What Is Sprint Football?

What is sprint football?

Well … it's quite simple. It's the same as regular football.

Helmet, shoulder pads, cleats, oblong-shaped ball, 100-yard field, field goal posts, sidelines, end zones … and the list goes on.

You name it and it's in the game.

The only difference between sprint and varsity is that the players who compete in sprint must weigh no more than 172 pounds 48 hours prior to kickoff.

But don't be fooled by the size for a second, because these guys can play.

"Honestly, I think I probably would have left the academy after my sophomore year if it wasn't for this team. It's the reason I get up in the morning. These are my brothers. It's the hardest and most fulfilling thing that I've ever been a part of. You do it for the love of each other and the love of the game."

-John Collins, LB, Class of '04
The Washington Times, September 18, 2003

The History

The evolution of 150-pound football was started in the early 1930s by a Penn president to assure the small student-athlete an opportunity to compete in football on the intercollegiate level.

Founded as the Eastern 150-Pound Football League in 1934, the original league had seven members: Cornell, Lafayette, Pennsylvania, Princeton, Rutgers, Villanova and Yale. Throughout the years, a number of teams have either joined or resigned their presence in the league. In 1946, Navy fielded its first squad, with Army following suit in 1957.

During the next 25 years, athletes became bigger forcing the weight limit to increase from 150 pounds to 154 pounds, and later to 159 pounds. At that time, the league was called the Eastern Lightweight Football League. Prior to the 1996 season, the ELFL increased the weight limit again, this time to 165 pounds just two days before the first game of the season. In 2004, the league made another change to the weight requirement when it upped the maximum weight to 166 pounds. Again in 2005, the weight maximum increased to 172 pounds.

The 1998 season marked the elimination of the term "Lightweight" and replaced with the word "Sprint," a word that expresses the quickness, speed and caliber of play in the league, while serving as a marketing tool to attract new teams. That year the league was renamed the Collegiate Sprint Football League (CSFL). Five teams comprise the current CSFL and include: Army, Cornell, Navy, Pennsylvania and Princeton.

The league has also produced some heavyweight alums, including Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who was a former standout as he played for Princeton in 1954. The league is not just limited to government officials but standout coaching legends as well. George Allen, who began his coaching career in 1947 as an assistant on the now-disbanded Michigan 150-pound team, went on to become head coach of the Washington Redskins.

The Players

At weigh-ins, which are done two days in advance of kickoff, players must report under the maximum allowed weight of 172 pounds. Sprint is very similar to wrestling in that the players constantly watch their diets. In addition to all the football drills that take place during practice, athletes will run several times throughout practice and in their free time to keep the weight in check.

"After high school, I figured I would never play another snap of football in my life," former Navy quarterback and two-time CSFL MVP Chris Ashinhurst (Class of '04) said. "I thought sprint was just like intramural. After the first practice, I was like, 'This is pretty intense stuff.' We have to cut weight, run like a track team and hit like a football team."

However, after weigh-ins, players can eat what they want as most reach 175 pounds by game day. The average weight for the athletes during the season ranges between 155 to 175 pounds.

During the off-season, players' weights fluctuate with some going as high as 185 pounds. However, as summer practice approaches, players go through their own training programs to make weight safely and get ready for the new season. Height doesn't matter in the league. Most of the players

