



Lightning Flag Football Handbook 2023

Mission Statement: Lightning Flag Football exists to provide home-educated young men the opportunity to participate in organized, competitive sports within a distinctly Christian environment that challenges each player to strive for maturity and conduct that is honoring to the Lord Jesus; thereby helping them to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.” Colossians 3:17

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I - Information

Forward

Parental Involvement

Player Involvement

Communication

Financial Accountability

Team Assignment

Out-of-town Travel

Heat Index Guidelines & Protocols

Section II - Policies & Procedures

Health Insurance & Liability

Eligibility

Player Fees

Other Possible Expenses to Players

Dress Code

Jewelry

Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco Use

Section III – Conduct, Rules and Discipline

Conduct of Players

Conduct of Parents

Rules & Discipline/Disciplinary Action Schedule

Player/Parent Acknowledgment

INFORMATION

FORWARD

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with Lightning Flag Football and to provide you with information about the benefits, requirements, and policies of this program. You should read, understand and comply with all provisions of the handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as a player or parent of a player. Our main objective is to provide an environment where young men can participate in athletics in a way that is honoring to the Lord Jesus and thereby grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

No handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As Lightning Flag Football continues to grow, the need may arise to change policies described in this handbook. The Lightning Flag Football Board, therefore, reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policy or portion of the handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate. Players and parents will, of course, be notified of such changes as they occur.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This program cannot exist without the volunteer help of parents and family. All families are required to fill a volunteer position for the general program. Need based exceptions will be made on a case by case basis. If Lightning Flag Football hosts a tournament during a season, additional volunteering to help with the tournament is required.

PLAYER INVOLVEMENT

Teaching commitment and responsibility is part of the character building of this athletic program. Practices and games are not optional. Players must let a coach and designated parent representative know, in advance, when they will be unable to be at a practice or game. The preferred method of contact is to let a coach know of a planned future absence before or after practice AND to **RSVP** on the scheduled date or event in Team App. For extended absences, an email may be sent to omahalff@gmail.com.

COMMUNICATION

We communicate primarily through email and Team App. If this is a problem, you will need to contact the Lightning Board at omahalff@gmail.com to set up an alternative form of communication.

Schedule changes are inevitable in athletics. Please be flexible and check Team App and your email regularly.

If weather is questionable, we will send cancellation notices using e-mail and Team App notifications. When absolutely necessary, we will call or text each family.

INFORMATION

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

We desire to keep all financial business of the Lightning Flag Football program at the highest standard. The Lightning Board develops a proposed budget at the beginning of each season and an actual income and expense report at the end of the season. All financial information is freely available to participating Lightning Flag Football families.

TEAM ASSIGNMENT

Lightning Flag Football strives to maintain both a varsity and junior varsity team. However, our ability to do this may be impacted from year to year by the number and make-up (i.e. age and experience) of our participating players.

Varsity is generally defined as those players aged 16 and up. It may also include those younger players determined to have the experience and/or skill level to be able to play on the varsity team. This determination will be made at the discretion of the coaches. The varsity team is a competitive high school team. Playing time is determined by the coaches and based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, skill level, experience, effort, attitude (on and off the field), attendance of mandatory team functions, commitment and dedication to the team.

Junior Varsity (JV) players are generally defined as those aged 15 and under. The primary objective of the JV team is to help those players learn the game and to develop and grow in their knowledge and abilities. While practice time is the best way to learn, playing in JV games also gives them valuable opportunities to grow through actual game experience. Every effort will be made to give each player ample playing time; however, we do not guarantee equal playing time for all. Attitude (on and off the field), effort, attendance of mandatory team functions, commitment and dedication to the team will all factor into playing time.

OUT-OF-TOWN TRAVEL

In the event Lightning Flag Football travels for an out-of-town game or tournament, additional information will be provided detailing team and player responsibilities. Players will not be allowed to drive to out-of-town games.

HEAT INDEX GUIDELINES & PROTOCOLS

Heat Index	Breaks		
	Option*	Every	Duration
90-94	Scheduled breaks	30 min	5 Min
95-99	Mandatory**	30 min	10 min
100-104	Mandatory Limit practice to 1.5 hrs	20 min	10 min
>104	Cancel Practice		

*Athletes can always take extra breaks

**Mandatory means athletes will come off the field and stay under shade with cooling towels and drink water for a minimum of 10 minutes.

