and signed.

### Section 5 - Assignment of Age Division

During registration, the league shall inform the player and his/her parent/guardian of the appropriate age division for which the youth qualifies. Should there be a change in the youth's status after registration; the League shall notify the youth and his parents/guardians of the new assignment prior to the first game of the season. No exceptions for age division assignment will be made at the time of registration.

**Based on age specifications, the age divisions are as follows:**

#### **AGE DIVISIONS:**

(7-8 yr. olds)      (9-10 yr. olds)      (11-12 yr. olds) (7<sup>th</sup> Grade)

#### **Exceptions:**

The board of directors will act upon all exception requests and their decision will be conveyed to the participant and parent/guardian prior to the first game.

A player may move up to the next age division if all weight requirements have been met. A parent must submit a written petition to the board of directors for review.

Section 6- Weight Limits & Weighing-in

The weight restriction in the various age divisions is as follows: (note below: under “Weigh-ins” a player’s weight is with full playing gear including the helmet):

Ages:	<u>7-8</u>	<u>9-10</u>	<u>11-12</u>	<u>7<sup>th</sup> Grade</u>
Maximum Weight (Minimum weight removed)	140	170	200	No Limit

For running backs, receivers, and ball returners

Maximum Weight*	110	140	160	No Limit
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\* Offense: Players over this weight must play on the offensive line (tackle-to-tackle only).

\* Kick receive: Players over this weight may play only on the front line positions.

\* Defense: Only two (2) inside linebackers can be over this weight limit, others must play on the defensive line (tackle-to-tackle).

If, at registration, the player is ineligible due to weight, the player can register to play in the TAFL with the understanding that they cannot play in the league if they cannot make the weight limit by the ‘team assignment-equipment pass out day’ (Community Picnic). A 50% refund will be given.

If a player is eligible (makes the weight limit) at registration and becomes ineligible at some time during the season, that player cannot participate in games until he/she can make the weight limit. The player can participate in practice without contact. In this situation, the coach must insure that the field director weighs the player before the game for the player to become eligible for that game.

A fluorescent circle sticker will be placed on a player’s helmet to indicate he cannot carry the ball.

**Weigh-ins:**

1. Weigh-ins will be held before each game.
2. The field director or designee will run all weigh-ins.

3. Each team must have a coach watching the weigh-in of the opposing team.
4. The players must be weighed in the equipment they will play in (with helmets).
5. No extra equipment or padding may be added to the player after they have weighed-in.
6. The scales at the game field shall be considered official.
7. Players must meet the weight limits to be eligible to play.

Any team using an unqualified player or switching jersey numbers (without notice) will automatically forfeit the game. The coach of the team will be suspended and the community director will appoint an interim head coach.

Section 7- Team Assignment at Registration

Youths will not be assigned to a team at time of registration and there is no guarantee that any player will get a team he/she wants or is expecting.

Section 8- Ineligibility

Any youth may be determined to be ineligible to play by being in violation of these by-laws and rules of play.

Article VII – COACHES

Section 1- Coaching Assignment

The President shall assign all head coaching positions prior to the assignment of players to teams. The President will decide arbitrarily, upon all information received who; will or will not be a coach for TAFL. First consideration for head coach positions shall be given to board members, coaches from previous years, and parents that, in the opinion of the board of directors, have a background indicating qualifications for the position.

All coaches, including assistants, must be at least 21 years of age. All head coaches will have prior experience coaching youth sport participants. All coaches and assistants will have their backgrounds

checked for criminal and sexual offenses, and/or other behavior deemed inappropriate.

#### Section 2 - Certification

Certification is not a requirement yet, but in the near future, the league will investigate the need for our coaches to be certified by some type of standardized coaching certification program like the National Federation of Interscholastic Coaches Association (NFICA).

