

BIG LAKE FAST PITCH ASSOCIATION BYLAWS

Approved Dec. 14, 2005 as amended 03/27/06, 04/02/07, 05/07/08, 11/4/09, and 12/2/09

1) Purpose:

The Big Lake Fast Pitch Association (BLFPA) was formed to promote the education, training and skill development of fastpitch softball for girls in grades K through 11 living within the Big Lake School District.

2) Organization Status:

The BLFPA is a 501(c)3 Corporation pursuant to the Minnesota Non Profit Corporation Act.

3) Membership:

- A. Participation in the BLFPA is open to all girls in grades K through 11 living within the Big Lake School District and shall not be restricted on the basis of race, creed, or national origin.
- B. The organization may allow a girl living outside the Big Lake School District to participate, provided a majority of the Board of Directors approves the exception and participation meets league guidelines.
- C. Age restrictions for participation on BLFPA teams will be determined by league rules.
- D. Team size will be limited to the maximum number of players as required by league rules. Teams may, at the discretion of the team's head coach, be expanded to play in tournaments to the limits set by tournament organizers.

4) Participation Fees:

- A. Participation fees shall be determined annually by the Board of Directors. Fees will cover the cost of league play, cost of fields, umpires, team equipment and entrance fees for State and National tournaments if teams qualify. If a team wishes to participate in extra tournaments, there will be an additional cost for players on that team.
- B. Each participant may also be required to purchase uniforms and other equipment as specified by the Board of Directors for the participant's age group. Any changes to the current uniforms must be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- C. No player shall be denied the right to participate due to financial hardship. Any parent claiming financial hardship may present their situation along with proof of free or reduced lunch to the President and Treasurer for review. The President and Treasurer, after a review of the facts, may agree to reduce or waive participation fees for specific individuals based on hardship. Each situation shall be reviewed on its own merit. The President and Treasurer shall have the sole discretion to make this

decision, which may include mandatory volunteer hours. All decisions shall be confidential.

- D. Registration fees must be paid at the time of registration (unless previously waived under the provisions of financial hardship) and are considered non-refundable. Late registrations are subject to team availability and approval of the Board. Under exceptional circumstances the President and Treasurer may review refund requests and approve or deny the requests based on the merits of the situation.
- E. All participants must be in good standing with the organization to be eligible for team tryouts or placement on team rosters. A maximum of 2 warnings will be issued prior to a determination by a majority vote of the Board of Directors that a participant is ineligible to participate in BLFPA activities. Reasons for rendering a participant ineligible for participation include, but are not limited to, actions set fourth in the BLFPA policies and procedures.

If a participant has been found to be ineligible for team placement by the BLFPA Board of Directors, a meeting with the Board of Directors must be requested and attended by the participants parents/guardians. At this meeting, the ineligibility status will be addressed and the Board of Directors will determine whether the participant's eligibility to participate will be reinstated.

5) Board of Directors:

A. The Big Lake Fast Pitch Association's Board of Directors shall be comprised of the following positions:

- I. President
- II. Secretary
- III. Treasurer
- IV. Vice President
- V. High School Varsity Coach
- VI. In-House League Coordinator
- VI. Travel League Coordinator

B. The term of office for the Secretary, Treasurer, In-House coordinator, and Travel league Coordinator positions shall be two years each. Terms shall be staggered to provide for continuity of the management of the organization.

- a. Elections for the offices of Secretary and Travel League Coordinator shall be held on even numbered years. Elections for the offices of Treasurer and In-House Coordinator shall be held on odd numbered years.

b. The election for the office of Vice President is held each year. The term of the Vice President shall be one year and the following year the Vice President will assume the role of the President and serve in that position for one year.

C. Each Officer shall be a voting member of the Board of Directors.

D. Each elected term of office shall commence immediately following election.

E. Each outgoing officer must serve as an advisor for the incoming elected Officer through the next scheduled monthly Board meeting.

F. Upon completion of each year served, the registration fee will be waived for one child if you are a Board Member or Tournament Director.

6) Annual Meeting:

The Board of Directors shall select a day in the month of February or March for the Annual Meeting. This date must be communicated to all participating families prior to the meeting. Nominees for office may address the attendees at the Annual Meeting. Any player or player's parent may request the Secretary include an item for the agenda of the Annual meeting. Players and parents may also address issues to the Board of Directors at the meeting.

7) Voting Rights:

The parents or guardians of each participant are granted one vote each. Voting rights are suspended if participation fees are not paid, unless previously waived due to financial hardship.

8) Elections:

A. Nominations to fill offices of the BLFPA Board of Directors must be made to the Secretary. Nominees must also be at least 18 years of age, and in good standing with the association. All participation fees must be paid in full in order to be placed on the ballot for consideration.

