

Boston Women's Flag Football League
Flag Football Constitution
Updated: September 22, 2018

Preamble:

We, the members of the Boston Women's Flag Football League, in order to provide a formal structure for the continuation of a women's flag football league in the greater Boston area free from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, creed, gender, national origin or sexual orientation/preference, hereby adopt this constitution formalizing our objectives of friendly competition.

The league shall consist of divisions based on skill level.

Article I: Team Membership

A league team:

- a. shall consist of not more than twenty-five playing members.
- b. may be sponsored by a person, business, association or other organization.
- c. Shall pay a non-refundable team fee prior to each new season.
- d. Shall submit their team roster to the commissioner prior to the start of the 3rd game.
- e. May, for good cause, apply to the officers for authorization to make roster changes.
- f. May conduct its internal affairs as deemed reasonable and consistent with this constitution.
- g. Minimum age of players is 18 and older.
- h. Any player shall be eligible for play in the BWFFL who was assigned female at birth or who self-identifies as female. This includes anyone assigned intersex at birth, transgender and non-binary individuals. This does not include cisgender men (individuals assigned male at birth who also live and identify as men).

FAQ:

The Boston Women's Flag Football League prides itself on establishing and maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all participants. In the hopes of addressing historical inequities in sport, the league embraces all members of the LGBTQ community, regardless of gender identity and/or expression.

Ruling: Any player shall be eligible for play in the BWFFL who was assigned female at birth or who self-identifies as female. This includes anyone assigned intersex at birth, transgender and non-binary individuals. This does not include cisgender men.

Who exactly does this include?

- Players born female who identify as female
- Players born female who identify/live as male or as non-binary, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, etc.

- Players born male who identify/live as female
- This does not mean players born male who identify as male.

Why is this fair?

Players born as or living their lives as women, regardless of their gender identification, live with barriers to sports. As we work to address these inequities and celebrate our common love for competition, we also continue to provide fairness and safety. Additionally, individuals born male who live their lives as male have many other options throughout Boston.

Will there be a competitive advantage?

Some players born male might have a physical advantage (strength, size, speed, etc.) over some players born female. Similarly we might find a cisgender female having these same advantages. Our league contains a wide range of size, athleticism, and skill level. While physiological changes can take place during hormonal treatment, there is a great deal of physical variation displayed in trans men, women, and folks just as there is a great deal of natural variation among cisgender men and women.

How do we control safety?

What makes this league special is the range of skills within. We ensure that teams are made as equitable as possible by having three divisions based on skill. Just as past policies have stated, if any member of a team is deemed “dangerous,” or unsafe, we will address that behavior, regardless of the player’s gender identity. Our code of conduct is also being reviewed and updated to ensure that we have clear expectations as a league to support a safe, competitive environment. As a recreational league that was founded on friendly competition and developing strong character and personality traits, we stand for inclusion above all. We want every BWFFL member to feel safe, included, and celebrated.

Article II: Officers

- A. The league officers shall consist of the Commissioner, the A and B Division Commissioners, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.
- B. The league shall have one Co-Commissioner for each division.
- C. Duties of the Officers:
 - 1. The Commissioner shall:
 - a. Preside at all Executive Committee meetings, but shall have no vote except in the case of a tie.
 - b. Be chief administrator, representative, and main contact for all outside entities e.g. umpires, parks and recreation departments, and any other group needed to facilitate league play.
 - c. Settle disputes to this constitution and rules made hereunder, subject to the review of the Executive Committee.
 - 2. The Assistant Commissioner shall:
 - a. Assume the duties of the Commissioner in the event of the Commissioner’s absence.

- b. Keep respective division teams informed of any information pertinent to them; make the season run smoothly; work with the Commissioner to solve any issues that arise.
 - c. Draft a potential league schedule, with the direction of the Commissioner.
 - d. Be responsible for determining playability of fields and informing teams involved of cancellations.
3. The Secretary shall:
- a. Keep accurate records of all league meetings.
 - b. Maintain all league documents, including but not limited to: minutes, by-laws, rules, rosters, phone lists, and correspondence; and shall make them available for inspection by any league member upon reasonable request.
 - c. Keep league standings.
4. The Treasurer shall:
- a. Set team fees with the approval of the Executive Committee.
 - b. Be responsible for the collection and accounting of all league funds.
 - c. Disburse league funds as decided at the executive meetings.
 - d. Be responsible for paying the umpires and the light fees.
5. If no secretary or treasurer are determined, A Commissioner will assume the secretary duties, and the B Commissioner will assume the Treasurer duties, with the roles to switch each year.

Article III: Executive Committee

- A. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Commissioner, A and B Commissioners, Secretary, Treasurer, and one representative from each team. All members of the league are welcome to attend these meetings as non-voting participants.
- B. Each member of the Executive Committee shall attend at least 2/3 of league meetings per season or each member of their roster will forfeit participation for the following season. Substitutions may be sent to meetings if the Commissioner is advised ahead of time.
- C. Each member of the Executive Committee shall have one vote except the Commissioners, who shall vote only in the case of a tie.
- D. The Executive Committee shall hear all appeals made of rulings by the Commissioner, and may uphold or reverse her pursuant to the constitution and rules made hereunder.
- E. The Executive Committee shall approve all expenditures of league funds with the following guidelines:
 - 1. Expenditures for field permit fees, if any, shall have priority over all other expenditures.