#### Section 3 - Duties

1. All teams are to be coached by a minimum of two (2) coaches, but no more than four (4). Head coaches are responsible for obtaining no more than three (3) assistant coaches to assist him/her in their coaching responsibilities.
2. All coaches must attend regular TAFL coach meetings. All head coaches must attend special TAFL coach meetings (assistant coaches are requested to come to these special meetings). The privilege to coach is jeopardized if these meetings are missed without cause.
3. Head coaches shall familiarize themselves, their assistants, their players, their cheerleaders, and their parents/guardians with the RULES OF PLAY as they apply to their age division.
4. All coaches are expected to increase their own knowledge of the game and coaching techniques. Attending clinics and seminars is a great resource.
5. Coaches are responsible to instruct and coach each player in the fundamentals of the sport while providing a safe environment to instill the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play.
6. Coaches are to get the athletes in a physical condition to adequately perform to their team and position requirements.
7. Head coaches shall hold at least one parent meeting (individually or in mass) prior to the beginning of the league game schedule. This meeting shall inform the parent/guardians of the nature of how the team will be coached (i.e. how practices will be run, what is expected, etc.), the operations of the league, and proper conduct and sportsmanship.
8. Head coaches will receive a file of each player's contact and medical information from the community director. This file must

be available at every practice and game and is to be kept confidential.

9. All coaches are to demonstrate good sportsmanship and conduct oneself in an adult manner at all times.
10. Periodically, coaches are to check the fit and usability of every player's helmet and all pads.
11. It is mandatory that head coaches get one "team parent" to help with functions of the team and recruit/coordinate the other parents' help. This person will be the one person to relay issues that may come up between "parents and coaches" or "parents and the league" (but never to a referee). This person will also coordinate the team's fundraising activities, team photos, and other non-coaching activities. If no "team parent" is assigned, the head coach will be responsible for this additional work.
12. Coaches are to make sure everything is picked up after every practice or game.
13. After each season, each head coach shall be responsible for the safekeeping and return of all equipment assigned to their team to their community director.
14. Since it is the coaches that are directly involved in almost every aspect of the league, it is requested that every coach feel free to communicate with the board regarding any ideas and solutions to improve league operations.

#### Section 4- Dismissal of a Coach

In the event of a dismissal of a coach, the following procedure will be observed:

Any report concerning unsportsmanlike, irresponsible, or inappropriate conduct, including willful violation of TAFL rules, will be looked at in a serious manner by the field director and by the president. The President, Vice-President or field director can temporarily (and immediately) remove and replace a coach from their position until the issue is settled or corrected. In absence of the President, Vice-President or field director, any director can temporarily remove a coach for misconduct.

Following the report of the misconduct, if any two (2) members of the board feel it is warranted that further action is needed; the president will convene a special meeting where both sides of the issue will be heard.

The board of directors will discuss the issue in depth. If a corrective action is not agreed upon, a vote on dismissing the coach will be taken. The votes will be tallied by the “Inspectors of Election” with the coach in question being informed of the results by the President.

### Article VIII- TEAM ASSIGNMENT

#### Section 1- Player Draft

A draft selection process will take place to determine the placement of players on teams. A coach representative from each community team in each age division will meet with a representative of the TAFL to make team selections. The President, Vice President, and Community Director may also be present to assist in the process.

#### Section 2- Team Assignment Date

Team assignments shall be made before equipment orders are due. This date will be determined prior to each season by the board of directors.

Late registration – Players registering after the posted registration deadline are not guaranteed to play. Players registering after team assignments have been made shall be assigned to a team by the President. In making late assignments, the President shall maintain team balance as best as he/she can while assigning participants to a team. Maintaining team balance shall take preference.

**After seven (7) days of the posted final registration deadline, late registrations will only be accepted by approval of the board of directors. Late registrations will not be considered one (1) week**

**before the first allowable day of practice, unless agreed approved by the President and Vice President.**

#### Section 3- Community Assignment Procedures

The board of directors will decide how member areas (communities) will be separated and who will be in the pool of players for that community’s selection pool.

