

BYLAWS OF THE NATIONAL DEAF FOOTBALL LEAGUE

A Nonprofit Corporation — Tax-Exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3)

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ARTICLE I — NAME, LEGAL STATUS, AND ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Name. The name of this organization shall be the National Deaf Football League ("NDFL" or "the League").

Section 2. Legal Status. The League is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under applicable state law and is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. No part of the League's net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any member, commissioner, officer, or private individual. The League shall not devote a substantial part of its activities to influencing legislation, and shall not participate in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Section 3. Member Leagues. The NDFL operates four member leagues. References to "the League" or "the NDFL" apply to all four unless otherwise stated:

- Men's Deaf Tackle Football League (MDTFL)
- Men's Deaf Flag Football League (MDFFL)
- Women's Deaf Flag Football League (WDFFL)
- COED Deaf Flag Football League (CDFFL)

Section 4. Formats of Play. The League offers two formats of play, assigned by the Board of Commissioners:

- **Tackle (full contact).** Governed by American 7s Football League (A7FL) rules as modified and adopted by the Board. Players wear a rugby-style soft foam helmet, knee-pad leggings, and a mouthguard. Hard-shell helmets and hard pads are prohibited. Applies to the MDTFL.
- **Flag (non-contact).** Applies to the MDFFL, WDFFL, and CDFFL.

Detailed playing rules for each format are maintained in the NDFL Operations Manual and may be amended by majority vote of the Board.

Section 5. Regional Divisions. The League is organized into three regional divisions:

- **West Coast Division:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.
- **Central Division:** Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin.
- **East Division:** Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Section 6. Realignment. The Board of Commissioners may add, remove, or realign divisions and assign member teams to divisions by majority vote when necessary for competitive balance, travel, or League growth.

Section 7. Definitions. For purposes of these Bylaws:

- "Good standing" means a member who has paid all applicable dues and fees, is not subject to a current suspension or ban under Article X, and has complied with all registration and documentation requirements.
- "Dependent child" means a child under eighteen (18) years of age who resides with and is financially supported by the parent or guardian, or a child over eighteen (18) who is enrolled as a full-time student and primarily financially dependent upon the parent or guardian.
- "Permanently incapacitated" means a physical or mental condition that, as determined by a majority vote of the Board based on competent medical evidence, prevents the individual from substantially performing the duties of their office for a period exceeding one hundred eighty (180) consecutive days.
- "Team owner" means the individual or individuals who hold responsibility for a member team's registration, roster, fees, and compliance with these Bylaws, as recorded with the League.

ARTICLE II — PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

The League is organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Its objectives are to:

- Promote and protect the mutual interests of all NDFL members.
- Develop participation in football among Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and signing communities.
- Encourage sportsmanship, teamwork, and healthy competition.
- Advance the physical, moral, and cultural education of the Deaf football community, including Deaf culture.
- Provide a national structure for men's, women's, and coed football competition.
- Support research, coaching development, and program growth for Deaf football.
- Host national tournaments and elevate the visibility of Deaf football.

ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Classes of Membership. The League recognizes three classes of membership: Active Football Membership, Corporate and Sponsor Membership, and Friends of NDFL Membership.

Section 2. Active Football Membership. Active membership is open to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and hearing individuals who:

- Are eighteen (18) years of age or older and have graduated from high school;
- Can communicate using sign language;
- Are not actively participating in NCAA collegiate athletics;
- Have signed the League liability waiver and Code of Conduct; and
- Have satisfied all registration, insurance, and documentation requirements.

Participation by hearing (non-Deaf) players is limited to two (2) per team. A player may not register with more than one team per division in the same season.

Section 3. Team Requirements. Each member team shall carry team liability insurance, maintain a roster not exceeding twenty-one (21) players, and submit a recent headshot photograph of every player to

the League no later than two (2) weeks before the team's first scheduled game. Headshots are used for player identification, roster verification, and League records.

Section 4. Game-Day Credentials. On game day, every player, coach, and game official shall present a valid government-issued photo identification and proof of individual health or accident insurance. Any individual who fails to provide the required documentation shall not be permitted to participate in any capacity.