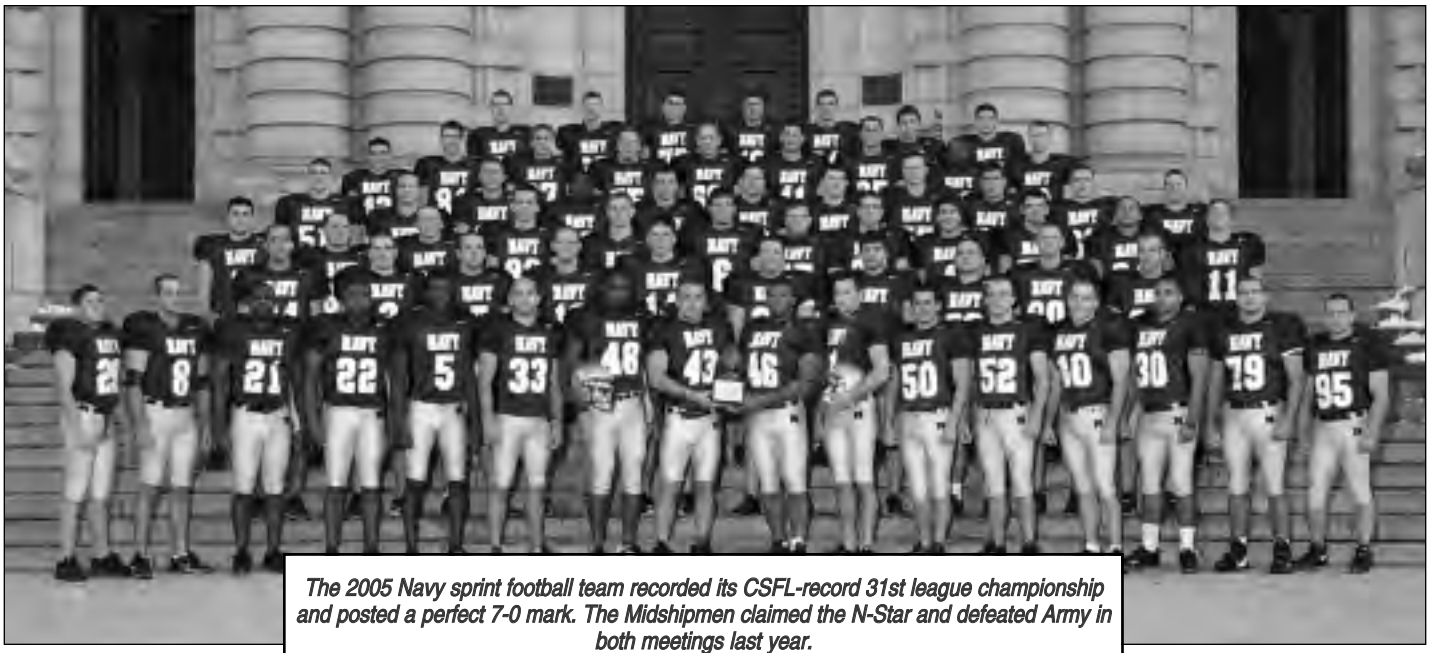
Year-By-Year League Champions

Year	School
1934	Rutgers
1935	Rutgers
1936	Yale
1937	Princeton/Yale
1938	Princeton
1939	Princeton
1940	Pennsylvania/Yale
1941	Princeton
1942	Princeton
1943	No Competition
1944	No Competition
1945	No Competition
1946	**Navy**
1947	**Navy**
1948	**Navy**
1949	Villanova
1950	**Navy**
1951	**Navy**
1952	**Navy**

Year	School
1953	**Navy**
1954	Princeton
1955	**Navy**
1956	**Navy**
1957	Army
1958	Army
1959	**Navy**
1960	Army
1961	**Navy**
1962	Army
1963	**Navy**
1964	Army
1965	**Navy**
1966	Army
1967	**Navy**
1968	Army
1969	**Navy**
1970	Army
1971	Army/**Navy**

Year	School
1972	Army
1973	Army
1974	Army
1975	Cornell/Princeton
1976	Army
1977	**Navy**
1978	Cornell
1979	Army/**Navy**
1980	Army
1981	Army/**Navy**
1982	Cornell
1983	Army
1984	Army/Cornell/**Navy**
1985	**Navy**
1986	Army/Cornell/**Navy**
1987	Army/**Navy**
1988	Army
1989	Army/Princeton
1990	Army

Year	School
1991	Army/Princeton
1992	**Navy**
1993	Army/Princeton
1994	Army
1995	**Navy**
1996	Army/**Navy**/Pennsylvania
1997	**Navy**
1998	Army/Pennsylvania
1999	Army
2000	Pennsylvania
2001	**Navy**
2002	**Navy**
2003	Army
2004	**Navy**
2005	**Navy**



The 2005 Navy sprint football team recorded its CSFL-record 31st league championship and posted a perfect 7-0 mark. The Midshipmen claimed the N-Star and defeated Army in both meetings last year.

are generally between 5-feet-6 and 6-feet tall, but there are always exceptions to the rule as some are as tall as 6 feet 3 inches.

The league is a perfect opportunity for players to continue competing in the sport they love. Most of the players in the league were told throughout their high school careers that they were too small to play at the intercollegiate level. However, this sport gives them the chance to fulfill their dreams.

"It was perfect for me because I didn't think I would play football after high school," former Navy running back Trevor Garabedian-Prophet (Class of '06) said. "I didn't weigh enough to play with the big boys, but this is right up my alley."

