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Fontbonne University Announces Launch of New Sprint Football League
Six Midwest universities and colleges will begin league play in Fall 2022

[Fontbonne University - St. Louis](#) is one of six Midwest colleges and universities to become charter members of a new, independent athletic conference, the **Midwest Sprint Football League (MSFL)**.

The MSFL charter members that accompany Fontbonne in this new conference include Quincy University (Illinois), Calumet College of St. Joseph (Indiana), St. Mary-of-the-Woods College (Indiana), Bellarmine University (Kentucky), and Midway University (Kentucky). With league play set to begin in Fall 2022, each institution will begin actively recruiting players over the next year.

Launching the first major sprint football league in nearly 100 years was initiated by Nancy Blattner, President of Fontbonne University. Formerly the president of Caldwell University, a member of the College Sprint Football League (CSFL), Blattner initiated the conversation with a group of college and university presidents, ultimately leading to the formation of the new MSFL. Because of Blattner's experience with the program, she will serve as founding chair of the Board of Governors for the MSFL.

Fontbonne Vice President for Athletics, Maria Buckel, will serve as the founding MSFL Commissioner. Together, this female duo will launch a niche sport that will have a positive imprint not only on Fontbonne University, but also the entire region.

While sprint football follows all the standard American football rules, including an 11-on-11 player format, the sport offers a different approach to playing the game. Illustrative of its name, sprint football emphasizes speed and agility, thereby offering a faster-paced style of play. The main differentiator lies within the weight

requirement of each player: 178lbs or less. Before each game, players will weigh in to ensure they are within the weight limit to play that individual game similar to wrestling.

Sprint football isn't an entirely new sport to intercollegiate student-athletes; first introduced in 1934, nine East Coast colleges and universities currently offer the sport as part of the CSFL. The introduction of Sprint Football to the Midwest not only creates a gateway for the campus and community to come together, but it generates new opportunities for current and future students.

"Any time it's possible to add a sport to provide more students the opportunity to continue to play their sport while earning a college degree, it is a special moment," says Buckel. "But being a part of launching a league multiplies that impact and to do so in a manner that adds the second league in the country for a niche sport like sprint football is a once in a career experience. For those that want to play football at Fontbonne, I'm excited to welcome those students as Griffins and cheer for them on the sidelines."

The addition of Sprint Football to a university's sports season brings a refreshing level of vibrancy, camaraderie, and spirit not only to the Athletics department, but the entire campus community. "Fridays and Saturdays at Fontbonne in the fall will be much more exciting with a home football game," says Buckel.

"Sprint football will be new to some fans in the Midwest and Upper South, but it won't take long for our part of the country to get excited about sprint football," says Dr. Blattner. "Sprint offers a distinctive and fast-paced approach to playing football at the highest level. Our six-member institutions are working together to provide new opportunities to student-athletes, who will take football in our four-state region in a different and inspiring direction."

This innovative and trailblazing initiative creates a new opportunity for high school student athletes looking to play a sport at which they excel. "I am so honored to have been able to play a role in providing high school student-athletes an opportunity to continue to play football that might have been overlooked because of their size," says Buckel. "It's exciting to see the joy that students exude when they participate in the sport they love and to witness the development which sports foster."

About Fontbonne University

Fontbonne University is a private, Catholic liberal arts university located in St. Louis, committed to a transformative education and inspiring students to become global citizens who think critically, act ethically and serve responsibly. The university was founded in 1923 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. For more information, visit www.fontbonne.edu

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