Section 5. Dues and Fees. Team registration fees, player fees, late fees, and all other League dues shall be established annually by the Board of Commissioners and published in the NDFL Operations Manual prior to the opening of registration. Unless the Board determines otherwise in writing, all fees are non-refundable.

Section 6. Coach and Owner Certification.

(a) Applicability. All head coaches, assistant coaches, and team owners shall satisfy the certification requirements of this Section before participating in any League activity in that capacity.

(b) Required Certifications. Each individual described in subsection (a) shall hold current certification in each of the following courses, offered by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) through NFHSLearn.com or an equivalent provider approved by the Board:

- NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching;
- NFHS Concussion in Sports;
- NFHS Sudden Cardiac Arrest;
- NFHS Heat Illness Prevention; and
- Current CPR and First Aid certification issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another provider approved by the Board.

The approved course list, providers, and equivalencies shall be adopted by the Board and published in the NDFL Operations Manual. The Board may add required courses by majority vote without amendment of these Bylaws, provided that no course may be removed from this list except by amendment under Article XIV.

(c) Required Documentation. In addition to the certifications required under subsection (b), each individual described in subsection (a) shall submit and maintain on file with the League:

- Proof of current individual health or accident insurance;
- A signed NDFL Code of Conduct and League liability waiver and release, executed annually on forms approved by the Board; and
- A copy of a valid, unexpired government-issued photo identification.

Signature of the Code of Conduct and liability waiver is a condition of participation and may not be waived by any Commissioner, coach, or team. The documentation required by this subsection is in addition to, and does not replace, the game-day credentials required under Article III, Section 4.

(d) Proof and Submission. Each individual shall submit evidence of every item required under subsections (b) and (c) directly to the President, or to a Commissioner the President designates in writing, no later than the deadline published in the Operations Manual and in no event later than fourteen (14) days before the team's first scheduled game. Acceptable evidence includes a certificate of completion,

NFHSLearn transcript or course completion record, wallet card, insurance card or policy declaration page, or comparable verifiable record showing the individual's name, the issuing organization, and the date of issuance or expiration. The President shall confirm receipt in writing, and the Secretary shall retain copies in the League's permanent records in accordance with the League's document retention policy.

(e) Term, Expiration, and Renewal.

- **Currency required.** Every certification required under subsection (b) and every document required under subsection (c) shall be current and unexpired on the date of submission and shall remain current through the final game of the season, including the national tournament. A certification, insurance policy, or identification document that expires at any point during the season does not satisfy this Section, even if it was valid on the submission deadline.
- **Renewal cycle.** Certifications shall be renewed on or before their stated expiration date, according to the renewal period set by the issuing organization. CPR and First Aid certification shall be renewed every two (2) years or on the schedule set by the issuing provider, whichever is shorter. NFHS courses shall be renewed on the schedule published by the NFHS, and where the NFHS sets no expiration date, every three (3) years. The Board may set shorter renewal periods for any certification and shall publish all renewal periods in the NDFL Operations Manual.
- **Advance renewal.** Any individual whose certification or required documentation will expire before the end of the season shall complete renewal and submit proof to the President before the season begins. The League will not accept a certification that expires mid-season as conditional compliance.
- **Notice of expiration.** The President, or the President's designee, shall notify each affected individual and their team owner in writing at least thirty (30) days before a certification or document on file is set to expire. Failure to give notice does not excuse the individual's obligation to maintain current certification.
- **Lapse.** If a certification or required document lapses, the individual shall notify the President within seventy-two (72) hours and is immediately ineligible to coach, serve as team owner of record, or be present on the sideline or in the team area until proof of renewal is submitted to the President and confirmed in writing. Ineligibility under this paragraph takes effect on the expiration date, not on the date of notice.
- **Reinstatement.** Eligibility resumes on the date the President confirms receipt of valid renewal documentation. No retroactive reinstatement shall be granted, and games missed during a lapse are not restored or replayed.
- **Annual resubmission.** Regardless of expiration date, each head coach, assistant coach, and team owner shall resubmit current proof of all items required under subsections (b) and (c), including a newly signed Code of Conduct and liability waiver, before each League year.