If a community cannot be assigned a full team, the players from that community will default into the nearest community selection pool possible (or the specific region’s pool, where regions exist). All players can request playing with a specific community at the time of registration, although these requests are not guaranteed.

#### Section 4- Team Assignment Draft Procedures

This shall be the established procedure for the selection of team personnel for all TAFL member areas:

1. Each child will be placed in the appropriate community based on their registration information. Any player who would like to play in a community other than their TAFL community must be TAFL board approved first.
2. The number of teams will be determined from the number of participants in each age group registered for that specific community. Each team shall be assigned a minimum of 15 players (subject to the community’s pool of players and the draft process). T.A.F.L. Board approval will be needed if over 24 players on a team.
3. Coaches will be selected to represent each team.
4. A “skills day” may be held by each community. This is the option of the community director. Coaches will be able to observe their community’s players for skill level. A community may elect to use a “fantasy draft” procedure in lieu of a “skills day”.
5. A draft will be held by each community with a TAFL representative present.
6. Order of draft will be determined by a flip of the coin or pulling a number out of a hat.

- a) The head coach's child (if applicable) is the team's 4<sup>th</sup> round pick.
  - b) The assistant coach's children (if applicable) are drafted starting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round and going forward to the 1<sup>st</sup> round, if needed.
  - c) The head and assistant coach's children are placed on the teams at the start of the draft, before any other players are selected.
  - d) If a head and assistant coach's children number more than four (4) (i.e. siblings), then the extra player(s) is the team's 5<sup>th</sup> round pick and the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, etc., as needed.
7. The draft then begins with team 1, 2, 3, etc. selecting players until the 1<sup>st</sup> round is complete.
  8. The 2<sup>nd</sup> round begins at the bottom of the team order (i.e. the team that picked last in the 1<sup>st</sup> round goes first in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round) and goes up through the teams until the round is complete.
  9. The 3<sup>rd</sup> round starts at the top and the draft continues in the top to bottom, bottom to top style until all players have been selected.
  10. If a player is selected and has a sibling(s) in the same age division, that sibling(s) must be the team's next round pick(s); unless, it is requested that they are not on the same team.
  11. It is imperative that the coaches and community director keep the teams as evenly matched as possible.
  12. All children go back into the draft process each year. There are no carryovers or protecting players for future seasons. All teams will be formed using the above process.
  13. No guarantees will be given for a participant to play on a certain team.
  14. After the completion of the draft, the TAFL Secretary will prepare rosters for each team. Player's jersey numbers need to be recorded by all coaches and updated rosters given to community directors after uniforms are issued to teams.

### Article IX- TEAM PRACTICES

#### Section 1- Practice Fields

The community director shall try to assign practice fields for each team that are most convenient for the majority of the players involved

and are evenly spread throughout the school district and/or area as possible. Coaches can use other practice fields with the approval of the community director and must first secure any other approval needed to use that field.

#### Section 2- Practice Policies

1. The first day of practice shall not be before the "community Picnic" of the applicable year. The president shall determine the exact date pre-season practice shall commence each season. Any team practicing before the scheduled time will be automatically suspended from that year play-off games. A practice is considered three (3) or more players from the same team drafted in that applicable year. The only exception to this rule is a "Community Camp", which consists of no more than 2-4 days in which every athlete in the community was invited to participate via the school system. This camp cannot be held any earlier than one week before the official start of TAFL Practice.
2. There shall be at least three (3) weeks of practice minimum and four (4) weeks of practice maximum preceding the first league game.
3. No practices are to be held on Sundays. Additionally, no practices are to be held on Fridays once school starts or when high school football starts, whichever comes first. Coaches are encouraged to schedule their practices around school activities as much as possible.
4. The first week of practice shall consist of conditioning only...no contact (contact being defined as a player coming into physical contact with another player, sled, dummy, shield, etc.). Players cannot have contact until they have completed at least 3 conditioning practices.
5. Once contact starts, only two (2) practices per week can involve contact.
6. During pre-season (before games start), each team shall practice at least one (1) time per week and no more than four (4) per week...but keep in mind the following (#7).
7. Each player shall have completed at least ten (10) practices before participating in his/her first game. The team shall forfeit each game they play where this rule is not followed.

