

## **Gopher State Football League (GSFL) Advisory Group Meeting**

**April 21, 2025,**

**The Ballpark – Twin Cities** in Blaine, MN.

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### 1. Welcome by Dawson Blanck, GSFL Managing Director

- The meeting opened with a clear articulation of its purpose: to strengthen the GSFL by aligning around key updates, standards, and policies for the 2025 season.
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### 2. GSFL Branding Update

- The new GSFL logo was officially launched, reinforcing the league's refreshed identity and commitment to community-based youth football.
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### 3. League Development Update

- Association Commitments: Updates were shared on the 30 associations committed to enrolling their teams into the GSFL for the 2025 season.
  - GSFL League Representative, Adam Cook, provided operational insights.
    - Questions? [football@myas.org](mailto:football@myas.org)
  - GSFL Advisory Group's role reaffirmed as a guiding body helping shape the league's community-first direction.
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### 4. GSFL Policy Recommendations & Discussions

#### A. Organizational Requirements presented by Dawson Blanck

- Organizations must demonstrate strong governance and stability:
  - Leadership must be elected democratically.
  - There should be open communication with parents and participants.
  - Programs must support multiple grade levels and operate with the intent to be around year after year.

- All associations must agree to a series of Best Practices that foster a safe, positive and productive experience for the youth football players participating in this league.
  - Recognized Teams must originate from:
    - Bona fide community associations
    - School-based programs with a proven multi-year structure
  - Not Eligible:
    - All-star/open teams (drawing players from multiple areas)
    - Independent teams (operating outside recognized local programs)
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### Player Eligibility Guidelines

Players should compete with the association tied to:

- The community where they live, or the school they attend.
  - For split households, players may participate based on the location of either parent's residence.
  - If there's no local program, or a program doesn't have enough players to field a team, athletes may join a bordering association, and no waiver is needed in those cases.
    - Notify Managing Directors
  - Waivers:
    - Required if players wish to play outside of their designated area
    - Must be initiated by the family and approved by all relevant associations
    - GSFL Managing Directors have final approval authority
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## B. Team Composition Guidelines presented by John Swanson, GSFL Managing Director

- Emphasis on competitive integrity and development:
    - Avoid same team compositions year over year
    - Conduct player evaluations and redistributions especially between 3rd–4th and 6th–7th grades
    - Transparency is key — associations should publicly post formation methods
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## C. Roster Size Guidelines

- Focused on balancing:
    - Player safety
    - Meaningful playing time
    - Development over convenience
  - Max Recommended Roster Sizes:

Grade Level	Game Format	Max Roster Size
2nd–6th Grade	9-Man	18 players
2nd–6th Grade	11-Man	22 players
7th–8th Grade	11-Man	33 players
  - Teams exceeding max rosters must meet mandatory playing time standards
  - No excuse for “not enough coaches” or “parent preference” — GSFL encourages splitting large teams when necessary
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## Trusted GSFL Coaches Requirements presented by Kevin Johnston, GSFL Managing Director

- Minimum Coaching Standards include:
    - Background checks (recommended annually)
    - Concussion certification (state law)
    - Child abuse prevention training (Safe Sport compliance)
  - At least two coaches per team must complete:
    - FREE GSFL Coaches Training via Trusted Coaches
  - Encouragement for full staff to complete sport-specific training via:
    - USA Football
    - GSFL's in-person July clinic
    - High school-hosted association clinics
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## 5. Game Hosting Guidelines

- Key Dates:
    - June 1 – Game Day Survey sent to representatives
    - August 1 – Deadline to return surveys
    - August 17 – Schedule release begins
  - Facility Standards: Associations are expected to ensure high-quality fields and clear, timely communication regarding availability and hosting logistics.
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## 6. Grade-Level Breakout Sessions

- Separate discussions were held for:
  - 2nd–6th Grade representatives
  - 7th–8th Grade representatives
- Focused on grade-specific implementation of policies, rules and sharing best practices