(f) Noncompliance. Any individual who has not satisfied this Section by the published deadline shall not coach, serve as a team owner of record, or be permitted on the sideline or in the team area in any capacity. A team that permits an uncertified individual to serve is subject to forfeiture of the affected game and to discipline under Article X.

(g) Records and Verification. The President shall maintain a certification roster for every member team listing each head coach, assistant coach, and team owner, each item required under subsections (b) and (c), and the expiration date of each item. The President shall report compliance status to the Board before the opening of each regular season and before the playoffs. Any Commissioner may inspect the certification roster at any time.

Section 7. Playoff Eligibility. A player must have participated in at least two (2) official regular-season games to be eligible for playoff or championship competition. Commissioners and coaches are jointly responsible for verifying participation records before the playoffs begin.

Section 8. Player Transfers. Players are expected to remain with their registered team for the full season. Transfers are permitted only under the written transfer policy adopted by the Board, which shall require a written request, release from the current team, written acceptance by the receiving team, and final approval of the Board. A player may complete no more than one (1) approved transfer per season. Any player who competes for another team without the required approvals is ineligible and subject to discipline. Board decisions on transfers are final and binding.

Section 9. Corporate and Sponsor Membership. Businesses, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and sponsors that provide financial or in-kind support with a minimum annual value of \$500 (or such other amount as the Board may set and publish in the Operations Manual) may become Corporate or Sponsor Members upon execution of a written sponsorship agreement approved by the Board. Sponsorship levels and corresponding benefits—including recognition, complimentary admission credentials, designated seating, hospitality, and signage—shall be established annually by the Board and published in the Operations Manual. Corporate and Sponsor Members hold no voting rights and no authority over League governance.

Section 10. Friends of NDFL Membership. Family members, interpreters, volunteers, donors, former players, coaches, officials, and community supporters may join as Friends of NDFL. Membership requires submission of a written application and payment of any annual dues established by the Board. The Board may waive dues for volunteers or individuals who provide significant in-kind services. Friends of NDFL Members in good standing shall receive admission privileges as described in Article IV. This membership class grants no voting rights and no eligibility to hold elected office.

Section 11. Nondiscrimination. The League does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Section 12. Discipline and Termination. Membership in any class may be suspended or terminated in accordance with Article X.

ARTICLE IV — ADMISSION AND GATE PRIVILEGES

Section 1. General Rule. Attendance at League events is governed by this Article. Admission to an event does not confer membership in any class, voting rights, or standing in the League, and membership does not guarantee entry to a ticketed event except as expressly provided below.

Section 2. Participants. Rostered players, head and assistant coaches, and team owners of competing teams, together with Commissioners and assigned game officials, shall receive complimentary admission to all League games, including the national tournament.

Section 3. Immediate Family. The spouse or partner and dependent children of any individual listed in Section 2 shall receive complimentary admission to regular-season games. Complimentary family

admission to the national tournament shall be limited to dependent children under eighteen (18) years of age unless the Board approves broader family admission for a specific event.

Section 4. Corporate and Sponsor Members. Each Corporate or Sponsor Member shall receive complimentary admission credentials for League events in a quantity determined by the Board according to sponsorship level, and may receive designated seating, hospitality, signage, and recognition benefits as set out in the sponsorship agreement and published in the Operations Manual.

Section 5. Friends of NDFL Members. Friends of NDFL Members in good standing shall receive complimentary admission to regular-season games, and discounted admission to the national tournament, at rates established annually by the Board and published in the Operations Manual.

Section 6. General Conditions. All admission credentials are non-transferable and remain the property of the League. Credentials may be revoked without refund for violation of the Code of Conduct, and complimentary admission does not extend to any event held at a third-party facility that sets its own admission terms.

ARTICLE V — BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Section 1. Governing Body. The League shall be governed by a Board of Commissioners (the "Board"). All corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the authority of the Board, which is responsible for the governance, administration, and operation of the League.