8. After the first game, through the rest of the season, each team shall practice at least one (1) time per week and no more than three (3) times per week (two (2) times with contact).
9. Participants joining a team after the first practice must satisfy rules #4 and #7 starting from the day they join the team.
10. If any team knowingly allows an unregistered or unqualified player to practice or play games will forfeit all games in which the player was used. The head coach of the team will be suspended from his or her coaching duties and the community director will appoint an interim head coach.
11. Practices will not be held when lightning can be seen.
12. No practice/scrimmage games shall be held prior to two weeks before the first game of the season and can only be played against TAFL teams in the same age group. Any special events, games, scrimmages, etc. involving teams from TAFL member areas, must be approved by the league prior to the event. There will be no scrimmages or practices against teams from non-TAFL members.

### Article X – REGIONS

As the numbers of teams expand, “regions” may be created. Regions will provide a convenience to participants and their families, simplify team assignments and game scheduling, and allow the league to grow throughout the Thumb Area.

There must be at least six (6) teams in each age division to start forming regions. A region will have a minimum of three (3) teams for each age division.

The board of directors will decide, each year, if there should be regions or define what communities will be in each region while being cognizant of balancing the number of teams and balancing the quality of competition as much as possible. As the league grows, regions may change in area and include different communities.

While most games will be scheduled against other teams in the same region, there may be some games scheduled against teams in other regions.

The goal is to have, at most, 4 regions (North, South, East, West), each having regular season game schedules within their own region. The winners of each age division would qualify them for the TAFL championship playoffs.

### Article XI – GAME SCHEDULE & LOCATION

#### Section 1 - Scheduling of Games

All scheduling and locations of regular season games will be set before the first day of practice of the season and be handed out to all players. Playoff games will be announced at a later date. The community director is responsible for issuing game schedules to all teams.

#### Section 2 - Number of Games

No team shall play more than No team shall play more than Eight (8) games in a regular season. If Playoffs are played within a specified season, it is our goal for all teams to be in at least one Playoff game. Playoffs shall consist of the top qualifying four (4) teams; where the winner of the playoffs will have played in at least (2) playoff games for a total of eight (8) games for the season. All other teams will play in lower bracket playoffs.

#### Section 3 - Game Fields

Game fields may be the designated home fields for each community/region. Games will be scheduled at participating communities throughout the Thumb Area. (Where regions exist, teams qualifying for the playoffs may have to travel to another region). A coin toss will designate home field. The community director will be responsible for designating home and away sides of the fields for each team on game day.

#### Section 4 - Dates and Times of Games

The date of the first game will be set, each year, by the board of directors, taking into consideration practice requirements and holidays. Up to eight (8) regular season games shall be played in consecutive weeks (except for holiday weekends), unless there are playoffs. If applicable, playoffs will start the weekend following the last regular season game.

If feasibly possible, all regular season games will be on Saturday at various times during daylight hours. If applicable, playoffs could be played “under the lights” at night.

### Article XII- RULES OF PLAY

#### Section 1- Basic Rules

T AFL competition and practices are governed by the playing rules and amendments of the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) and the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA). Some T AFL rules have been added for the participants’ and the league’s best interest. Regulation high school playing, substitution, and scoring rules will be in effect except where they conflict with T AFL rules.

#### Section 2- Field Director at each Game

The board of directors shall appoint a director to be present at each game and serve as field director. The appointed field director shall be responsible for seeing that the conduct of all officials, coaches, players, cheerleaders, and spectators is appropriate. The field director shall have the authority, within his/her best judgment, to act upon or make decisions over any situation that may arise, within the confines of this constitution and with the best interest of T AFL.

