HEART OF AMERICA ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

Football

SECTION A: Leadership

1. Chair for the HEART Coaches Association will be an elected position by the football coaches of the HEART conference. This position will serve a 2-year term. If there is a coaching change, an election will take place and the selected will assume the chair immediately. The Chair is responsible for organizing agenda items and will run the meetings.

SECTION B: Meetings

1. Must have a quorum to be an official Heart meeting.

SECTION C: Football Game Procedures

1. Attendance at pre-game conferences shall be limited to game officials and authorized conference representatives, e.g., Commissioner or Supervisor.

2. Home management should provide copies of the game program in the officials' dressing room.

3. The pre-game conference shall start promptly one hour before game time.

4. Home management shall provide clean towels for officials.

5. The home management shall provide to the officials in their dressing room six legal game balls. The home management is to furnish two ball crew for each side of the field. Ball crew must be instructed to stay off the playing field. Ball crew should be mature individuals and capable of performing their important duties proficiently. On rainy days towels must be available to the officials on the side lines to aid them in the wet day mechanics.

6. The referee and umpire shall report in uniform to the team dressing room at least one hour before game time to begin their pre-game duties. Coaches are to make it themselves available to officials at this time.

7. The Heart requests that you add to your game day procedures for opposing team and officials; at 75 minutes prior to kickoff the White Hat Referee be escorted to the Officials Review area and test out the equipment to ensure its functionality. Please have a game day administrator escort them to the replay area. Please also have your official replay coordinator on site to test the camera and functionality of the equipment for the White Hat at their location inside the stadium.

8. The clock operator shall be the official timer. The clock operator shall report to the officials' dressing room one hour before the game time to check the correct time of the day and to receive instructions from the back judge.

9. The field clock is to start sixty minutes before game time and to run the twenty minutes of the half-time intermission. At half-time the clock is to be started. Homecoming half-time may be extended to 25 minutes. The visiting team Athletic Director will be notified prior to the day of the game.

10. In the event of the failure of the official scoreboard clock, the electric clock operator, through sideline communication, shall notify the back judge of the time remaining in the period. The back judge will pick up the time on the stopwatch he is carrying. By rule, the clock is to be stopped and both benches are to be notified when there are four minutes remaining in a half. Back judges shall relay to the sidelines for the benefit of the coaches the time remaining in minute intervals after each score in the final two minutes of each half.

11. Ball crew may not include football players and are to report to the officials' dressing room sixty minutes before game time.

SECTION D: Game Scheduling

1. Member institutions shall play a varsity round robin football schedule, and these games alone will count in the conference ratings. Conference ratings shall be made of all-round robin sports.

2. Round robin crossover schedule will start on first play date available and bye week will be on week seven (7).

3. Member institutions shall limit the number of varsity football games to a maximum of 11, not including alumni and post-season contests.

4. 10 non-varsity games maximum per season.

5. If a Heart college has a JV team, priority scheduling should be to schedule those Heart teams who are willing to play.

6. If schools desire, they may play their conference game on a mutually agreed date rather than the conference schedule date.

7. When schools play games on non-institutional sites, other than NAIA play-off games, permission to play said games shall be obtained from the Commissioner.

8. All games are 1pm or 6pm unless agreed upon by Athletic Directors of the two institutions. (Junior Varsity games may have a start time of 7 p.m.)
    a. Pre and Post Bowl games are supported.

9. Schedule Approval Process:
    a. The Coaches will have the opportunity to present scheduling parameters to the Commissioner that meet the 60% minimum criteria of overall games set by the COP. This will be reviewed by the Commissioner and submitted to the Heart Scheduling Committee.
    b. The Scheduling Committee along with the individual sport liaison will then review the proposed scheduling parameters submitted by the Commissioner and approve or alter the proposal. These approved or altered parameters will be returned to the Commissioner to produce a schedule that fits the parameters.
    c. When the schedule is completed, it will be submitted to the Scheduling Committee (with the sport liaison as an adjunct) for analysis and approval. If not approved, it will be sent back to the Commissioner for alterations.
    d. Once approved by the Scheduling Committee the Commissioner will forward to the Athletic Directors Committee for final approval. At this point, the schedule will be at the stage where any changes should be made via the schedule change process.
    e. Approval comes with a 2/3rds majority voting in the affirmative.

SECTION E: Tie-Breaker

1. To determine the automatic bid to the NAIA-FCS from the Heart North or South Division, in the case of a two-way tie between teams in the same division with the highest conference winning percentage, the winner of the head-to-head competition between those two teams earns the automatic berth to the NAIA-FCS.