Section 2. Composition. The Board shall consist of eight (8) Commissioners holding the following positions:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Director of Events and Championships
- Director of Officiating
- Women's Representative
- Men's Representative

Section 3. Equal Authority. Each Commissioner shall have one (1) equal vote on all matters before the Board. No Commissioner shall possess greater voting authority than another. Each Commissioner serves a primary area of responsibility while sharing collective responsibility for the governance and success of the League.

Section 4. Qualifications. Each Commissioner shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age, a member in good standing, and shall possess at least three (3) years of experience as a player, coach, official, or administrator in Deaf football or Deaf sports. One (1) seat on the Board may be filled by an individual with significant leadership, executive, nonprofit, business, or organizational operations experience who does not have a sports background; such an individual must submit a current résumé or curriculum vitae for review and approval by the Board.

Section 5. Election and Installation. Commissioners shall be elected at the annual general meeting held in May of each year, under election procedures adopted by the Board. Newly elected Commissioners shall take office on September 1 following their election and shall serve a two (2)-year term ending August 31 of the second year. Terms shall be staggered so that four (4) positions are elected each year:

- **Odd-numbered years:** President, Treasurer, Women's Representative, and Director of Officiating.
- **Even-numbered years:** Vice President, Secretary, Men's Representative, and Director of Events and Championships.

Section 6. Terms. Commissioners shall serve ongoing two (2)-year terms and may be re-elected to the same position without limitation on the number of terms served.

Section 7. Transition of Office. An outgoing Commissioner shall remain in office and continue to perform all duties through August 31 following the election. On or before that date, the outgoing Commissioner shall deliver to their successor all League records, accounts, keys, credentials, equipment, files, and other League property in their possession, and shall cooperate in an orderly transfer of responsibilities.

Section 8. Founder. The Founder of the League shall serve as a Commissioner for life unless the Founder voluntarily resigns, becomes permanently incapacitated, is removed for cause, or the League is dissolved. While the Founder holds one of the eight positions listed in Section 2, that position shall not be subject to the election schedule in Section 5.

Section 9. Vacancies. If a position becomes vacant by resignation, removal, death, or inability to serve, the Board may appoint a qualified individual by majority vote of the remaining Commissioners to complete the unexpired term.

Section 10. Resignation. A Commissioner may resign by delivering written notice to the President or the Secretary. Resignation takes effect on the date stated in the notice.

Section 11. Removal for Cause. A Commissioner may be removed for cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Board. Cause includes breach of fiduciary duty, unauthorized use of League funds or property, conviction of a crime involving dishonesty, unexcused absence from three (3) consecutive regular meetings, or a material violation of these Bylaws or the Code of Conduct. The Commissioner shall receive written notice of the charges at least fourteen (14) days in advance and an opportunity to be heard, and shall not vote on the question of their own removal.

Section 12. Volunteer Service. All Commissioner positions are voluntary. Commissioners shall not receive salaries, wages, stipends, or other compensation. The Board may approve reimbursement of authorized, documented League expenses when funds are available.

Section 13. Standard of Conduct. Each Commissioner shall discharge their duties in good faith, with the care an ordinarily prudent person would exercise, and in a manner reasonably believed to be in the best interests of the League.

Section 14. Presidential Recusal. The President shall not preside over, chair, or vote on any investigation, disciplinary matter, or appeal in which the President is a party or has a personal interest. The Vice President shall preside in such matters.

ARTICLE VI — DUTIES OF OFFICERS

President

- Serves as chief executive officer of the League and presides at all meetings of the Board.
- Represents the League in official matters and serves as its authorized spokesperson or designates one.
- Oversees strategic planning and League operations.
- Appoints committees and committee chairs with the approval of the Board.
- Receives and verifies coach and owner certification documentation under Article III, Section 6, and maintains the League certification roster.

Vice President

- Assists the President and assumes the President's duties during absence or inability to serve.
- Chairs the Governance, Bylaws, and Ethics Committee.
- Oversees bylaw interpretation, appeals, and governance matters, and safeguards against conflicts of interest.