SAMPLE HYDRATION PLAN

Self Assessment	If weight loss > 1 – 2 lbs or urine color is gold or color of apple juice, Then - INCREASED RISK OF HEAT RELATED ILLNESS
Prepare	2 hours prior - drink ~2 cups of water 10 minutes prior - drink ~1 cup of water
Keep Drinking	~ 4 cups of water per hour during workout
Recovery	Within 2 hours of completion - drink ~2 cups of water per lb of weight loss
Be Alert	Athletes need to recognize warning signs of dehydration

Things to remember:

- High body-fat athletes can have a harder time with exercise and can become dehydrated faster than lower body-fat athletes working out under the same environmental conditions.
- Poor acclimatization/fitness levels can greatly contribute to an athlete's dehydration problems.
- Medications, fevers and illness greatly affect an athlete's dehydration problems.
- Clothing, such as dark, bulky, or rubber protective equipment can drastically increase the chance of heat illness and dehydration.

The best management of heat related illnesses is prevention.

- Along with physical conditioning, the factor of acclimatization to heat is important. Acclimatization is the process of becoming adjusted to heat. It is essential to provide for **GRADUAL ACCLIMATIZATION TO HOT WEATHER**. It is necessary for an athlete to exercise in the heat if he is to become acclimatized to it. It is suggested that a graduated physical conditioning program be used and that 80% acclimatization can be expected to occur after the first 7-10 days. Research states that most heat related fatalities occur in the first four days of preseason practice. Please acclimate your athletes to the heat with gradual practice sessions.

Heat Related Illness	Treatment
<p>Heat Cramps are involuntary muscle spasms.</p>	<p>Rest in a cool place. Massage cramp with ice and passive stretching. Replenish fluids with water. Return to play when you are symptom free.</p>
<p>Heat Exhaustion involves: profuse sweating, dizziness, weakness, nausea, headache</p>	<p>Remove unnecessary clothing & equipment, towel with cool water and/or ice the neck region, armpits and near groin areas (rapidly cool the body). Rest in a cool place. Discontinue activity until thoroughly recovered. Return to play when you are symptom free.</p>
<p>Heat Stroke: A Medical Emergency associated with nausea, seizures, disorientation, a glassy stare and possible unconsciousness or coma. It may occur suddenly without being preceded by any other signs. The individual is usually unconscious with a high body temperature and a hot dry skin. Heat stroke victims, contrary to popular belief, may sweat profusely.</p>	<p>ACTIVATE EMS!!! Remove unnecessary clothing & equipment. Rest in a cool place. Rapidly cool body with ice on neck region, armpits and near groin regions (rapidly cool the body). Treat for shock. Return to play when released by a physician.</p>
<p><i>With any heat related illness, treatment for all heat conditions involves immediately moving the person to a cool place, rapidly cooling the body, and removing all equipment and unnecessary clothing. Administer cool fluids. Elevate the feet above the heart to maintain blood pressure and circulation to the brain.</i></p>	

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

HEALTH INSURANCE LIABILITY

All players are expected to carry personal insurance providing coverage should injury occur during practices or games. Parents, guardians and players agree that Lightning Flag Football, as well as the facilities that Lightning Flag Football uses for practices and games, will not be held responsible for any injuries.

ELIGIBILITY

Players must be at least 50% homeschooled and be passing all courses. Players must be biological males at least 12 years of age and no older than 18 years of age prior to September 1st of the season year. Players may not have participated in a high school graduation ceremony prior to the beginning of the season.

If the player attends a Christian, Rule 13 or Rule 12 school that does not offer football, they may petition to play with Lightning Flag Football. All petitions to participate are subject to Lightning Board approval.

PLAYER FEES

All player fees may be paid directly or through fundraising opportunities offered by Lightning Flag Football. Fees cover rentals, referees, coaches, and other operating costs. All fees and donations are for use by the Lightning Flag Football program. They are non-refundable and non-transferable.

OTHER POSSIBLE EXPENSES TO PLAYERS

Uniform costs including undergarments, socks, cleats, and mouthguards are the responsibility of the player(s) family. Any out of town travel expenses such as lodging, gas, and food are also the responsibility of the player(s) family.

DRESS CODE

Game uniforms will be issued to each player. Uniforms are meant to create a team environment and are to be worn as directed - modestly, keeping all undergarments covered. Compression shorts or pants are **required** underneath uniforms. A compression shirt isn't required but is suggested. Black is preferred, but white is acceptable. While practicing, the same standards are to be maintained - attire worn modestly, keeping all undergarments covered. To prevent broken fingers, we require pocketless shorts at practice. Shorts with pockets sewn shut are acceptable.

The uniform is to be worn during game times only. No part of the uniform (whether shorts or jersey) should be worn at any other time unless specifically directed by the coaching staff or the board.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

JEWELRY

No jewelry/accessories shall be worn during practice or games. Any exceptions must be approved by the coach.

DRUG/ALCOHOL/TOBACCO USE

The Lightning Flag Football program maintains a drug-free, alcohol-free, and tobacco-free environment for all players while participating in practices and games including travel time to and from away games. While participating, there is to be no form of drug, alcohol, or tobacco used by any of the players.