#### Section 3- “Home” Team

The “Home” team coach shall appoint responsible individuals to handle the chains and down boxes. These individuals are not allowed to talk to players, coaches, or officials other than as part of their official capacity. The “chain gang” will stand on the home team’s sideline.

Starting the second half of the game, there is no choice of who kicks the ball and who receives. The team that received the kickoff at the beginning of the game will kick the ball at the start of the second half from the same side of the field in which they started the game.

#### Section 4- Inclement Weather

Referees can stop the game due to lightning (or other severe weather conditions) and will consult with the field director who will make the decision to continue or not continue playing. There will not be a waiting period to see if more favorable weather conditions will come to continue play. All decisions in this regard are final. Games will be played in rain or snow.

If the lightning (or other severe weather condition) stops, the next scheduled game (of that day) will start at its regularly scheduled time. If this game cannot be played, then the following game will still be scheduled to play at its regularly scheduled time.

If a game has been cancelled and has completed 3 full quarters, the team with the most points at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter shall be the winner of the game (if the game is tied after the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, the game will be considered a tie). If the game has not completed three (3) full quarters, the game is cancelled and will not be rescheduled.

#### Section 5- Tie Breakers

When there is a tie between teams the following order will be used to decide the winner:

- a. Head to head competition
- b. Defensive points scored against you
- c. Coin toss

In cases where overtime is necessary, the following play guidelines will come into effect: 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12 year old divisions will run 4 plays all starting at the 10 yard line. The first team to stop the opposing team from scoring wins. Each team gets a possession. This continues until one team is stopped short of scoring. The U13/7<sup>th</sup> grade division will run 4 plays as well; however, they will start from the 15 yard line. A coin toss will determine who gets the ball first.

#### Section 6 – Every Participant Plays

All players shall start on either offense, defense, or special teams for all age groups, with the exception of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and thereafter play as equally as possible. All coaches shall be responsible for insuring that each team member is provided with the opportunity to play as equally as possible in proportion to the amount of practice time during the current week, at the coach's discretion. Each head coach is responsible for devising a system to assure such participation. Our goal will be to get at least 5 plays per half, per child.

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade program will be the only exception and will attempt to give adequate playing time, based on player participation, ability, and coaches' discretion. The program will follow junior high school rules.

If a field or community director determines that a team member is not being allowed to participate, he/she shall inform the head coach. If the condition persists and there is not a good reason, the field director must take the matter to the board of directors for further review and/or disciplinary action. On determining a flagrant violation, the board can remove a coach, or take other action at its discretion.

#### Section 7 – Uniforms and Equipment

Each member of each team must wear the uniform designated by the TAFL during all league games. If part or all of the uniform is forgotten at game time, a sweatshirt/shirt and pants of the basic color for that team must be worn during the game. The opposing coach must approve of the substitute uniform; otherwise, the player cannot play. The field director will have final say if there is a dispute.

Game jerseys will be supplied by the League and shall not be worn for practice. Players **are encouraged** to wear these game jerseys in public and at school.

Due to the safety factor, if two (2) teams, which are playing each other, have the same color jerseys, the home team will change to

another color or use field/practice jerseys. (This will be a concern when there are different regions set up.)

Coaches shall be responsible for their teams' appearance. Clean pants, socks, shirts, and shoes with the correct coloring are recommended. Shirts tucked in and socks and pants pulled up are highly encouraged.

Every player must wear gym shoes or rubber cleats. All other football cleats and footwear must be approved by the field director.

Every player must wear TAFL approved shoulder pads, helmet with facemask and football pants with all the pads. Player bought equipment, including arm pads, must be TAFL approved before using in a practice or game. Every effort should be made by field directors and coaches to see that no obsolete or worn out equipment is used and that all equipment fits well. All face shields must be clear and approved by the field director.

If a player wears a neck roll, the TAFL strongly suggests a proper fit. Proper fitting being defined as: "neck roll that adequately protects the neck, but still allows movement of the head in all directions."