And these are not just ordinary players. Some earned team or individual honors with their high school football and variety of other teams. Navy's 2006 offensive captain, K.C. Dalton, helped his football team to a perfect record (14-0) and a state championship in 2000 and earned three letters in track. Ryan Engle, Navy's 2006 defensive captain, was a three-time all-conference linebacker and two-time all-conference running back, in addition to lettering in basketball and baseball.

Because of the players' size, proper technique and execution are taught rather than just bulking up. Due to this element, sprint teams regularly beat Division III junior varsity teams that have 300 pounders scattered throughout the roster.

"Looking back at Plebe Summer, I would do anything to have those workouts again. There are so many Plebes doing it, you could slack off and get away with it. But now, if you're not busting your (butt) like everybody else, you're letting down the brothers on your team. We're just a tight-knit group that won't settle for less than perfection."

-Marcus Walters, S, Class of '07
The Dallas Morning News, October 11, 2003
On comparing team practice to workouts during Plebe Summer…

Naval Academy Tradition

There are few schools that can match the tradition of sprint football at the U.S. Naval Academy.

The Midshipmen have won 24 outright and 31 total league championships, both of which are the most in CSFL history.

In their 60 years of competing in the sport, the Midshipmen have totaled an impressive 292-61-9 record for an .819 winning percentage. In addition to those impressive numbers, Navy has also outscored its opponents by an all-time score of 9,713-3,427.

Past ELFL/CSFL Champions

Team	Outright	Shared	Total	Last
Navy	**24**	**7**	**31**	**2005**
Army	19	11	30	2003
Princeton	5	5	10	1993
Cornell	2	3	5	1986
Pennsylvania	1	3	4	2000
Yale*	1	2	3	1940
Rutgers*	2	0	2	1935
Villanova*	1	0	1	1949

**No longer field a sprint football team*

Each year, the city of Newark, N.J., hosts what is called the 'Pride Bowl.' The Midshipmen have played in the game on several occasions and the previous four seasons they battled service academy-foe Army in the event.

"It's more than a game," Newark Star-Ledger sports reporter Jerry Izenberg said in a 2003 column. "It's a happening. Considering the circumstances that led to its birth, the way it continues to keep hope alive where so many see no hope. Pride Bowl is more than a happening. What it is, is a full-blown miracle."

The game has drawn so much attention that it was broadcast on national television by College Sports Television (CSTV) in 2003. The entire nation saw first hand how serious the sport is taken at both schools with Navy coming out on top, 14-0.

"This lighter side of Army-Navy is no joke," Sports Illustrated writer John Walters said in his article about the sport in a November 2003 issue of Sports Illustrated on Campus.

Izenberg agrees with the statement.

"It's Army-Navy, the most intense rivalry in all of sports," he added. "Whether it's football, basketball or chess. If they played varsity marbles, you could throw that in as well."

BEAT ARMY

At the Naval Academy, beating Army is important. Plebes yell "Beat Army!" in Bancroft Hall, "Beat Army" is on every weight in the Naval Academy weight room and alums and fans alike scream "Beat Army!" at the end of Blue & Gold, the Naval Academy alma mater.

Navy has dominated Army over the last 30-plus years, posting a winning record against the Black Knights 32 of the last 35 years and winning the N-Star series 10-consecutive years.

Over the past nine years the Midshipmen have won 66 percent of all athletic contests played against West Point, including an astounding 70 percent of all N-Star contests.

2005-06 Record Against Army . . . . . .18-14 (.563)
2005-06 N-Star Record Against Army . . . . . .14-8 (.636)
Nine-Year Record Against Army . . . . . .184-95-5 (.657)
Nine-Year N-Star Record Against Army. . . . . . .134-57-5 (.698)

2005-06 N-STAR WINNERS

- Sprint Football
- Women's Volleyball
- Men's Soccer
- Women's Swimming
- Men's Swimming
- Football
- Men's Basketball
- Men's Indoor Track & Field
- Women's Indoor Track & Field
- Gymnastics
- Wrestling
- Women's Outdoor Track & Field
- Lacrosse
- Tennis

★ **Wrestling:** Heavyweight **Tanner Garrett** helped Navy to its sixth win in a row over the Black Knights with a 3-2 victory in the 50th meeting between the two rivals. Navy owns an incredible 40-5-5 record all-time against Army.

★ **Tennis:** Navy scored its first victory over Army since the 2002 season with a thrilling 4-3 triumph over the 2006 Patriot League Champions. Navy used a young lineup, starting three freshmen, two juniors and a senior to knock off the Black Knights. **Adrian Lai**, a 2006 All-Patriot League honoree, won both of his matches against Army.