2. In the case of a three-way tie between teams in the same division with the highest conference winning percentage, the following tiebreakers will be considered in order:

a. The collective win-loss record of the three tied teams in games played against one another shall be compared. If one team possesses a superior record against the other two, that team shall be awarded the automatic berth.
b. If this does not produce a clear-cut champion, the first step is to eliminate, one-by-one, the team with a loss to the common opponent with the lowest conference winning percentage (as determined by conference win-loss record).
    i. Within division will be used first and then common opponents cross-division second until one team is eliminated.
    ii. Teams would be eliminated from the tie until two teams remain, the head-to-head competition between them would determine the NAIA-FCS playoff representative.

c. If this does not produce a clear-cut champion, the following will be used.

    i. A coaches vote will be taken by the remaining coaches in the Heart Conference excluding the three teams.
    ii. Coaches will vote on who they feel is the best team and deserves qualification to the NAIA-FCS.
    iii. Coaches will rank the tied teams, 1st , 2nd , 3rd etc. All ballots will be shared with head coaches in the conference.
    iv. Each ranking will be weighted 1st (3 points), 2nd (2 points), 3rd (1 point).
    v. If two teams are still tied after the vote, the head-to-head tiebreaker will break that tie.
    vi. If three teams are still tied, take the points for the coaches that are in the division to break the tie.
    vii. If three teams are still tied, the conference office will conduct a blind draw.

SECTION F: Rules

1. The Heart of America schools follow the standard NCAA rules book.
2. Each institution's official Heart Conference Football Championship roster shall not exceed 62 student-athletes, consistent with the NAIA postseason roster limit for football. Roster submission procedures, deadlines, and allowable roster changes shall be administered by the Conference Office.

SECTION G: Officials

1. Eight officials for conference, and 7 officials for JV games shall be assigned from the approved conference list by the HEART Supervisor of Officials.

a. Officials' assignments shall be sent to member institutions by the day of the football coaches meeting.
b. Officials are not to be assigned for two consecutive weeks or more than three games during the season per institution.

SECTION H: Statistics

1. Inform all SID's that the home team must provide 3 sets of statistics are given to each team at half-time and end of game.

2. Home team shall be responsible for official stats to be submitted to the Heart Assistant Commissioner by Sunday's deadline. (With mutual consent of both SIDs, corrections can be made within 72 hours of the contest.)

3. When stats are not provided it should be reported to the Commissioner.

SECTION I: Awards

1. The Conference Champion will be the team with the highest winning percentage, and they shall receive the conference championship banner. All schools that tie for the football championship will receive a banner. (Co-Champions, Tri-Champions, etc.)

2. The Heart will recognize the following for each division (north and south) for 1st and 2nd team all-conference:
    a. Offense: 10 linemen, 2 tight ends, 6 wide receivers, 2 quarterbacks, 4 running backs, 2 placekickers, 2 return specialists.
    b. Defense: 8 linemen, 8 linebackers, 8 defensive backs, 2 punters, 1 longsnapper
    c. 2 All-Around Athletes
    d. Honorable Mention: Each team will select 3 players from their roster to receive Honorable Mention.
3. Only the 1st team offense and defense All-Conference will be given plaques. (No ties on the 1st Team All-Conference)

4. Each division (north and south) will recognize a Conference Player of the Year, an Offensive Conference Player of the Year, and a Defensive Conference Player of the Year.

5. The Heart coaches will award the Ken Gibler Head Coach of the Year and the Heart Coaches will award an Offensive Assistant Coach of the Year, Defensive Assistant Coach of the Year and Special Teams Assistant Coach of the Year for

the Heart North and South Division. Each head coach may nominate one assistant coach per award. There will not be Co-winners for this award.

6. Each school can nominate an offensive and defensive player of the year for a vote by each school.

7. Heart of America all-conference teams for the North and South Divisions will be selected by the coaches via a conference ballot to be managed and calculated by the conference Assistant Commissioner.