B. The Secretary and Treasurer shall prepare ballots listing all nominees for each office.

C. The Board of Directors shall select election judges from among the members. The election judges will pass out ballots to each valid voter in attendance at the Annual Meeting. The election judges shall collect the ballots, count the votes cast and announce the results at the Annual Meeting. The nominees receiving the most votes as a result of the election will fill the open positions.

D. Should a director resign from office before the end of the term, the Board of Directors will select a replacement to serve in the vacated position until the next election regardless of the remaining length of term.

- E. The Board of Directors may remove any current board member from office for failure to perform their duties by a majority affirmative vote.

9) Board Meetings:

- A. After the Annual Meeting, the President will set the date for the first meeting of the Board of Directors. At the first meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board shall agree upon a tentative schedule for regular Board Meetings. This schedule shall be communicated to all participating families.
- B. Regularly scheduled Board Meetings are open to all parents and players who are in good standing with the Association.

10) Board Committees:

- A. The President may create committees as needed to meet the needs of the Association.
- B. The President shall appoint the leader of each committee, subject to approval from the Board of Directors.
- C. Board meetings may be closed for the any of the following reasons:
 - a. Discussing tryout evaluations.
 - b. Discussing coaching positions.
 - c. Addressing any issues or complaints leveled by parents or coaches.

11) Amendments to Bylaws:

The Bylaws of the BLFPA may be amended by a majority vote of the BLFPA Board of Directors at any meeting.

12) Operation Policies:

The Board of Directors will carry out the herein stated purpose of the BLFPA through the application of the current bylaws and Big Lake Fast Pitch Association Policies and Procedures (Appendix A) to the current bylaws. The Policies and Procedures of the BLFPA will be reviewed and updated as needed on an annual basis. This review and update will take place annually in January or February, but must precede the Annual Meeting of the association. Any changes to the policies and procedures must be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Appendix A
Big Lake Fast Pitch Association Bylaws

I. COACH SELECTION AND OBLIGATIONS

Head Coaches will be selected from a pool of volunteers. If there is more than one volunteer, the Board will interview the candidates and select a coach. A committee selected by the President will recommend final selections. Final selections will be approved by majority vote of the Board members present at the team formation meeting.

Coaches and assistant coaches will be required to have a background check. Eligibility will be determined by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Coaches will be required to teach and develop all players and support the entire BLFPA program. The development of players, particularly at the younger age levels and lower tiers, is valued over a winning record. Each girl is to learn and play several positions. Balanced (not necessarily equal) playing time, particularly at the younger age levels and lower tiers, is to be dictated as much by commitment and attendance as skill level. Coaches may limit playing time for participants that do not show up for practices or display poor sportsmanship.

Coaches who fail to meet these obligations may be removed by majority vote of the Board. Parents with a grievance against a coach should follow the complaints procedure.

All coaches and/or team representatives shall handle themselves in a manner that puts Big Lake in a positive light. Incidents of improper behavior by coaches and parents will be handled by the Board and may result in the loss of current and future coaching opportunities.

II. ROSTER SIZES

It is desired to keep roster sizes to a manageable level, thereby providing maximum playing time for all participants. Rosters will generally be limited to twelve (12) players per team. Rosters for traveling teams will be based on the number of candidates and skill level. Candidates may be cut from traveling teams. Expansion of team rosters may be made when trying to find places for all participants or to help teams deal with part time players. Roster sizes will not exceed the maximum number of players allowed by the league. If there is not a team at the appropriate skill or age level, efforts may be made to find locations for players on teams in neighboring communities.

III. OTHER PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES

While it is desirable to have local athletes play for Big Lake Softball, any individual desiring waivers shall have their request granted.

IV. TEAM FORMATION POLICY

A. AGE REQUIREMENTS

Teams are formed based on ASA age regulations or league guidelines.

B. TEAM FORMATION

In-house:

Players may be placed on teams at random. There will not be a try-out. A skills clinic may be held before the season starts to assist coaches and Board members to form equitable teams.

Travel:

Attempts will be made to place participants on teams with players of comparable abilities. When there is a disparate level of talent there shall be A and B level teams. The higher tier level team(s) will include the top eight players for a 10 player team, 9 players for an 11 player team or 10 players for a 12 player team, determined by tryout evaluations. The coach will select a maximum of 2 players from the next 6 highest scoring players to complete the team's roster. The final roster shall be approved by the Board of Directors.

When the abilities of players are more even, pitchers and catchers will be distributed equitably among the available team rosters. The remaining players will also be distributed equitably among team rosters based on evaluation. Efforts will be made to keep siblings together or keep players together for car pooling purposes if advance notice is given.

Teams will be placed in the summer leagues based on the anticipated skill level of the teams.