★ **Men's Lacrosse:** Face-off specialist **William Wallace** dominated the "x" where he won 16 of the 23 draws and also added a goal in leading the Midshipmen to an 11-10 Star Game victory over Army. Richie Meade has led his Midshipmen to nine-straight Star Game wins and owns an 11-game winning streak heading into 2006-07.

★ **Men's Basketball:** In earning their 13th N-Star in the last 14 years, **Greg Sprink** paced the Mids with 23 points, making clutch free throws down the stretch to lead Navy to a 67-62 overtime win over Army on national television.
★ Three victories in last year's dual meet allowed **Mike Linn** to conclude his career having never lost a race to an Army swimmer in any of his 12 individual or relay events against the Black Knights.

★ **Volleyball: Beth McArthur** totaled 31 kills, 31 digs and 11 blocks in helping lead Navy to a pair of victories over Army. In addition to their two wins over the Black Knights, the Mids also defeated Air Force in Colorado Springs.

★ **Women's Track & Field:** Led by **Kirsten Andrews**' four combined first-place performances against Army, Navy defeated the Black Knights in both the women's indoor and outdoor Star Meets for the fourth time in the last seven seasons. Andrews won the 100-meter hurdles, pole vault and long jump to lead the Mids to a 104-99 outdoor victory, while Navy claimed a 99.5-81.5 win in the indoor meet as Andrews topped the field in the pole vault.

★ **Men's Soccer:** Four different players scored goals and Navy ran it's record against Army to 2-0-3 in the last five years with a convincing 4-2 victory in front of a national-television audience. **Kris Huff** scored a goal and assist and was named CSTV's Player of the Game.

★ **Football: Adam Ballard** rushed for 192 of Navy's 490 yards and scored a touchdown, leading the Mids to a 42-23 victory over Army in the 106th meeting between the service academies. The win marked Navy sixth Star Game win in the last seven years.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

MAJORS

Students at the Naval Academy can select one of 43 different majors within the following 19 fields of study ...

Division of Engineering & Weapons

Aerospace Engineering, Electrical Engineering, General Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Naval Architecture, Ocean Engineering, Systems Engineering

Division of Math & Science

Chemistry, Computer Science, General Science, Information Technology, Math, Oceanography, Physics, Quantitative Economics

Division of Humanities & Social Science

Economics, English, History, Political Science

In addition to graduating with a Bachelor's of Science, students can also attain a minor in one of seven different languages.

GRADUATE SCHOOL

There are no graduate school classes offered at the Naval Academy, but opportunities for midshipmen to attain a postgraduate degree at a civilian school or university are available. The ability to attend medical school, as former Navy football player Terrence Anderson '00 did, is another option.

In addition to furthering their education at schools across the country, students at the Naval Academy annually are in competition for one of the prestigious Rhodes Scholarships to study at the University of Oxford in England.

Since Navy's first Rhodes Scholar, E. Van Meter '28, a total of 43 Naval Academy graduates have received the Rhodes Scholarship, including 10 over the last six years. Among Navy's recent recipients is former baseball player Trevor Thompson '05.

COSIDA ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICANS

Naval Academy student-athletes have been selected as an Academic All-American by the College Sports Information Directors of America 42 times over the years, with Mids garnering 16 awards since 2000.

The list of recent honorees includes two-time Academic All-American Courtney Davidson (women's basketball, 2003 & '04) and first-team recipients Micth Koch (tennis/at-large, 2000), Andrew Sause (water polo/at-large, 2001), Kate Macfarlane (soccer, 2002) and Trevor Thompson (baseball, 2005).

Navy student-athletes garnered a pair of Academic All-American awards last season, with Sean Blackman (gymnastics) and Kirsten Andrews (cross country/track & field) each earning third-team accolades.

Top to Bottom: Terrence Anderson; Abi Campbell; Trevor Thompson; Courtney Davidson; Lisa Steinmetz; Nicole Annapu

GRADUATION RATES

The Naval Academy athletic program is ranked the best in the country among the 117 schools with Division IA football programs in graduation rates according to a report released by the NCAA in January.

Top Five Graduation Rates Among Division I-A Schools

Rank	Institution	Graduation Rate
1	Navy	99%
2	Notre Dame	98%
3	Clemson	97%
	Northwestern	97%
5	Duke	96%