



# St. Louis Slated To Get Team As Arena Football League Is Revived

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ST. LOUIS - The return of the "50-yard indoor war" will feature a team in St. Louis as the Arena Football League relauches in 2024.



St. Louis was named as a site for an all-new 16-team league which is slated to start play next year, following up on the success of the St. Louis BattleHawks in the XFL in its revival this past spring.

The team's ownership group, nickname, colors and uniforms have yet to be released, but St. Louis will be one of the cities to host a team in the AFL, which went out of business in 2019 after a revival in 2010. The entire league is now owned by F1 Sports and Entertainment, who bought the rights to the league's name, logo and organizational plans in January, 2022.

The other cities that will have teams in the league will be Boise, Idaho, Austin, Tex., Chicago, Philadelphia, the Orlando Predators, Tallahassee, Fla., Bakersfield, Calif., Denver, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Lake Charles, La., Cincinnati, Salem, Ore., San Antonio, Nashville, Everett, Wash. and the West Texas Warbirds of Odessa, Tex.

St. Louis had a team in the original AFL known as the St. Louis Stampede in 1995 and 1996, the same time as the arrival of the St. Louis Rams in the NFL. The Stampede enjoyed some success, attracting good crowds and making the AFL playoffs both years, but were eliminated in the league quarterfinals by the Albany, N.Y., Firebirds 51-49 in 1995 and by the Iowa Barnstormers (based in Des Moines, Ia. and featuring a future Rams quarterback named Kurt Warner) 52-49 in 1996. The team went out of business before the 1997 season when the Blues management decided to return the franchise back to the league.

The team played at the then-Kiel Center, now known as Enterprise Center, and it's expected the new team will play there.

The original Arena Football League debuted in 1987 and was successful before suspended operations in 2009 after internal league disputes and resumed play in 2010.

The sport was created by Jim Foster, at the time a promotions manager for the NFL, after watching a Major Indoor Soccer League match at Madison Square Garden in New York. Several test games were played in Rockford, Ill., in 1986 before the AFL officially launched in 1987.

The game is played on a 50-yard field, which is also 85 feet wide, with end zones eight yards deep. The goal posts are 15 feet high and nine feet wide, and are attached to rebound nets on either side. Kicked or passed balls that rebound off of the nets are considered in play, which creates very interesting and unpredictable situations and plays. There is also a 21-man active roster, with eight players on the field, and back and receivers can be in motion in any direction before the snap. Kickoffs take place on the goal line and there is no punting; teams must either try a field goal attempt or go for a

play on fourth down. Teams have four downs to gain 10 yards, and in addition to touchdowns, field goals, safeties, etc. drop kicked conversions are worth two points and dropped kick field goals are worth four points.

Team benches are behind boards on either side of the field, which are heavily padded, and overtime periods are 10 minutes, with both teams having at least one possession to score. If the game is still tied after the first possession by both teams, the game goes into sudden death, with the first team to score by any means winning. If the first possession of overtime results in a defensive score, the game is also over.

The league had six teams operating in its last season in 2019, the Albany Empire, Washington Valor, Philadelphia Soul, Baltimore Brigade, Atlantic City, N.J., Blackjacks and Columbus Destroyers. The Empire finished 10-2 and won the league's championship game, the Arena Bowl, over Baltimore 45-27.

The revived AFL is expected to play a two-game preseason and eight-game regular season in 2024 and to begin in April, with playoffs to be played in June through August. More details about the St. Louis team will be announced at a later date.