8. All award orders will be placed through the conference office.

SECTION J: Divisions

Heart of America North	**Heart of America South**
Clarke	Baker
Culver-Stockton	Benedictine
Graceland	Central Methodist
Grand View	Missouri Baptist
Mount Mercy	MidAmerica Nazarene
Peru State	Missouri Valley
St. Ambrose	William Woods
William Penn	

SECTION K: Film and Film Exchange

1. Game film must be videotaped with an HD camera while on a tripod/platform. Videotaping by hand is not allowed.

2. Use an online film exchange system. Upon request home team must provide game tape to visiting team after the game.

3. Film must be completed by midnight the day of the game and must be O/D/K as well as provide Down and Distance.

4. Failure to comply with film exchange policies will result in the following progressive enforcement:
    a. First Violation
        i. A formal written warning issued by the Conference Office.
    b. Second Violation

        i. A one-game suspension of the head coach for the next already scheduled countable varsity contest.
    c. Third Violation
        i. A one-game suspension of the head coach for the next already scheduled countable varsity contest.
    d. Subsequent Violations
        i. Each additional violation will result in an additional one-game suspension of the head coach for each occurrence.
5. The Conference Office shall have the authority to determine violations and administer penalties.
6. Technological Issue Exception and Notification Requirements
    a. If an institution experiences a legitimate technological issue preventing compliance with film exchange requirements, the institution must adhere to the following notification protocol:
        i. Notification must be sent within 24 hours of the conclusion of the contest in question.
        ii. Shot of scoreboard should be at least on change of possession and more often if possible. The film should start as offensive team breaks the huddle and turned off well after the play has concluded.
        iii. The notification must be sent via email to:
            1. the Conference Commissioner
            2. all head coaches within the sport
            3. the sport's Board of Governors Liaison
            4. the institution's Athletic Director
        iv. The notification must include:
            1. a description of the technological issue
            2. steps being taken to resolve the issue
            3. an estimated timeline for resolution
    b. Failure to provide timely notification as outlined above will constitute a violation under this policy. The Conference Office reserves discretion to waive penalties when documented technological failures occur and proper notification procedures have been followed.
7. Any Sunday film exchange arrangements should be agreed to by both coaches:
    a. Location
    b. Time
    c. Cell phone # for the coach who will meet for the exchange.
8. Conference schools shall not release film to non-conference institutions that they are not playing.

9. All game film from Heart of America Athletic Conference scheduled conference games must be made available for film exchange on the Hudl platform. NAIA Postseason and non-conference games are not required to be made available on the Hudl film exchange platform.

10. Monday/Thursday – updated rosters and two-deep should be provided on Monday and Thursday of game week by noon.

SECTION L: Coach Challenges

1. To add a 3rd camera for replay in the opposite end zone of the current end zone camera and it is to be placed on the opposite hash of the other current end zone camera.The visiting team must bring the entire Skycoach system and camera.

2. Head Coaches will have one challenge to use during the game (including Overtime). If the challenge is successful, then it is retained, and the Head Coach has one more challenge to use during the game (including Overtime). (2 max)

3. When the Head Coach wants to initiate a challenge, he calls timeout, drops the red challenge flag, and informs the Referee he intends to challenge the ruling on the field. This challenge must be initiated before the ball is next put in play.

4. If the challenged play is available on video but the result inconclusive, the ruling on the field will “stand” as called. The team will lose its challenge and be charged a timeout.

5. If the challenged play is not available due to an equipment failure, the ruling on the field will “stand” as called, and the team will not lose its challenge, nor will it be charged a timeout.

6. If a coach initiates a challenge and then learns that the play in question is not a reviewable play, the timeout will be enforced, the team will lose a timeout, but the team will not have used a "challenge".

7. **OFFICIALS REVIEW DISCRETION**: Officials can review a call at their discretion as long as determined by the sport rule.

8. **REVIEWABLE PLAYS** -- NCAA Football Rule 12
    a. SCORING PLAYS
        i. A potential touchdown or safety.
        ii. Field Goal attempts Reviewable only if the ball is below the top of the uprights as it crosses the end line.
    b. PASSES
        i. Pass ruled complete, incomplete, or intercepted.
        ii. Forward pass touched by a player (eligible or ineligible) or an official, including whether the touching is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage.
        iii. Forward pass or forward handing when a ball carrier is or has been beyond the line of scrimmage.

iv. Forward pass or forward handing after a change of team possession.
v. Pass ruled forward or backward.
vi. Location of the ball when there is a ruling of intentional grounding. Beyond LOS, receiver in the area etc.