All players must wear mouth protectors either clear or colored, unless the player has written permission from his/her dentist. Mouthpieces **must** be attached to the helmet and worn in the mouth while on the playing field. A first warning may or may not be issued by the referee. A 10-yard penalty will be given for each violation.

Individual award stickers are prohibited to be placed on helmets. 1<sup>st</sup> offense: The player must be removed from the playing field until the sticker is removed. 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Team may be required to forfeit.

#### Section 8 – Referees

All referees (regardless of whether they are MHSA/NFIO sanctioned) must attend the TAFL Official's Clinic for continuing certification to officiate in the league. All referees must have a copy of the MHSAA Rules for the current year and get a copy of the TAFL rules from the equipment director or designated TAFL Board Member.

Referees shall be a minimum of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, although all officiating crews must include at least one (1) adult (21 or older) to serve as the head referee at all contests. There must be at least two officials at every game. Referees work directly for the designated field director.

Referees may penalize teams 15-yards for unsportsmanlike conduct by the players, coaching staff **or** supporting fans. This does not eliminate the possibility of questioning an official on a call; however this must be done in a sportsmanlike manner.

The TAFL is responsible for the continuing education of the league’s referees. The field director is responsible for any communication between the league and the officials.

Section 9 – Game Playing Times

All age divisions will have:

Ages:	<u>7-8</u>	<u>9-10</u>	<u>11-12</u>	<u>7<sup>th</sup> Grade</u>
Minutes per Quarter	10	11	12	Jr. High Rules 8 min.
				“stopped” clock

Four quarters, a 2-minute rest between quarters, and an 8-minute rest at half time.

Each team is entitled to three 35-second time outs per half.

The clock will stop for all penalties after a score, following kick-off, an injury or equipment repair. The clock is not stopped for any other reason, with the exception of the last two minutes of the first and second halves of the game when the difference in score is within 8 points, then and only then will the clock stop for a dead ball (i.e. going out-of-bounds, after a pass play or the time it takes to move the 1<sup>st</sup> down markers).

(currently it states “the last two minutes of the game when the difference in score is eight ..)

Each team must have a 10-minute warm-up of stretching and/or calisthenics before starting each game. Before starting the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of each game, at least a 2-minute warm-up will be observed by each team. These warm-ups are mandatory and will be enforced by the referees. Should either warm-up result in a delayed start of either half, the team causing the delay is to be penalized 15 yards at the time of kick-off.

In the event of injury, an official’s time-out will be called. However, the hurt player must report to their sideline after the time-out and remain there at least three (3) consecutive plays. The referees will be instructed at the TAFL Official’s Clinic to follow this procedure.

Section 10 – TAFL Special Rules of Play

PATs (Point After Touchdowns):

After a touchdown, the point after will be either run or passed successfully from the 3-yard line and will count for one (1) point. The offense has the option to go for two (2) points from the 5-yard line and must notify the referee of this decision before the ball is placed in play. There will be no place kicks for either PATs or field goals, except for 7<sup>th</sup> grade if conforms to the school requirements.

Fumbles:

The defense shall not advance fumble recoveries. Offense cannot advance a fumble once the ball is past the line of scrimmage, except for 7<sup>th</sup> grade if conforms to the school requirements.

Punt Rush and Punt Return:

In our continuing attempt to improve player safety, the following rules for punting plays will be followed:

**Age Divisions:**

7 – 8 yr. olds	No punt rush	No punt return
9 – 10 yr. olds	No punt rush	No punt return

In lieu of a punt, the ball is automatically placed 25 yards from the line of scrimmage unless you are inside the 40, then it is half the distance.

