

**NEW YORK GAY FOOTBALL LEAGUE'S
TRAVEL PROGRAM BYLAWS**

Last Revised: February 22, 2023

I. NYGFL Mission

It is the Mission of the NYGFL to cultivate an inclusive and diverse environment for all members - gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning and straight allies and, in so doing, to encourage and empower each individual to reach their goals as an athlete, teammate, friend, leader, and member of the greater New York community.

Moreover, the NYGFL strives to use its fundraisers, social and cultural events, and the sport of flag football itself to break down stereotypes, eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to educate the general public about the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, questioning and straight allies community with the ultimate goal of fostering greater tolerance and empathy.

No one shall be excluded from participating on the basis of sexual orientation, gender and gender identity, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political beliefs, athletic ability, physical challenge, HIV status.

II. Travel Program Vision & Committee Structure

Tournament teams serve as an extension of the league’s mission, with an emphasis on inclusion and player development. The travel program seeks to develop cohesive and competitive teams, grounded in the NYGFL “One NY” mindset and its core values of dignity & respect, with the hopes of achieving the ultimate success of bringing home a championship.

II.A. Tournament Committee. The Tournament Committee will serve as the leadership core that ensures successful implementation and execution of the travel program vision every season. The Tournament Committee shall be composed of the Tournament Chair, Player Development Chair, and the lead captains of the respective Open and Women’s+ Division teams.

II.A.1. Tournament Chair. At the beginning of each tournament season, the Tournament Chair shall be appointed by the board. The Tournament Chair shall report to the NYGFL board and be responsible for:

- Coordinating league-wide player communication about the travel program
- Setting and managing timelines for the tournament season
- Coordinating the captain selection process
- Serving as the NYGFL liaison with the National Gay Flag Football League (NGFFL) board and tournament directors on behalf of all teams
- Supporting team captains in the team formation process
- Serving as the point of contact for player concerns
- Creating a subcommittee that will manage tournament operations (i.e. uniform procurement, sponsorship/fundraising initiatives)

II.B. Resignation, Removal and Replacement.

II.B.1. Resignation. Tournament Committee members can resign from the committee at any time by written notice to the Player Development Chair and the Tournament Chair.

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II.B.2. **Removal and Replacement.** Any member of the Tournament Committee can be removed at any time by a simple majority vote of the Board. In the case of removal, a replacement member may be appointed, at the discretion of the board.

II.C. Voting & Quorum.

II.C.1. **Tournament Committee.** All members will have an equal vote and must be present for a vote to take place.

II.C.2. **Captains' Voting & Quorum.** When collaborating with captains, each team will have an equal vote, and at least one captain from each team must be present for a vote to take place.

II.C.3. **Voting.** In connection with voting, "present" means physically in the room, on the phone, email chain, text chain, Facebook message, etc.

- If contacting members through email, text, Facebook message, etc. the Tournament Committee must give the committee members, and captains where applicable, a reasonable amount of time to respond.

II.C.4. **Proxy.** There will be no voting by proxy.

II.C.5. All votes shall pass by a simple majority.

III. TEAM RULES AND RECRUITMENT GUIDELINES

III.A. **Sanctioned Teams.** The NYGFL Board shall sanction a specified number of NY Travel Teams, to represent the NYGFL in three major NGFFL sponsored national flag football tournaments – Sunshine Cup, Pride Bowl, and Gay Bowl. Each year, the Board and Tournament Committee will align on which 2 tournaments to support for each division. The number of sanctioned teams will be determined at the discretion of the NYGFL Board based on player commitment and leadership capacity, while ensuring that all teams are able to be competitive.

III.A.1. The Tournament Committee will organize an open tryout process for players interested in joining the travel program.

III.A.2. The Tournament Chair will reach out to the players who are not initially chosen for a travel team to gauge their interest in staying involved.

III.A.3. The Tournament Chair will be responsible for keeping the Interested Player List up-to-date and available to the Tournament Committee.

III.A.4. Players will be added to teams from the Interested Player List based on the needs of the team and their **expressed** preferences.

- All preferences must be communicated in writing to the Tournament Committee Chair.

III.B. Additional Teams. In the event there is sufficient and sustainable interest within the NY Travel community for another team in any division and, contingent upon available capacity of the aforementioned tournaments, the NYGFL Board shall obtain feedback from the Tournament Committee, before voting, on whether to sanction that team by majority rule. If approved, the Tournament Committee Chair shall notify the greater community about the new team and its captain vacancy.

III.C. Travel Player Eligibility

III.C.1. Any active league member in good standing is eligible to participate in the travel program. Players shall be considered an active member of the NYGFL if they meet at least one (1) of the following criteria:

- Played on a NYGFL regular season team, and maintained playoff eligibility, within the past 3 seasons leading up to the Tournament Season.
- Served as an active NYGFL referee for more than half of an eligible Fall/Spring season within the past 3 seasons leading up to the Tournament Season.
- Served on the NGFFL board or NYGFL Committee within the past 3 seasons leading up to the Tournament Season.

III.C.2. New players who become active NYGFL members during the Fall Season that coincides with Gay Bowl are NOT eligible to play in the tournament unless they are considered as a “Wild Card Player” for their respective team.