c. DEAD BALL AND LOOSE BALL
i. Loose ball by potential passer ruled fumble.
ii. Loose ball by the passer ruled incomplete forward pass when there is clear recovery, or the ball goes out of bounds in the immediate continuing action after a loose ball.
iii. Live ball not ruled dead in possession of the ball carrier.
iv. Loose ball ruled dead or live ball ruled dead in the possession of the ball carrier when the clear recovery of a loose ball in the immediate continuing football action.
v. Ball carriers forward progress, spot of fumble, or spot of out of bounds backwards pass, with respect to a first down or goal line.
vi. Catch or recovery of a fumble by a Team A player other than the fumbler before any change of possession during fourth down or a try.
vii. Ball carrier in or out of bounds. If a ball carrier is ruled out of bounds the play is not reviewable unless it involves a potential scoring play or involves the recovery of a loose ball.
viii. Catch, recovery or touching of a loose ball by a player inbounds or out of bounds.
ix. A loose ball touching on or beyond a sideline, end line, goal line, pylon or breaking the plane.
x. Catch or recovery of a loose ball in the field of play or end zone.
xi. Forward fumble that goes out of bounds with respect to a first down.

d. KICKS
i. Touching of a kick.
ii. Player beyond the neutral zone when kicking the ball.
iii. Kicking team player advancing the ball after a potential muffed kick/fumble by the receiving team.
iv. Scrimmage kick crossing the neutral zone.
v. Blocking by players of the kicking team before they are eligible to touch the ball on an on-side kick.
vi. A player touching or recovering a kick or loose ball who is or has been out of bounds during the kick.
vii. Receiving team advancing after a fair catch signal.

e. TARGETING

i. Targeting called on the field will be automatically reviewed by the Referee. If the targeting play is not available on video, or the video does not offer a clear picture of the targeting, the ruling on the field will “stand” as called.
ii. Targeting not called on the field may be challenged by the Head Coach. In order to create a targeting foul, the Referee must see all elements of a targeting foul on the available video.

f. TIMING
   i. No clock adjustments are available using this replay system.

g. MISCELLANEOUS
   i. Position of the ball in relation to the goal line.
   ii. Number of players on the field for either team during a live ball.
   iii. Correcting the number of a down. (Note: The correction may be made at any time within that series of downs or before the ball is legally put in play after that series concludes.)
   iv. Any person who is not a player interfering with live-ball action on the field of play.

Standard Operating Procedures for SkyCoach Replay and Coaches Film Review for Heart of America Athletic Conference Football.

- The Heart requests that you add to your game day procedures for opposing team and officials; at 75 minutes prior to kickoff the White Hat Referee be escorted to the Officials Review area and test out the equipment to ensure its functionality. Please have a game day administrator escort them to the replay area. Please also have your official replay coordinator on site to test the camera and functionality of the equipment for the White Hat at their location inside the stadium.

- The Heart requires the following standards for the SkyCoach system be in place for the 2024 football season:

    - A designated area behind one of the end zones, for the officials review, with at minimum a tablet such as an ipad, a television or larger monitor may also be used, but is not required.
    - A tent to cover the area for official’s review is recommended but not required.
    - Each team may have up to a maximum of 5 tablets for coaches review either on their sideline or in the press box.
    - A maximum of two camera angles must be in place for replay and coaches review, one located in or above the Press Box and one located behind an end zone.
    - You may use a drone camera as long as it is in a stationary position on a poll or similar device.

SECTION M: Dressing

1. Private dressing facilities which can be secured are to be provided for the visiting team.

2. Shower facilities, dry erase board are to be offered for the visiting team.

SECTION N: Warm-Up Before Game

1. Each team will provide their own 6 balls, or the visiting team can use the home team's footballs.

2. Home team will determine visitor's side of the field (bench).

3. Each team may use an "L" shaped warm up area prior to 45 minutes before game time. At the 45-minute mark before game time, the "L" will be dissolved, and each team will stay on their own 45-yard line.

4. Both teams are to enter and leave the field area in a manner that does not interfere with their opponent's warm-up activities.

5. A coin toss shall be made two minutes before the game time in the center of the field.

SECTION O: Sideline Courtesy

1. The host is to provide a game doctor who is to be available throughout the game and after the game concerning possible injuries.

2. In general, it is expected that the home team will provide equal services to the visitor's side-line (except side-line phone not provided).

3. A field microphone is required at Heart games.

SECTION P: Heat Illness Policy

1. Please refer to the Athletic Trainers Policy Handbook: **https://heart.prestosports.com/Athletic_Training_Procedures_2023-24.pdf**

APPENDIX:

A. Leadership

1. Chair: Joel Osborn – Benedictine (Term ends June 2028)

2. Vice Chair: Tom Sallay – Culver-Stockton (Term ends June 2028)

B. First Practice Date

1. 2026 first practice is August 8

3.