**Age Division:**

11 – 12 yr. olds	Punt rush allowed*	Punt return allowed
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Punt rush allowed*	Punt return allowed

\* There will be NO contact allowed with the offensive center (long snapper) on the line of scrimmage in a punt situation. Referees shall be instructed to enforce any violation with a personal foul with a 15-yard penalty and an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

Kick-offs:

**Age Divisions**

7–8 yr. olds	No Kick-offs	Ball placed on 40-yd. line
9–10 yr. olds	Kick-offs allowed	Ball kicked from 40-yd. line
11–12 yr. olds	Kick-offs allowed	Ball kicked from 40-yd. line
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Kick-offs allowed	Ball kicked from 40-yd. line

Trick Plays:

In keeping with the primary mission of the TAFL, which is teaching football fundamentals and sportsmanship, the following “gadget” plays are not permitted:

- Center sneaks (hiking the ball without a count)
- Fumble-rooskis (fumbling the ball on purpose to get an advantage)
- Bounce passes or any play where the receiver/ball carrier leaves the playing field and returns to handle the ball.

The team attempting to use one of the above plays shall be penalized with both the loss of a down and a 10-yard assessment. The designated field director shall have the final determination of a trick/gadget play.

Sideline Area:

All coaches must remain on the sidelines as in regular high school rules and may enter the playing field to converse with their players only during called time-outs. There shall be an automatic 15-yard

penalty for any member of the coaching staff on the playing field that interrupts the normal progress of the game.

Coaches and players on the sidelines must remain one (1) yard back and within the 25-yard line markers.

**Exception:**

For Age Divisions: 7–8 yr. olds and 9–10 yr. olds  
One (1) coach per team may be present on the playing field, but shall not interfere, either physically or verbally, while play is in progress. The coach can be in the huddle but must remain at least ten (10) yards behind the line of scrimmage and out of the playing area when play resumes.

Out-Scoring by more than 32 Points:

Any team out-scoring an opponent by more than 32 points could be given a bye the following game. If, in the opinion of the designated field director at the game, every practical effort was made to keep the score down or there are circumstances beyond the coach’s control that prevented the team from keeping the score down, the bye will not be enforced. Before any such action takes place, the designated field director and the president must discuss the situation.

Section 11 – Miscellaneous.

**Football size.** All 7-8 year old and 9-10 year old teams shall use a “Pee-Wee” football or its equivalent size for practice and games. All 11-12 year old teams shall use a “Junior” football or its equivalent size for practice and games. 7<sup>th</sup> grade shall use a Youth Size Football.

**Defensive Line.** 7–8 yr. old and 9–10 yr. old teams must have no more than a six (6) man defensive line at all times, except goal line defense inside the 10 yard line. Defensive line, tackle to tackle, must be in a 3 or 4 point stance. Linebackers need to be 3 yards off the ball and can’t move until the ball is snapped. This is for the 7/8, 9/10 and 11/12 year old divisions. Any violation is a 15 yard penalty.

**Extra Games.** Games to be played against non-member football teams must be approved by the board of directors prior to scheduling the

game. In any TAFL area, where the opposing team is not affiliated with TAFL, the opposing team shall be under the nominal supervision of the area field director.

**Horsecollaring.** All horse collaring will result in a 15 yard penalty.

#### Section 12 - Sportsmanship

Rules governing the conduct of coaches, players, and spectators are continuously reviewed by the league in an attempt to stem unsportsmanlike behavior.

In an effort to keep the game environment under control, the Referees may penalize a team 15-yards for unsportsmanlike conduct by the players, coaching staff **or** supporting fans.

Any coach or assistant coach entering the field of play to argue an official's call in an unsportsmanlike or hostile manner, shall be immediately ejected from the game. He/she will be required to leave the playing site immediately before the game resumes and will be on a league-enforced suspension from all practices and games for the next seven (7) calendar days. Any coach not complying will forfeit the game in question and the entire team will be suspended from all practices and games for the next seven (7) calendar days. The designated field director must report any such ejection to the president and the league.

Any player or coach using profanity, degrading language, unsportsmanlike gestures or taunting of another player, coach or referee shall be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct. This penalty shall be considered a team penalty and the next unsportsmanlike infraction from any player or coach of the same team will result in an immediate ejection of that player or coach from the game. A 3<sup>rd</sup> unsportsmanlike infraction from a player or coach will result in that team forfeiting the game.

