

# WHAT IS SPRINT FOOTBALL?

## 2007 NAVY 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.

### 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

*"It's regular football, just with smaller people. There's a big difference between some of the guys who were studs in high school and the guys who just say, 'Hey, sprint football is lightweight football; maybe I can make this team?' Those guys get dwindled out real, real quick."*

*"There's a lot more talent out here than people think. But what makes this team so great is the brotherhood that we have. We're so tight-knit."*

-Chris Davis, DB, Class of '09  
The Virginian Pilot, November 9, 2006

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.

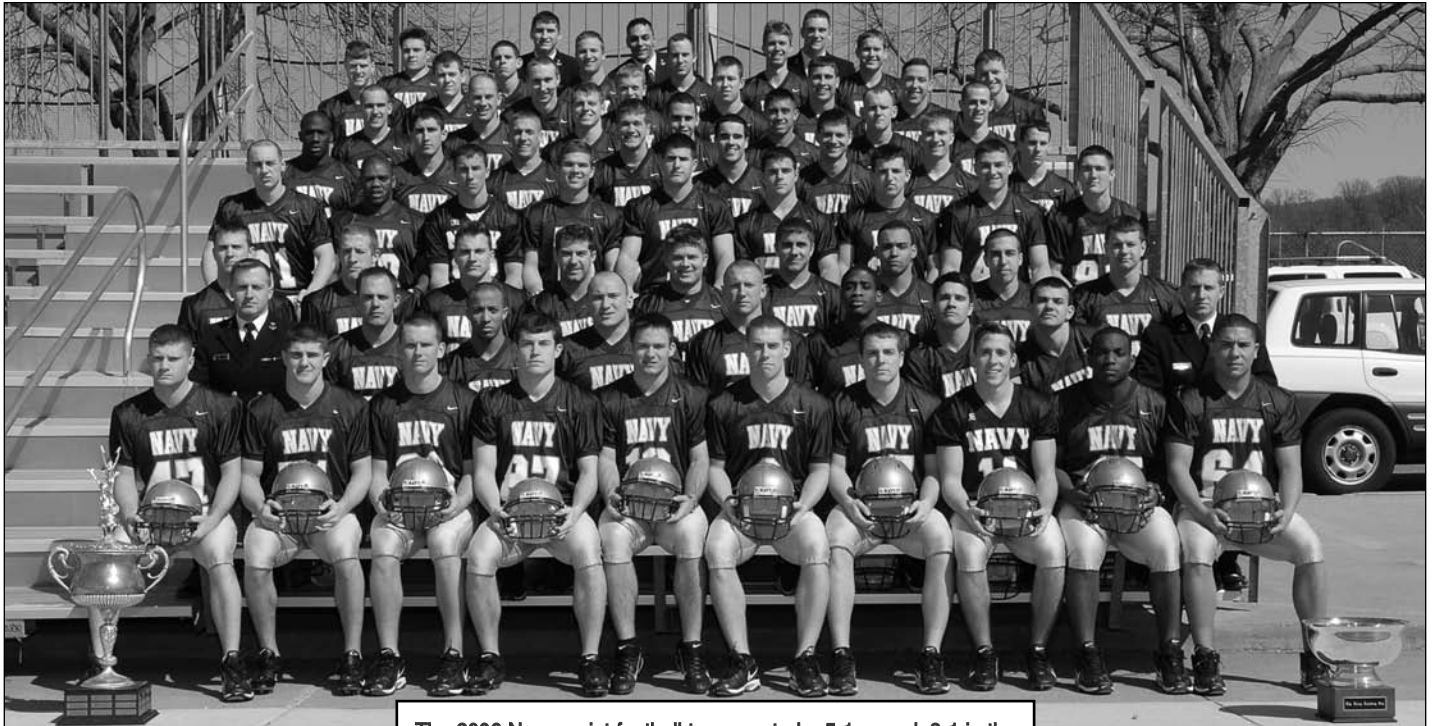
"After high school, I figured I would never play another snap of football in my life," former Navy quarterback and two-time CSFL MVP Chris Ashinhurst (Class of '04) said. "I thought sprint was just like intramural. After the first practice, I was like, 'This is pretty intense stuff.' We have to cut weight,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

### Year-By-Year League Champions

Year	School	Year	School	Year	School	Year	School
1934	Rutgers	1953	Navy	1972	Army	1991	Army/Princeton
1935	Rutgers	1954	Princeton	1973	Army	1992	Navy
1936	Yale	1955	Navy	1974	Army	1993	Army/Princeton
1937	Princeton/Yale	1956	Navy	1975	Cornell/Princeton	1994	Army
1938	Princeton	1957	Army	1976	Army	1995	Navy
1939	Princeton	1958	Army	1977	Navy	1996	Army/Navy/Penn
1940	Penn/Yale	1959	Navy	1978	Cornell	1997	Navy
1941	Princeton	1960	Army	1979	Army/Navy	1998	Army/Penn
1942	Princeton	1961	Navy	1980	Army	1999	Army
1943	No Competition	1962	Army	1981	Army/Navy	2000	Penn
1944	No Competition	1963	Navy	1982	Cornell	2001	Navy
1945	No Competition	1964	Army	1983	Army	2002	Navy
1946	Navy	1965	Navy	1984	Army/Cornell/Navy	2003	Army
1947	Navy	1966	Army	1985	Navy	2004	Navy
1948	Navy	1967	Navy	1986	Army/Cornell/Navy	2005	Navy
1949	Villanova	1968	Army	1987	Army/Navy	2006	Cornell
1950	Navy	1969	Navy	1988	Army		
1951	Navy	1970	Army	1989	Army/Princeton		
1952	Navy	1971	Army/Navy	1990	Army		



The 2006 Navy sprint football team posted a 5-1 record, 3-1 in the CSFL, and defeated Army in both meetings on the year

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 are generally between 5'6" and 6'0" tall, but there are always exceptions to the rule as some are as tall as 6'3".

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 2007 offensive captain, Todd Barriger, was the team captain of both his football and basketball team and won two district championships on the gridiron. Taylor Brashear, Navy's 2007 defensive captain, was an all-state selection in Tennessee and was twice named to the all-region team.

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.

### 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 61 years of competing in the sport, the Midshipmen have totaled an impressive 297-62-9 record for an .819 winning percentage. In addition to those impressive numbers, Navy has also outscored its opponents by an all-time score of 9,878-3,484.

In a rivalry as intense as the 'big boy' counterparts, Navy and Army have battled in sprint football 64 times, with the Midshipmen coming away victorious 33 times with one tie.

For the 11th-consecutive season, Navy and Army will square off twice in the same season. This year, the Mids and the Black Knights will compete in the Allegiance Bowl in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., before battling for the N-Star at West Point in November.

"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.

Navy's 2006 head coach Maj. Joseph R. Clearfield, USMC, concurs, "It's just unbelievable how hard these guys (Navy and Army) play. This was how football was meant to be played, with 11 guys flying around with reckless abandon."

### Past ELFL/CSFL Champions

Team	Outright	Shared	Total	Last
<b>Navy</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2005</b>
Army	19	11	30	2003
Princeton	5	5	10	1993
Cornell	3	3	6	2006
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*