Players may request to play down to a lower tier team subject to board approval. Specifically, this allows a pitcher or catcher not rated high enough to play on the higher level team an opportunity to play down in order to pitch/catch on a lower tier team. This request should be made prior to evaluations.

Tryouts are waived if enrollment at a particular level is less than or equal to the number of players needed to form a team.

V. PLAYING UP

The association exists to provide opportunities for girls to perform at the best of their ability. The board recognizes that there may be athletes with exceptional ability who may be best served by playing at a more competitive level. A player may play at a level above her

specified playing age if she makes the top tryout team at the higher age level based on the results of the tryout for that age group. The player can not be a coach's selection player.

If a player elects to try up to a higher age group, the board reserves the right to place them on a lower tier team in that age group is needed to fill rosters.

The BLFPA Board of Directors also reserves the right to request a player(s) to move up to a higher age level in order to fill out rosters. When this occurs, participants will be placed on a team of an appropriate skill level. The player or player's parent/guardian may decline having the player move up.

VI. TRYOUT PROCESS

Within the limits of a volunteer organization, BLFPA strives to make the tryout process as impartial as possible. Prior to tryouts, a number of judges (to be determined based upon the number of participants) will be selected by the Board of Directors to evaluate each player at each skill including: throwing, hitting, fielding grounders, fielding fly balls, pitching, (bunting, sliding and base running may also be used). No adjustments to the tryout tests or procedures are to be made once the tryout begins. Call backs maybe used to assist in making final roster selections.

VII. TRYOUT ATTENDANCE

Players are required to attend the full tryout process. Illness, injury, or personal circumstances may cause players to request an exemption from tryouts. Requests must be made prior to the start of tryouts unless an injury or illness occurs during the tryouts. The BLFPA Softball Board will review the request for exemption and determine the appropriate course of action based on the best interest of the program. Anyone choosing not to participate in tryouts will be placed on a roster of a non-top team at the discretion of the selection committee and in the best interests of the program.

VIII. SUMMER POST-SEASON ROSTERS

Teams advancing to post-season play will be allowed to add players to their roster in accordance with rules of the governing body. Post-season roster additions are intended to maximize the depth and quality of the team and will be at the sole discretion of the team coach.

IX. FALL TEAM ROSTERS

The number of teams we have competing each year will be dependent on the number of athletes wanting to participate and the availability of coaches. Continuation of a summer team will be given priority to continue into fall season if 6 or more players elect to stay with the team. Priority will be given to the existing coaching staff.

X. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Coaches are volunteers. They are not expected to tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior by players or parents. Profanity, verbal abuse, or physical abuse will not be tolerated. Discipline for detrimental behavior conducted during any BLYAA sponsored event, or events where the BLFPA is a participant, is the responsibility of the head coach.

If a player does not respond to a coach's verbal warning(s), the Board of Directors grants its coaches the right to dismiss a player from practice or a game for conduct deemed detrimental to the team. The interpretation as to what constitutes insubordinate or otherwise inappropriate behavior at the time of the incident will rest on the judgment of the coach.

First Offense – Suspension from current practice or game. The coach shall inform the player's parents of the incident and the player will return to the next scheduled practice or game, but must first meet with the coach prior to the start of the next practice or game.

Second Offense – Suspension from a game. A mandatory telephone conference or meeting between the coach, the player and her parent(s) must take place before the player can resume participation with the team.

The coach may recommend disciplinary action above and beyond these guidelines to the BLFPA President and Vice President, if the severity of the situation warrants. Any deviation from the recommendations stated above is subject to the approval of the Board. In all cases, notice of suspensions will be communicated to the player's parent(s) and the BLFPA President.

XI. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Whenever possible, parents and players are encouraged to work with coaches to resolve their differences. Parents and players should wait to address their concerns until they can approach the coach in a private setting where other parents and players are not around. This should not be done during a game or practice.

If the problem remains unresolved after discussing the matter with the coach, contact the Travel League Coordinator or In-House Coordinator as appropriate. The coordinator will facilitate an informal meeting between the parents and /or player, the coach, and the Board President.

If the matter is not resolved at the informal meeting and someone wishes to pursue the matter further, a written complaint or question should be directed to the attention of the BLFPA President. The letter must be signed and contain a return address and a phone number. The coach or other individual(s) involved will be given an opportunity to respond, in writing, to the statement. The complaint and response will then be brought before the BLFPA Board as soon as possible. If deemed necessary by the Board, the parties involved may be requested to appear before the Board to answer questions. Written correspondence stating the final decision and action taken by the Board of Directors, if any, will be mailed to both parties within 30 days.

XII. TEAM FUNDRAISING

Individual teams may fundraise to defray travel and lodging expenses for out of state national tournaments.

All fund raising must be pre-approved by the board.