

## **SAN FRANCISCO GAY FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE TRAVEL TEAM POLICY**

### **SFGFFL's Mission**

The San Francisco Gay Flag Football League (“SFGFFL”) is an organization that fosters a community for the LGBTQIA+ individuals in the San Francisco Bay Area through the positive social and athletic enjoyment of flag football. Through flag football, we empower our players and our surrounding communities to reach their goals as athletes, teammates, friends, and leaders, regardless of level, skill, knowledge, or ability. We actively create a safe space for members of the San Francisco Bay Area LGBTQIA+ community to feel included in flag football.

Tournaments are exciting opportunities to compete against the highest levels of competition, meet other players from around the country, and represent our league on the national level. NGFFL tournaments involve an additional level of strategy and physicality and with it, comes additional responsibilities, costs, and expectations.

In line with our mission, SFGFFL aims to assemble teams that represent its values, prioritizing sportsmanship and community above all else. To participate on a SFGFFL Travel Team and represent the league on the national and regional stages is a privilege reserved for those who understand and share the league’s values. How travel teams conduct themselves at tournaments can directly impact the SFGFFL’s standing as a member league with the NGFFL and as such, it is of utmost importance that our travel teams reflect our values.

Travel players must represent the best of our league in front of the NGFFL community, be able to compete and protect themselves and their teammates against strong competition, and plan to cover 100% of their own expenses. Our league therefore has set forth minimum requirements and a collaborative selection process for those who wish to compete on our travel teams.

### **Travel Team Lead**

- Annually, the current Board of Directors will vote and elect a Travel Team Lead to manage the administrative tasks associated with organizing travel teams
  - Throughout the year, the Travel Lead will discuss with the Board of Directors which tournaments to compete in
- The Travel Team Lead must be one of the current Board of Directors
- The Travel Team Lead may nominate a Travel Committee. The Travel Committee can include eligible league members who will assist the Travel Team Lead in carrying out their duties. A member of the Travel Committee shall be a W+ Travel Director who will manage all elements of travel for W+.
- Responsibilities for the Travel Team Lead include, but not limited to, deciding:
  - Who is eligible for travel team for Open Division
  - Who to nominate as Captains for Open Division for the Board to vote on. Captains can be confirmed by the board with a simple majority vote.
  - How many teams are being sent for Open Division

- Which divisions teams will play in for Open Division
- Ensure roster composition compliance for Open Division
- Booking fields for practice if captains for Open are not able to
- Ensuring Captains organize team dinners at tournaments and when possible lead organizing joint division team socials ahead of tournaments
- Checking in with captains on positions and review player game plan and ensuring captains have a plan for every player for Open Division
- Coaching captains through setting expectations with their players for Open Division
- The W+ Travel Director will oversee all duties mentioned above for the W+ Division

### **Player Eligibility and Expectations**

- All interested players must submit a player interest form to be shared annually ahead of tournament(s) the league anticipates to attend
- Eligibility: Must have an active membership in SFGFFL or San Francisco Women’s Flag Football League (“SFWFFL”)
  - Active membership for SFGFFL defined as:
    - Play, been an active supporter, or refereed in 50% of most recently completed season games
    - Must be registered in season travel tournament is happening in
    - Be in good standing (dues paid, no suspensions)
    - Special consideration for extenuating circumstances can be made by the Board which players can note in their deposit form
    - Former members can play based on board vote pursuant of most current NGFFL PAUGA rules
    - Pay the travel deposit fee by the deadline to be considered eligible for travel team
  - Active membership for SFWFFL defined as:
    - Be in good standing with SFWFFL
    - Nuanced determination made by SFWFFL Commissioner(s)
    - Pay the travel deposit fee by the deadline to be considered eligible for travel team
  - Must pay the travel team deposit by the deadline set forth by the Travel Team Lead ahead of Travel Team tryouts
  - Travel players may include a limited number of “honorary” spots pursuant of most current NGFFL PAUGA rules
    - These spots are nominated by the Travel Team Lead and voted on by the Board of Directors
    - They are reserved for former SFGFFL/SFWFFL players who’ve moved away or retired but have earned the chance to represent San Francisco either due to their league contributions or prior tournament performance
    - Honorary players are NOT guaranteed playing time. This is mostly a symbolic recognition, though they may be given an opportunity to play a limited role at their captain’s discretion and only after the rostered

players are considered. Honorary players may not start over rostered players

- In the event that not enough eligible SFGFFL players are able to play on a travel team to fill out a 15 person roster, SFGFFL will consider accepting NGFFL Free Agents from the official NGFFL Free Agent roster. Free agents will not displace eligible SFGFFL players.
- Expectations
  - Attendance
    - Players should attempt to attend a minimum of 50% of travel team practices
    - Extenuating circumstances should be brought to your captain's attention as soon as possible, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the team captain and the SFGFFL Travel Lead
    - Players who fail to attend 50% of practices, without an approved exception, may forfeit their roster spot, a determination made by their captain. Player deposit is not refundable when roster removal is due to poor practice attendance
  - Financial Support
    - Tournament players must be prepared to cover all expenses related to traveling to and participating in a tournament
  - With a roster of 15+, players should expect to primarily play only offense or only defense

