



## **Introduction**

This document is an outline of a plan of action in which the outcomes will strengthen the developmental aspects of our junior high school and high school football programs and better serve the needs of our junior high students. Our high school head football coach, Beau LaBore, has strong aspirations for building a top echelon football program. Due to these aspirations, and in light of changes in our league – Suburban East Conference – format for junior high school football, Coach LaBore has presented the Stillwater Area High School athletic administration with a number of proposals and ideas to make improvements in our junior high football programming.

The SAHS athletic administration has studied Coach's LaBore's concerns, met with stakeholders involved in junior high football and activities, and studied a number of related programs. It is with this background information the athletic administration team is sharing this plan of action.

### **Key Points:**

1. Currently, our 7/8 football season runs a total of seven weeks. We have the shortest season in the conference. For example, compared to Mounds View's program, we are three weeks shorter. Over the course of a player's development this means our student-athletes are getting 30% less instruction.
2. Nearly all east metro schools currently have community-based, night football programs at the junior high level, or will be moving to this type of program by the 2014-15 school year. Currently, Mounds View, Forest Lake, East Ridge, and Woodbury run a night program for their junior high school students. White Bear Lake runs a 7<sup>th</sup> grade night football program. Roseville and White Bear Lake (8<sup>th</sup> grade) are planning to run community-based night football programs beginning the fall of 2014.
3. Of the 32 Class 6A football programs, 25 have a night football program for junior high student-athletes currently in place.
4. Our current player-coach ratio is the highest in our conference at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels, even with the varsity football program funding four junior high coaching positions each year for the past seven years to help with better instruction for our participants.
5. Over the past two years we have struggled to find highly qualified football coaches for our junior high teams. We have made very late hires in 2011 and 2012, sometimes even making hires after the start of the season. It is increasingly difficult to find qualified coaches who are available in the hours immediately after school dismissal. The change in the elementary school day times has also taken away a pool of coaching candidates. We are seeing fewer teachers at the secondary level coaching football.



#### **Plan of Action:**

The 2013-14 school year will be the final year ISD 834 runs an after school football program. Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, the St. Croix Valley Athletic Association will run a community-based night football program for students in grades seven and eight.

1. VAA will implement a 3-8 football program, similar to its current 3-6 program.
2. The goal is for the composition of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football teams to be school-based, whenever practicable. In other word, team(s) representing SJHS, and other teams representing OLHS.
3. Ninth grade football teams will be divided equally, similar to what is currently done with our volleyball, softball, and boys and girls basketball teams.
4. Two coaches will be added to our after school, ninth grade football program. One coach added for each team.

Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, ISD 834 junior high schools will offer intramural flag football and dodge ball. This is to provide additional after school opportunities for students at both schools, and to potentially fill part of the void left by the cessation of the after school football program.

#### **Time Line:**

##### **April 2, 2013**

Meeting held with Superintendent, both junior high principals, junior high and high school athletic directors, head football coach, and VAA President to discuss the current middle school football program.

##### **April 8-12, 2013**

Report created for 7/8 football

##### **April 29-30**

Plan to add three "points" to the coaching salaries for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football coaches with Human Resources. This is due to the lengthened season.

##### **May 1-10**

Share information with School Board members and administration team.

##### **May 11-17**

Meeting between high school football coach, junior high athletic director, and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football coaches. At this meeting discussion will be held about the format of the season, compensation to coaches for additional time, and the transition between summer camp and fall school season.



Information sent out to football parents of potential 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade players outlining changes for the 2013-14 season.

#### **May 18-25**

Parent meeting with head football coach and junior high athletic director detailing all information for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football for fall of 2013. Time and location of this meeting is to be determined.

Announcement made that there will be significant changes in the 7/8 football program for those who live in the Stillwater School District for the 2014-15 school year and beyond. At this meeting, an explanation of the move to SCVAA sponsorship of night football and the cessation of after school football will be shared.

Letters will be sent out to incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football families explaining the two year plan as we transition. We will also feature this on the junior high school websites, the Stillwater Ponies Football website, the SCVAA website, and announce this in the local newspaper during the month of July.

#### **June 2013**

Fall football schedules determined for the coming 2013 season. Equipment, transportation and uniforms will be finalized.

Early sign-ups during the first week of June for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football players will be coordinated.

#### **August 2013**

Complete last minute coaching hires to lock all staff in place.