- There are NO exemptions for this requirement.

III.C.3. **Wild Cards.** Teams are entitled to a maximum of two (2) Wild Card players on their roster.

- Wild Card players are individuals who are in Good Standing with the league but do NOT meet eligibility requirements.

III.C.4. All league members may practice with a tournament team and/or at tournament-focused development clinics. However, attendance at such practices shall serve as no guarantee to being included on a Gay Bowl team roster.

III.C.5. **Rosters.** All initial rosters must be approved by the NYGFL Board. It is an expectation of the board that all captains work together to build competitive roster that are aligned with the league’s mission and vision.

III.C.6. **Roster changes.** In the event that there is a vacancy on a roster, the Tournament Committee can decide to shift a player or players from one team to another with a simple majority vote. This change must be submitted to the NYGFL Board for final approval.

III.D. Player Commitment

III.D.1. Financial Commitment. Each tournament has a required player financial commitment (registration dues, travel expenses, uniforms, etc) and time commitment to participate. Team captains will provide an estimate of average costs and tentative practice schedule to potential participants. It is the expectation that those who are interested in joining understand and can support this financial and time commitment, should they be selected for the roster.

III.D.2. Practices. In order to improve as individuals and team players and become a cohesive and competitive team, it is critical that members of the tournament team(s) attend official team practices. It is the expectation that those who are selected to a tournament team attend at least 60% of practices leading up to each tournament in order to maintain their spot on the team.

III.E. Unsanctioned Conduct. Anyone who has been identified as someone attempting to undermine the success of the NYGFL's Travel Program (whether it be by illegally recruiting players, creating shadow teams, etc.) will immediately be identified as participating in unsanctioned conduct by the NYGFL Board, and considered not in Good Standing with the League. Their eligibility will be revoked and they will be unable to participate in the current Tournament Season and may be subject to further disciplinary action from the Board.

III.E.1. Appeals. A player may appeal the change in their status by submitting a written request to the Board and Tournament Committee. The Board will convene to review the request, in a reasonable time, and reply in the regular course of business. The Board may request the player's presence when they convene to review the request.

III.F. Player Conduct and Suspension. All travel player conduct issues will be dealt with by the NYGFL Board, in consultation with the Tournament Committee, in accordance with the league's policies and procedures. This is in addition to possible NGFFL conduct review.

III.F.1. By participating in travel team activities and/or registering to play on a team, you are agreeing to be bound by the rules and regulations of the NYGFL and its Travel Program. Furthermore, you are agreeing to be governed by the league and travel program's leadership and tournament structure.

IV. CAPTAIN RULES AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

IV.A. All Travel Program Captains must be active members in good standing with the NYGFL

IV.B. Travel Program Captain responsibilities include:

IV.B.1. Ensuring that their team complies with the NYGFL and National Gay Flag Football League (NGFFL) Gay Bowl rules and bylaws.

- Official NGFFL Bylaws are available here:
http://ngffl.com/Portals/0/NGFFL_Bylaws.pdf

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- IV.B.2. Attending all organized player recruitment events, player tryouts, league-wide tournament fundraising and community activities.
 - If necessary, a team representative may attend such activities in lieu of the captain.
- IV.B.3. Coordinating tournament practices and team building activities
- IV.B.4. Communicating pertinent information with the team prior to, during, and after a tournament
- IV.B.5. Registering their team with the NGFFL host city for the national tournament and ensuring that final rosters are submitted to the NGFFL. In addition, captains are required to ensure all players are registered with the host city for the tournament.
- IV.B.6. Coordinating all travel arrangements for their team, including transportation to/from the host city, transportation to/from the fields, and accommodations for all team players.
- IV.B.7. Attending all Tournament Captains meetings and other related activities before and throughout the tournament weekend.
- IV.B.8. Managing the on-field football experience, including strategy, player lineups, and player communication

V. Captain Selection

- V.A. Any member of the NYGFL in good standing may apply to be a travel program captain. All prospective travel program captains must submit a formal application to the NYGFL Board for consideration
 - V.A.1. In the application, each candidate is encouraged to include how they would advance the mission and vision of the NY Empire travel program consistent with the guidance put forth in this document. Each candidate also is encouraged to identify, or at least be prepared to discuss, ideas about who would be appointed as a co-captains
- V.B. The tournament chair and board will review and evaluate all applications and select lead captains for the specified number of tournament teams using a standardized set of criteria.
- V.C. Once lead captains are selected, they will have one week to inform the tournament chair and the board of their selection of one (1) co-captain. Co-captains must be approved by a majority vote of the board.
 - V.C.1. Co-captains will assist in carrying out all responsibilities and meet the same requirements as outlined in Section V. of this document *Captains Rule and Eligibility Requirements*.

VI. Changes to Bylaws

- VI.A. **Order of Events.** Only the NYGFL Board is authorized to amend these bylaws by two-thirds vote.

- VI.B. **Disclaimer.** Every scenario that may arise cannot possibly have been addressed by these bylaws. Therefore, if a scenario arises that is not addressed by the bylaws, the NYGFL Board has the sole discretion to address it in any manner they deem fair and just.