Secretary

- Records and distributes minutes of all Board meetings.
- Maintains official League records, documents, policies, and historical archives.
- Oversees League communications and official notices.
- Certifies the Bylaws and maintains the official current copy.

Treasurer

- Oversees all League finances and maintains accurate financial records.
- Prepares monthly and annual financial reports for the Board.
- Oversees budgeting, banking, reconciliation, and financial compliance.
- Ensures timely filing of all required federal and state reports, including the IRS Form 990 series.

Director of Events and Championships

- Plans and oversees all NDFL events, tournaments, and championship games.
- Coordinates event operations, schedules, venues, permits, and logistics.
- Works with host organizations, sponsors, volunteers, and League officials.

Director of Officiating

- Oversees all NDFL officiating operations.
- Recruits, trains, assigns, and evaluates referees.
- Ensures officials enforce League rules and maintain professional standards.
- Recommends officiating policies and rule interpretations to the Board.

Women's Representative

- Represents the interests of the WDFFL and women members of the CDFFL.
- Communicates with team owners, coaches, and players, and assists with operations, scheduling, and policy recommendations.

- Promotes the growth and development of the women's divisions.

Men's Representative

- Represents the interests of the MDTFL and MDFFL.
- Communicates with team owners, coaches, and players, and assists with operations, scheduling, and policy recommendations.
- Promotes the growth and development of the men's divisions.

Each Commissioner shall perform such other duties as are assigned by the Board.

ARTICLE VII — MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

Section 1. Annual General Meeting. The Board shall hold an annual general meeting in May of each year for the election of Commissioners, receipt of annual reports, approval of the budget for the fiscal year beginning the following September 1, and ratification of amendments. The date, time, and place shall be fixed by the Board and noticed to all members at least thirty (30) days in advance.

Section 2. Regular Meetings. The Board shall meet not fewer than fifteen (15) times each calendar year.

Section 3. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by the President, the Vice President, or any three (3) Commissioners upon at least forty-eight (48) hours' notice stating the purpose. Only business stated in the notice may be transacted.

Section 4. Notice. Notice of meetings may be given in writing or by electronic means to the address or account each Commissioner has provided to the Secretary.

Section 5. Electronic Meetings. Meetings may be held in person or through Board-approved video conferencing platforms that permit all participants to communicate simultaneously. Participation by such means constitutes presence for purposes of quorum and voting.

Section 6. Quorum. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Commissioners then in office. No business shall be transacted in the absence of a quorum.

Section 7. Voting. Each Commissioner has one (1) vote. Unless a greater vote is required by these Bylaws or by law, action shall be taken by a majority vote of the Commissioners present at a meeting at which a quorum is present. Proxy voting is not permitted. Action may be taken without a meeting only by unanimous written or electronic consent of all Commissioners then in office, which shall be filed with the minutes.

Section 8. Minutes. The Secretary shall record the official minutes of every meeting. Draft minutes shall be distributed to all Commissioners within forty-eight (48) hours following the meeting. Approved minutes become part of the League's permanent records.

Section 9. Executive Session. The Board may enter executive session to consider personnel matters, disciplinary actions, appeals, legal matters, contract negotiations, and financial matters requiring confidentiality. Only Commissioners and individuals specifically invited by the Board may attend.

Section 10. Transparency. The Board may livestream meetings or official announcements to promote transparency, except during executive session.

Section 11. Annual Distribution. The Board shall review, approve, and distribute the Bylaws, the Operations Manual, and all required forms to every team owner and head coach no later than September 1 of each League year.

ARTICLE VIII — COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees. The League shall maintain the following standing committees:

- **Governance, Bylaws, and Ethics Committee** — reviews and recommends amendments to these Bylaws and League policies, interprets the Bylaws, oversees conflict-of-interest compliance, and hears appeals. Chaired by the Vice President.
- **Tournament and Competition Committee** — oversees host sites, scheduling, brackets, seeding, and competition standards.
- **Officiating Committee** — supports the recruitment, training, assignment, and evaluation of officials.
- **Finance and Audit Committee** — reviews financial records, internal controls, and the annual financial review, and reports directly to the Board.
- **Hall of Fame Committee** — recognizes outstanding contributors, players, coaches, and officials.