#### **Fall of 2013**

1. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football season will run from August 19-October 24. The season will continue to be a four-day a week, after school program that includes nine games.
2. Note: We are requesting at least one person be involved in the one week football clinic. This would help with the transition to the regular season.

#### **December 2013**

Meeting between School District and VAA to finalize all plans in the transition will take place. VAA and the school district will go over equipment and rental agreement with Community Education.

#### **Fall of 2014**

Night football run by the SCVAA replaces after school football.



**Cost Analysis of the Programming Change:**

	Average of last three years		2013-2014 School Year		2014-2015 and beyond	
	Expenses	Revenue	Expenses	Revenue	Expenses	Revenue
Salaries	\$13,984.00		\$21,004.00		\$15,500.00	
Officials	\$5,354.00		\$5,354.00			
Transportation	\$8,000.00		\$8,000.00			
Equipment	\$5,992.00					
Fees-7 <sup>th</sup>		\$7,600.00		\$7,600.00		\$2,000.00
Fees-8 <sup>th</sup>		\$10,400.00		\$10,400.00		\$2,000.00
7-8 Activites Budget		\$15,330.00		\$15,330.00		\$11,500.00
Donation				\$1,028.00		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$33,330.00</b>	<b>\$33,330.00</b>	<b>\$34,358.00</b>	<b>\$34,358.00</b>	<b>\$15,500.00</b>	<b>\$15,500.00</b>

**Note:**

2013-2014 school year would have an additional three weeks added to the season. This is the reason for the additional costs in salaries. The equipment costs are no longer there because there won't be a need to refurbish.

2014-2015 salaries are based on an additional ninth grade coach at each junior high and coaches for a fall 7/8 flag football league. The revenue is a result of fees taken in for the newly established intramural flag football and dodge ball leagues.

We have conservatively figured 80 students would get involved in intramural flag football and dodge ball at each junior high @ \$25 each.



Questions that might be asked:

**1. How does the contract pay for junior high coaches in Mounds View compare with Stillwater?**

All community based football programs do not pay for coaches. After school programs that are funded by school districts pay their coaches. Volunteer coaches make up the staffs of night football programs. The night football program would have no paid coaches.

**2. What is meant by “night football”?**

Night football is a community based football program that communities offer in place of after school, school sponsored programs. Practice times vary from after school to evenings for practices. The majority of practice times fall between 5:00-8:00 PM. Game times are scheduled between 6:00 and 7:30 PM. Many of the communities play these games in their high school’s stadium fields (turf).

**3. Why have we struggled to find a pool of highly qualified coaches?**

There are various reasons why we struggle to get a number of highly qualified coaches. The changes in our elementary school start times have reduced the numbers of coaches. The after school time is not ideal for getting a lot of interested candidates because of other jobs. The number of teachers who get involved in coaching has declined over the last decade or so.

**4. Does our current head football coach support the change?**

There is no doubt that Beau LaBore would like to see a stronger 3-8 program under his leadership. He has done a lot to make sure youth coaches teach the same fundamentals, schemes, and practice structure by providing coaching and youth clinics.

**5. How will 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football change as far as creating teams?**

Teams will still be divided geographically based on where they live within Stillwater Schools. Essentially there will still be teams made up of either OLJH or SJHS. There may be placement of players to even up teams or meet skills needs.

**6. How will the ninth grade program be changed?**

Beginning in 2014, all ninth grade football players will meet at SJHS for practices. The teams will be divided equally (Note: This request was made by the junior high principals and is favored by the head football coach), with one team Stillwater Red and the other Stillwater Black. Division of teams will be based on skills, position needs, etc. The addition of two ninth grade coaches, one for each team, would cost about \$5,000.

**7. How would the junior high AD position change?**

We are excited about the fact that Ralph will be able to implement an intramural program for the junior high schools. Adding both a flag football and dodge ball program would allow students to get involved with their school.

**8. How much would this change cost families interested in football?**



Football currently costs \$75 for seventh graders and \$110 for eighth graders at the junior highs. Beau LaBore has stated that costs for participants would be about \$150. For that price players will get the best equipment possible, jersey, and an addition of games to their schedules. VAA does have in place a scholarship program that allows those who don't have the money to still participate. It is important to remember that all fees go toward the cost to run the program.

**9. How does VAA implement its program to the youth in our school district?**

VAA Football has a handbook that outlines policies and procedures for training, background checks, channels for communication, and an overall philosophy. Beau LaBore has been instrumental in the development of this. Background checks for coaches and concussion training are a requirement for all youth organizations. The liability possibilities have required this of all youth groups.