### **Costs and Fundraising**

- Travel team players must be able to cover all their own costs. As a rough estimate, tournaments can cost anywhere from \$1,000-3,000 including registration, airfare, housing, local transportation, food, entertainment, and other expenses.
- Purpose of the Travel Deposit
  - To be considered for selection on a Travel Team
  - To pay for field permits, equipment replacement, and goes towards funding a team dinner while at the tournament(s)
  - Refundability
    - If selected for a Travel Team, this deposit becomes non-refundable
    - If not selected for a Travel Team, individuals will be refunded their deposit
- Team fundraisers
  - Players may organize and host additional fundraisers on their own, but all travel players must be invited to participate, and all funds will be split equally among the players that chose to participate in the fundraiser. If a player opts not to participate in a fundraiser, they do not receive any of the funds raised.
- Sponsorships
  - Teams may not solicit their own sponsors for travel teams.
  - All travel teams represent SFGFFL and will be sponsored by league sponsors. All sponsor funds will be split equally among all travel teams. Please contact the

Travel Team Lead if you know an organization or business that may be interested in sponsoring our travel teams.

### **Captain Requirements & Selection**

- The Travel Team Lead will select the captains for the tournaments to be attended by SFGFFL sponsored travel teams
- All teams will be led by at least one LGBTQIA+ captain and up to two additional co-captains
- Open Division Captains
  - Must have previous NGFFL captain experience or at least one must have been a captain in a SFGFFL season
- W+ Division Captains
  - The lead captain and/or at least 50% of the captains on a given team must have played in a NGFFL league for at least one season, previously served as a captain for a W+ NGFFL travel team, or played in at least 3 NGFFL tournaments in the W+ division.
  - Other captains who have not played in a NGFFL league for one season must be approved by the Commissioner(s) of SFWFFL
- Captains will be identified and contacted before the Travel Team tryouts
- If there are enough players who have paid their deposit by the deadline set forth by the Travel Team Lead ahead of Travel Team tryouts, multiple teams may be formed.
- If there are not enough eligible players, division teams may be consolidated with a discussion with division captains and Travel Team Lead to determine who will be the head captain
- Division Captains will collaboratively draft their teams to create competitive teams. The Travel Team Lead can provide guidance and insight but ultimate rostering falls to the captains with division captains mutually agreeing upon their teams.
- Expectations for captain responsibilities include but are not limited:
  - Organize and lead team practices;
  - Ensure correct and timely registration;
  - Help players facilitate travel/housing arrangements;
  - Record player attendance and ensure attendance;
  - Ensure all players play in both half of every game;
  - Coordinate team social events and fundraising opportunities;
  - Communicate clearly with players and Travel Team Lead;
  - Deciding positions and creating game plans for every player and communicating anticipated roles as early as possible so players understand what positions they should be practicing leading up to the tournament;
  - Facilitate healthy sportsmanship within the team and with opposing teams;
  - Foster, facilitate, and encourage camaraderie among all SFGFFL travel teams collaborating with other travel team captains;
  - Enforce SFGFFL code of conduct and uphold team/individual sportsmanship.

### **Roster Guidelines**

- Each roster will have a minimum of 15 players and a maximum of 22 players
  - If there are between 22 and 30 interested players, the Board can vote to send a second team with under 15 players
- For tournaments with roster composition requirements (ex. Gay Bowl, Sin City), each team can only roster five straight allies and may only play three at any time.
  - To ensure compliance with the NGFFL on this requirement, we refer to each player's self-identification on the registration for their last SFGFFL season.
  - We recognize that gender identity and self-discovery are fluid and encourage potential tournament players to speak with the Travel Team Lead or the Commissioner if they wish to update their identification
- For other tournaments with no roster composition requirements, each team will endeavor to maximize LGBTQIA+ representation and will accept any eligible players as needed to form a full and complete roster
- Roster Selection
  - There will be a two week period for eligible players to practice together and at these, the division captains will be observing players to help inform their roster decisions
  - Players selected will play for the team that they are drafted to. Roster changes can only be made under extenuating circumstances and must be approved by the captains of each team, the Travel Lead, and the Board of Directors.

### **Code of Conduct**

All players and supporters who attend a tournament – whether a sanctioned NGFFL tournament or non-NGFFL tournament – represent SFGFFL and are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct. Any incidents that occur at tournaments will be reviewed by the Board and may impact a player's ability to compete in our home league or future tournaments.