2. A majority vote is required to authorize the expenditure of league funds.
 3. The Executive Committee may authorize the expenditures of league funds.
- F. The Executive Committee may establish new committees.
- G. The Executive Committee shall establish rules of order for the conduct of its meetings.
- H. The Executive Committee shall, as necessary, adopt by-laws consistent with the provisions of the constitution for the smooth and efficient administration of the league.
- I. Rule changes will occur with the following protocols
1. A member of the Executive Committee will submit a written proposal to the Commissioners at least one week before the scheduled meeting. In order for a rule change to be considered the member proposing the change must gather written support of the measure from 1/3 of the Executive Committee prior to submittal.
 2. Rule changes may be only be voted on at pre- or post-season meetings
 3. Rule changes will be discussed and voted on by the Executive Committee with a 2/3rds majority needed to pass.

Article IV: Disciplinary Committee

- A. A Disciplinary Committee has been established to rule on issues of unsportsmanlike conduct by members of the league.
1. The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of the Head Commissioner and the Co-Commissioner from the opposing division (If infraction is in A Division, the B-Division Commissioner will participate). In addition, at least three members of the Executive Board from the opposing league will be asked to participate in a disciplinary meeting.
 2. In order for an incident or situation to be considered by the DC, a protest/appeal must be filed in writing with the league according to the procedures set forth in Article IX, section D, paragraph 1 of the BWFFL constitution.
 3. After conducting a hearing, the DC may: dismiss the case, render an immediate ruling, decide to deliberate for a set period of time and then issue a ruling or decide to investigate the matter further (in which case another hearing must be held to announce their findings). Notification of any involved parties not present when the Committee renders its decision is the responsibility of the Committee.
 4. The Disciplinary Committee may rule on any conduct that occurs before, during or after league play. Ejection from a BWFFL game or field of play is automatically counted as a violation of the conduct clause, unless the ejected individual petitions the Committee. While the Committee cannot “undo” an ejection, it may (should it find the ejection unreasonable or unwarranted) remove the violation from the individual’s record.
 5. Decisions of the Committee are final.

Article V: Meetings

- A. A meeting of the Executive Committee may be called by the Commissioner or by any two members of the Executive Committee.
- B. Quorum requirements shall be as follows:
 - 1. A majority of team representatives must be present.
 - 2. League officers do not represent their teams and will not be counted when determining if a majority of the teams are present.
- C. Whereas the focus of the divisions may vary, we hereby agree that under certain circumstances, divisional votes may be appropriate. Issues which arise that are divisional matters (to be determined by the Head Commissioner and A & B League Commissioners) would then be subject to a divisional, rather than league, vote.

Article VI: Elections

- A. The election of officers will take place at the last meeting of the preceding season. Nominations and voting will be by the Executive Committee.
- B. Any member of the league may run for any office, except Commissioner, upon nomination by two other league members.
- C. A league member must have served as an officer for one year prior to running for Commissioner. Candidates for Commissioner must also be nominated by two other league members.
- D. Elections shall be by secret ballot.
- E. If no candidate receives a majority of votes, there shall be a run-off election.

Article VII: Rights and Privileges

- A. Each team shall organize without league interference as to its internal affairs. This includes how they elect their representative to the Executive Committee.
- B. A new team may join the league if the Executive Committee so votes. Upon acceptance into the league, a team shall automatically have the right to a representative on the Executive Committee and the right to vote.
- C. Placement of a new team into a division will be done by the commissioners.
- D. A team must consist of 10-25 players. (See Article I, Section h)
- E. The league will use BWFFL rules to govern league play (see attached League Rules).

Article VIII: Standings

- A. The league prior to the beginning of the season will decide how to determine league standings.
- B. The league will hold an end of the season tournament (Superbowl) for each division and a designated volunteer will present the tournament schedule/format to the team representatives before the end of the season.

Article IX: Penalties

- A. Individual Expulsion:
 - 1. Expulsion of an individual for the remainder of a game will be decided by the referee, based on the player's adherence to BWFFL rules and/or unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - 2. Any BWFFL member who violates the unsportsmanlike conduct clause twice in the same season shall be suspended from the league for one year to the date of the second incident and shall not be eligible to be on the roster of any league team for the purpose of league play. For the purposes of this rule, a violation shall be considered to be:
 - a. Any ejection from a BWFFL game or field of play before, during or after the game, at a league sponsored event or any situation that affects the league negatively.
 - b. Conduct determined to be a violation of the conduct clause by the Disciplinary Committee.
 - 3. The suspended member's team shall not be permitted to fill her space on the roster.
 - 4. Should any team violate provisions 1 or/and 2 by allowing a suspended individual to be on their roster for league play (after the Disciplinary Committee has ruled), that team shall also be suspended for the following two games of BWFFL play (which may extend into the next season).
 - 5. Any losses suffered by the suspended team will count as non-forfeited losses.
- B. Team Forfeits:
 - 1. As determined by BWFFL rules.
 - 2. Any member has the right to point out forfeitable violations of membership or league rules to the Commissioner or the Executive Committee.
 - 3. In case of forfeit, forfeiting team must pay the referees for that game to the league 24 hours before the next game or the next game will be cancelled.
- C. Team Expulsion:
 - 1. A team that forfeits three games is no longer eligible to participate in the league for that year.
 - 2. When a team forfeits out the regular season before the mid-season mark, all previously played games are removed from the standings and new standings will be determined.

3. If a team forfeits out of the league after mid-season, that team takes losses for all games played and all future opponents receive wins for those games.

D. Procedures for Protests and Appeals:

1. A written protest must be given to the Commissioner within one week of the game in question.
2. The Commissioner is responsible for determining whether a protest is upheld or denied. Appeals of rulings made by the Commissioner must be presented at the next meeting.
3. The Executive Committee may review and overturn the Commissioner's decision upon a two-thirds majority vote.

This constitution and its by-laws must be reviewed and agreed upon by the team representatives before acceptance.

After initial acceptance, amendments and additions can only be made at the first and last meetings of the season.