Section 2. Special Committees. The President may appoint special committees, with the approval of the Board, for specific purposes and limited durations.

Section 3. Composition. Committees may include Commissioners and non-Commissioner members. Each committee shall be chaired by a Commissioner unless the Board provides otherwise.

Section 4. Authority. No committee may act contrary to these Bylaws, obligate League funds, or bind the League without prior Board approval. Committees report their recommendations to the Board for action.

ARTICLE IX — FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the League shall begin on September 1 and end on August 31.

Section 2. League Accounts. The League shall maintain one official League bank account as the primary account for all League funds. Zelle may be used only as an approved method of sending and receiving payments tied to that account. No Commissioner, officer, team, or member may hold League funds in a personal account.

Section 3. Authorized Signers. Access to the League bank account shall be restricted to the President, Vice President, and Treasurer. Each may view and manage the account, but no individual may withdraw, transfer, or use League funds without prior Board approval. Every disbursement shall require the authorization of two (2) of the three (3) authorized signers. Upon any change in the office of President, Vice President, or Treasurer, the Board shall update the bank signature card, online banking credentials, and all account access within thirty (30) days of the effective date of the change, and shall record the update in the minutes.

Section 4. Authorization of Expenditures. Any withdrawal, transfer, or use of League funds must be approved in advance by majority vote of the Commissioners at a duly called meeting. The purpose, amount, and recipient shall be recorded in the minutes. Emergency disbursements may be approved by

majority vote at a virtual meeting, provided minutes are documented and distributed within forty-eight (48) hours.

Section 5. Deposits. All checks and cash received by the League shall be deposited into the official League bank account within twenty-four (24) hours or by the next banking day. A receipt, deposit slip, or other proof of deposit shall be retained and provided to the Commissioners.

Section 6. Documentation. All third-party payments, reimbursements, and vendor payments must be supported by valid invoices, receipts, or contracts and recorded in League financial records.

Section 7. Reporting and Oversight. The Treasurer shall reconcile all accounts monthly and present a written financial report at each regular meeting. Monthly bank statements shall be provided to all Commissioners. Any Commissioner may review account balances at any time. At least two (2) Commissioners shall review League financial records regularly to ensure proper oversight.

Section 8. Budget and Annual Review. The Board shall approve an annual budget before the start of each fiscal year and shall cause an annual review of the League's finances. The Board shall obtain an independent audit or review when required by law or when annual revenue exceeds a threshold set by the Board.

Section 9. Permitted Use of Funds. Team fees and League funds are reserved strictly for League operations, including field and facility rentals, permits, referee payments, equipment, trophies, awards, approved cash prizes, insurance, and other Board-approved expenses.

Section 10. Prohibited Use of Funds. No Commissioner, officer, coach, owner, player, volunteer, or representative may use League funds for personal purposes, or for personal or team transportation, registration fees, lodging, or similar costs. The League shall make no loans to any Commissioner or officer.

Section 11. Field and Facility Permits. Team owners and coaches are responsible for reserving park or school fields and providing written confirmation, receipts, and invoices to the Commissioners at least thirty (30) days before game day. Commissioners shall assist when a team cannot secure a field, and shall obtain any permit authorizing the sale of food, drink, or merchandise. Permits shall be paid from League funds only; the use of personal funds is prohibited. No game may be played without a verified permit on file.

Section 12. Misappropriation and Unauthorized Use of Funds.

(a) Prohibited Conduct. No Commissioner, officer, coach, owner, player, volunteer, or representative shall use League funds, property, or assets for personal purposes or for any purpose not authorized by the Board. Unauthorized use or taking of League funds or property is a violation of these Bylaws.