The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted, but players must make coaches and traveling chaperones aware of the medication(s) being taken.

CONDUCT, RULES & DISCIPLINE

CONDUCT OF PLAYERS

Players are expected to:

1. Attend all games, practices and mandatory team events unless previously excused by the coach and designated parent representative.
2. Contact the coach and designated parent representative, in advance, if unable to make any practices, games or other mandatory event. The preferred method of contact is to let a coach know of a planned future absence before or after practice AND to **RSVP** on the scheduled date or event in Team App. For extended absences, an email may be sent to omahalff@gmail.com.
3. Be on time for practices and games.
4. Listen to instructions and follow the team rules as set out by the Lightning Board and the coaches.
5. Show respect to the coaches, players, parents, game officials and other Lightning Flag Football authority figures and loyalty to the Lightning Flag Football program.
6. Be coachable: willing to take direction, instruction, and discipline.
7. Demonstrate an enthusiasm for practices and playing the game, along with striving for excellence as a player.
8. Abstain from using any abusive, foul, degrading, disruptive, or complaining language or gestures; and to always remain encouraging to those around you.
9. Report all injuries to the coaching staff ASAP.
10. Refrain from misconduct, at any time, which casts discredit upon the Lightning Flag Football program's reputation or image.

CONDUCT, RULES & DISCIPLINE

CONDUCT OF PARENTS

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

1. Encourage and support the authority of the coaching staff, Lightning Board, and Lightning Flag Football program.
2. Make every reasonable effort to have the player at all scheduled practices and games on time and fulfill their commitment to the team.
3. Treat coaches, fellow parents, game officials, players, and spectators with respect at all times, and make sure all family members/invited guests do the same.
4. Contact any Lightning Board member with any problems, concerns, or comments regarding the Lightning Flag Football program.
5. Make the coaches or Lightning Board aware of any physical, mental, or emotional problems that their player may experience.
6. Abide by the guidelines set up for out-of-town travel, including but not limited to, ensuring proper clothing and appropriate conduct. Players will not be allowed to drive to out- of-town games.
7. Support the Lightning Flag Football program by volunteering to help with the many functions surrounding the program.
8. Pay fees by assigned due dates.
9. Acknowledge that their student has met the eligibility requirements set by Lightning Flag Football.
10. Provide correct contact and personal information to prevent miscommunication.

CONDUCT, RULES & DISCIPLINE

RULES & DISCIPLINE

The Disciplinary Action Schedule that summarizes the rules of Lightning Flag Football and sets out the penalties for violations will be followed for any particular violation. It is difficult to cover everything and the rules are not all inclusive. There may be other infractions not necessarily covered in the specific rules that may call for a warning or other disciplinary action.

In the event of violation, most of our rules provide for progressive discipline. The schedule that follows helps assure uniform communication and uniform administration throughout the program's operations, even though individual cases may require individual consideration by the Lightning Flag Football Board and/or coaching staff.

Any warnings, suspensions, or dismissals given to a player will be immediately explained to the parents as well.

VW = Verbal Warning
 WW = Written Warning

S = Suspension
 D = Dismissal from the program

The penalty for the rule infraction may vary, depending upon the severity of the offense and other facts in the case.

Rule	1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense	4 th Offense
ATTENDANCE:				
Unexcused absence	VW	WW	S	D
Chronic excused absence	WW	S	S	D
Unexcused/excessive tardiness	VW	WW	S	D
Leaving without permission	VW	WW	S	D
PRACTICE/GAME BEHAVIOR:				
Failure to obey coaches' instructions	VW	WW	S	D
Improper use, possession, or selling of drugs/alcohol/tobacco during Lightning activities	S	D		
Fighting	WW	S	D	
Violation of dress/uniform code	VW	WW	S	D
Intimidating, threatening, or interfering with a coach, game officials, or other players	WW	D		
Use of abusive/foul/degrading language or gestures	WW	S	D	
OTHER ACTS:				
Theft from the Lightning program or other players	S	D		
Misconduct which casts discredit upon the Lightning program's reputation or image	WW	S	D	

PLAYER / PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby **acknowledge** receipt of the Lightning Flag Football Handbook. I **understand** that the Handbook is for information and guidance and that all contents are subject to change at any time. I **fully understand** and **agree** to follow Lightning Flag Football's code of conduct and rules. I realize that, as a player, any violations could result in loss of privilege, suspension, or dismissal from the Lightning Flag Football program; and, as a parent, any violations could result in loss of privilege to attend games or practices.

Player Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

This acknowledgment is to be signed by each player and each parent or guardian and returned to one of the Board members prior to participating in practices or games.