

GRAFTON GLADIATORS

141 W. Falls Rd. Apt. 106
Grafton, WI. 53024
262-375-7467

TEAM HISTORY

The Grafton Gladiators were established in 1976 by Mr. Ron Heller of Grafton. They became members of the All -American Youth Football League in 1977. The Gladiators were one of the original 6 teams in the league. There are now 46 current members.

The Gladiators started out with 25 players, fielding just an “A” team. With the numbers steadily increasing, a “B” team was added in 1979, and finally, a “C” team in 1989. Since their inception, the Gladiators have played their home games at Grafton High School, practice used to be held at the 9th. Avenue baseball field and Kennedy Elementary School, they have practiced exclusively at Kennedy since 2001.

The Gladiators have always been a completely independent and self-funded organization, relying on reg. fees, fund-raisers and community support to meet their financial needs.

The league that they participate in governs much like the High Schools WIAA. They set season schedules for all teams, and implement and enforce all on field playing rules and restrictions. Each organization maintains control of their own team policies and procedures.

Following the 1982 season, Head Coach Ron Heller retired and turned the team over to Bob Kiefer, a defensive assistant with the team since its birth. Coach Kiefer led the team that year to it’s second league title, and on the morning of the championship game handed out new game jerseys to the players, changing the team colors from all black to orange, black and white. Those colors remain in place today.

The Gladiators went through another cosmetic change following the 1994 season when Coach Kiefer moved up to coach the JV team at Grafton High School, Bob stayed with the team and assumed the role of Team President. The Gladiators new head coach was Chuck Race. Coach Race had been with the team since 1987. He ha coached at the A,B and C levels and along with the Head Coaching duties, he served as the defensive coordinator on the A team.

Following Coach Race’s death in 2001, Bob Kiefer returned to once again to assume role as Head Coach and Defensive Coordinator on the A Team.

In 2002, Coach Kiefer moved on to Grafton High School coaching staff again, but remained with the team as Program Coordinator. At that time, a “Head Coach” was appointed at each level and that system remains in effect today.

TEAM HISTORY CONTINUED

The Gladiators suffered another tragedy in 2006 with the sudden death of Coach Rick King with 2 games remaining in the season, the final 2 games were played in honor of Coach King and the Gladiators were victorious in both contests, finishing the season 6-2.

In 1976 it cost each player \$10 to play. To help the team raise funds, all players had to sell candy bars. Today we charge \$225 dollars and all players are expected to participate in the teams fun-raising efforts. The team numbers continue to stay steady at approximately 100 players and 40 cheerleaders.

The Grafton Gladiators have always been open to new ideas and challenges. There is a high discipline level throughout the program for the players safety, and to this day they lead the league with the highest standards and overall commitment to excellence. Over 1500 players have come through our program, with many returning as coaches. The high standards that were established by the players and coaches of the past are what fuels today's teams to strive for excellence in the future. Throughout the past 32 years the Gladiators have compiled an overall record of 161 wins, 93 losses and 1 tie. They have won 15 Division titles, appeared in 4 League Championship games, winning 2, and winning 2 Chicago Area Super Bowls.

THE GRAFTON GLADIATORS WILL CONTINUE TO STRIVE TO BE SECOND TO NONE.