(b) Investigation and Interim Measures. Upon credible allegation of unauthorized use of League funds or property, the Board may, by majority vote, suspend the accused individual pending investigation. The individual shall receive written notice of the allegation within seventy-two (72) hours and an opportunity to respond.

(c) Disciplinary Action. Following investigation and a hearing in accordance with Article X, the Board may, by majority vote, impose discipline including removal from office, suspension, permanent ban, or referral to law enforcement.

(d) Recovery. The League reserves the right to pursue all civil remedies to recover misappropriated funds, property, or assets.

(e) Documentation. All incidents under this Section shall be documented in the official minutes and retained in the League's permanent records.

ARTICLE X — CONDUCT, DISCIPLINE, AND APPEALS

Section 1. Code of Conduct. All players, coaches, owners, officials, Commissioners, volunteers, and spectators shall conduct themselves respectfully and shall comply with the NDFL Code of Conduct at all League games, practices, and events.

Section 2. Prohibited Conduct. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Possession or consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substances at League games, practices, or events.
- Smoking, vaping, or tobacco use within fifty (50) feet of the field of play or in other restricted areas.
- Fighting, threats, or attempts to incite violence.
- Harassment, bullying, discriminatory language, or offensive gestures directed at any person, including on social media.
- Disorderly conduct, including entering the field of play without authorization.
- Excessive profanity or offensive language in any form.

Section 3. Disciplinary Authority. Commissioners have authority to investigate violations and impose penalties, including written warning, fine, benching, ejection, suspension, removal from office or committee, termination of membership, or permanent ban from League activities.

Section 4. Progressive Discipline. Except as provided in Section 5, violations shall be addressed progressively: a first violation results in suspension for the remainder of the current game; a second violation results in a one (1)-game suspension; and a third violation results in suspension of up to one (1) year, subject to review and approval by the Board.

Section 5. Severe Violations. Fighting, substance abuse, harassment, threats of violence, theft, and similar severe misconduct may result in immediate suspension or permanent ban without regard to the progressive schedule. Severe violations may also be referred to law enforcement.

Section 6. Due Process. Before a suspension exceeding one (1) game or a termination of membership, the individual shall receive written notice of the alleged violation and an opportunity to respond in writing within seven (7) days. The Board shall issue a written decision.

Section 7. Appeals. A disciplined individual may appeal in writing to the Governance, Bylaws, and Ethics Committee within fourteen (14) days of the written decision. The Committee shall review the record and submit a recommendation to the Board. The Board's decision by majority vote is final and binding. Any Commissioner with a personal interest in the matter shall recuse themselves.

Section 8. Forfeits and Competition Penalties. Forfeit rules, grace periods, referee fee obligations, fines, and rescheduling procedures are established by the Board and published in the Operations Manual. The Board may modify penalties in extraordinary circumstances, including documented medical emergencies, natural disasters, or other events beyond a team's reasonable control.

ARTICLE XI — CONFIDENTIALITY AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Section 1. Duty of Confidentiality. All Commissioners, committee members, League officials, and volunteers shall maintain strict confidentiality regarding non-public League business, including board discussions, executive sessions, disciplinary matters, investigations, personnel matters, financial information, legal matters, and confidential documents or communications.

Section 2. Public Disclosure. No Commissioner or League official shall disclose or discuss confidential League business on social media, online forums, podcasts, livestreams, interviews, or any other public platform without prior authorization from the Board.

Section 3. Authorized Spokesperson. The President, or a person the President designates with Board approval, is the League's authorized spokesperson for public statements.

Section 4. Professional Conduct. Commissioners and League officials shall conduct themselves professionally and shall not knowingly make false or misleading public statements about the League, its Board, members, teams, officials, sponsors, or partners. This section does not restrict any person from reporting suspected unlawful conduct to law enforcement or a regulatory agency.

Section 5. Enforcement. Violations of this Article are subject to discipline under Article X.

ARTICLE XII — CONFLICT OF INTEREST, INDEMNIFICATION, AND RECORDS

Section 1. Conflict of Interest. The Board shall adopt and maintain a written conflict-of-interest policy consistent with Internal Revenue Service guidance for 501(c)(3) organizations. Each Commissioner and committee member shall sign an annual disclosure statement.