Concerning the sportsmanship of spectators and fans, it will be explained to the coaches at the coaches' meetings, officials' clinic and by every field director, that it is the coach's responsibility to control

their team's fans and parents. If the coach cannot control them, then the designated field director must step in and restore order. It should be explained that at the 1<sup>st</sup> such offense, a sportsmanlike conduct penalty, will be enforced and 15 yards marked off against the offending team. A 2<sup>nd</sup> offense will require the field director to stop the game and if the individual(s) causing the disturbance can be identified, they will be instructed to leave the playing site or the game will be stopped and a forfeit awarded to the opposing team.

All spectators must remain at least five (5) yards from all boundaries of the playing field. The field director shall, immediately escort any spectator entering the playing field for reasons other than player injuries, from the playing site. The game will resume once the spectator has left the game site.

#### Section 13 – Participant Awards and Gifts

At the end of the season, the league will present each player on all teams with an award (i.e. usually a shirt and trophy).

#### Section 14 - Safety

Player safety should always be on the forefront of all coaches, officials, and directors' minds both on and off the fields.

Each team is to be equipped with a first aid kit, including ice packs. Coaches are required to bring their first aid kit (including ice packs) to all practices and games. If more first aid supplies are needed, the coaches must contact the league to replenish their inventory of medical supplies.

In the event of an injury, the field director in charge may remove an injured player from the game if in his/her opinion, the player is unable to safely continue.

All field directors, head coaches and assistants should be, at least, acquainted in basic first aid procedures.

The community director, with the help of the board of directors, will develop an emergency action plan to evacuate an injured player (ambulance, etc.) as part of every community's pre-season planning.

Section 15- TAFL Blood borne Pathogens

In keeping with the TAFL policy of stressing the utmost safety at all times for our participants and following the current MHSAA guidelines, the following policy will be invoked and adhered to by all TAFL communities and their players, coaches, referees and community directors.

1. A player who is bleeding, whether from an injury, previous injury, or an unexpected occurrence (i.e. nose bleed) shall not be allowed to play until the bleeding is stopped. All traces of the blood must be removed and the injury site adequately covered by a dressing.
2. Any player who has liquefied (fresh) blood on a jersey, pants, pad or socks will not be allowed to play until the jersey, pad, or sock(s) is replaced or removed. Realizing that this should be a rare occurrence, but that the possibility exists, the TAFL suggests that all teams have at least two (2) extra jerseys provided for them by their respective area and it shall be the coach's responsibility to see that these jerseys are at each game.
3. Each area shall provide latex (plastic) gloves for use by each team, in addition to furnishing gloves for use by the game officials. These gloves are to be safely disposed of if they are used, along with any Band-Aids, dressings or related medical supplies that may come in contact with blood.
4. It is suggested that each area formulate a procedure for handling a "bleeding occurrence," such as who is authorized to treat an individual who may be bleeding, for instance, the field director, coach, etc.
5. The League recognizes that it is not economically feasible to have spare football pants on each and every sideline. However, in the

event of a bleeding occurrence on a player's pants, the player will not be allowed to participate until the blood is removed and/or covered.

6. The referees shall be instructed to remove from the game any player with blood on the above mentioned equipment. This is not just the injured player, but any participant who has come into contact with the injured player and may have blood on their equipment. No injury time out will be assessed in the event of a bleeding occurrence, however the injured player will be held out of play until bleeding stops and blood is cleaned up properly and coach sees player is fit to play again. See TAFL Blood borne Pathogens Rule #4.
7. These regulations shall remain in effect until further notice.

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None of the Thumb Area Football League rules can be waived by any person for any reason. Anyone willfully violating any rule will be suspended for one (1) year. Reinstatement/appeal procedures are outlined in the TAFL Guidelines.

### **CERTIFICATION**

These bylaws were amended at a meeting of the Board of Directors by a unanimous vote on July 30, 2009.

Tara Jordan

Secretary

7-31-2009

Date