Section 2. Disclosure and Recusal. Any Commissioner with a direct or indirect financial or personal interest in a proposed transaction shall disclose the interest, leave the room during deliberation, and abstain from voting. The disclosure and recusal shall be recorded in the minutes. The transaction requires approval by a majority of the disinterested Commissioners.

Section 3. Indemnification. The League shall indemnify its Commissioners, officers, committee members, and volunteers against expenses and liabilities incurred in connection with League service, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable state law. The League may purchase directors and officers liability insurance.

Section 4. Records. The Secretary shall maintain the articles of incorporation, these Bylaws, minutes, policies, membership records, and required filings. Records shall be made available for inspection as required by law.

Section 5. Additional Policies. The Board shall adopt written document retention and whistleblower policies and shall review them periodically.

ARTICLE XIII — PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the League in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws, the articles of incorporation, any special rules of order the Board may adopt, or applicable law.

ARTICLE XIV — AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Section 1. Amendment. These Bylaws may be amended, repealed, or restated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Board of Commissioners.

Section 2. Notice. Written notice of any proposed amendment, including the full text of the proposal, shall be provided to every Commissioner at least thirty (30) days before the meeting at which the amendment will be considered.

Section 3. Effective Date. An adopted amendment takes effect on September 1 following its ratification at the annual meeting, unless the Board specifies a different effective date at the time of adoption.

Section 4. Operations Manual and Standing Rules. The NDFL Operations Manual, playing rules, fee schedules, tournament policies, and other standing rules may be adopted or amended by majority vote of the Board at any duly called meeting. No standing rule may conflict with these Bylaws; in the event of conflict, these Bylaws control.

ARTICLE XV — DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the League, the Board shall, after paying or making provision for all liabilities, dispose of all remaining assets exclusively for the purposes of the League by distributing them to one or more organizations then qualifying as exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, with preference given to a Deaf sports organization with similar purposes. Any assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction in the county in which the League's principal office is located, exclusively for such purposes.

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

The undersigned, President of the National Deaf Football League, certifies that these Bylaws were duly adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the National Deaf Football League at a meeting held on August 10, 2026, and amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Board at a meeting held on August 31, 2026, and constitute the complete and current Bylaws of the League.

Moni' Brown, President
National Deaf Football League

Date

SCHEDULE A — MATTERS DELEGATED TO THE NDFL OPERATIONS MANUAL

The following matters are governed by these Bylaws but administered through the NDFL Operations Manual, which the Board may adopt and amend by majority vote. These items were removed from the body of the Bylaws because they change frequently and should not require a two-thirds amendment vote.

- Playing rules for tackle (MDTFL) and flag (MDFFL, WDFFL, CDFFL): players required, game length, timeouts, halftime, blocking, tackling, snap, scoring, equipment, kickoff and throw-off procedure, quarterback and blitz rules, uniforms.
- Fee schedule: team registration fees, player fees, late fees, referee fees, and all admission rates, including sponsor credential quantities and Friends of NDFL discount rates.
- Registration and insurance calendar, including submission deadlines and proof-of-coverage dates.
- Coach and owner certification: approved providers and equivalencies for NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching, NFHS Concussion in Sports, NFHS Sudden Cardiac Arrest, NFHS Heat Illness Prevention, and CPR/First Aid; renewal periods; submission deadlines; and proof-of-certification, insurance, Code of Conduct, and liability waiver forms.
- Player transfer forms, procedures, and deadlines.
- Regular season structure, tie-breaking procedures, playoff seeding and brackets, and the regional round robin format.
- National tournament policies: site selection, dates, bracketing, awards, medals, and cash prize amounts.
- Weather contingency and lightning safety procedures.
- Scheduling considerations, including coordination with the Deaf basketball season.
- Forfeit rules, grace periods, fine amounts, late arrival policy, and rescheduling procedures.
- League equipment inventory and transport responsibilities.
- Field permit request forms and checklists.