

13 January 2010

St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association

Organizational By-Laws

A. Purpose

The St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association (commonly referred to as Stillwater Fast Pitch) was established in 1984 to promote the development of a quality, competitive level of girls fast pitch softball in the St. Croix Valley Area. This program is committed to the development of potential Stillwater Area High School softball players.

B. Affiliations

The St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association is affiliated with a League that has sanctioning thru a national organization such as but is not limited to the ASA, AFA, USSSA, NAFA. This league can be comprised of teams from the south central to north eastern suburban rim of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

C. Governance and Operation

1. The St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association consists of four primary agencies.
2. The first, the governing agency, is the Executive Board that oversees operations including budget and fee structure, establishing teams, coaching position approvals, equipment orders, fields, officials, clinics, and arbitration. It consists of the association President, each of the age level coordinators, the Secretary and the Treasurer.
3. The second, a judiciary agency, is a six-member ad hoc committee which will be utilized in arbitration. It will be comprised of the President and the age-level coordinators. If a conflict of interest or a split vote arises, one of the other Executive Board members will act as a supplemental voting member, in the following order: Secretary, and Treasurer.
4. The third, an operating agency, is a Coaches Advisory Group that deals with acquiring competent coaching candidates, team selections, tournament sign-ups, and individual team operations. It includes all head coaches and those assistant coaches who wish to be involved. The head of this group is elected by the coaches.
5. The fourth, another operating agency, is a Varsity Booster Club whose purpose is to creatively pursue fund raising activities that will enhance the Varsity Program and allow for Capital improvements to the program and facilities. Membership will include the Association President and Varsity Head Coach who together will select one parent representative each from the high school level, junior high level and softball association respectively. Disbursement of funds will be determined by members of the Varsity Booster Club and reported to the Association.

6. The Executive Board will insure that there is representation of the Association at the League meetings, before, during and after the regular season. This representative will report on the results of the League meetings to the Association.
7. Terms of office for all members of these four agencies will be on an annual basis from January to January.
8. An annual meeting will be convened in January of each year for the purpose of the election of officers, a financial report, and any membership concerns.
9. An Association member is defined as follows:
a currently registered player, parents or legal guardians of a registered player, St. Croix Valley Girls Fastpitch coaches, St. Croix Valley Girls Fastpitch Executive board members and Alumni parents and players.
10. The By-laws of St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association may only be modified or amended at the annual January general membership meeting. Approval of the new by laws will be by a simple majority of the members of the retiring Executive Board.

D. Non-profit and Financial Institution Status

1. The St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association is registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit youth organization.
2. The financial institution which handles the St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association's account will be selected by the Executive Board. Financial information may be obtained from the Executive Board.
3. Fiscal year operations will extend from September 1st through August 31st.

E. Levels of Play

1. The St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association conducts play at the following age levels:
 - 18 and under
 - 16 and under
 - 14 and under
 - 12 and under
 - 10 and under
2. Players who remain within the age limits of a level through December 31 of the previous year are eligible for that level.
3. The number of teams at each level is determined annually by the number of participants, field availability and coaches.
4. In addition, teams will be designated Class A (Tier 1), Class B (Tier 2), or in some cases Class C (Tier 3) level of play within each age bracket. Team designation will be based on the perceived depth of skill level within each team in each age bracket.

Such a decision takes precedence over geography as a consideration in League scheduling.

5. Entry into Class A, Class B, or Class C Minnesota State Tournament is on the basis of the League Tournament play only.

F. Age-Level Coordinator Selections

1. Candidates for Age-Level Coordinators at all levels will be accepted at the Association's fall meetings.
2. It is not necessary for a level coordinator to be a head coaching candidate on a particular team at that level. It is, however, encouraged that they are involved as an assistant coach or parent volunteer in some capacity with a team(s) at that level.
3. Age-level coordinators will serve to coordinate try-outs and play for teams at their age level, and to mediate any concerns brought before them by Association members concerning play at their respective level.
4. Coordinators will also serve on the Association Executive Board to assist in program operations and mediate any concerns brought before the Board on the part of any Association member.

G. Coaching Selections

1. Candidates for coaching positions at all levels of play will be accepted at the Association's fall and winter meetings.
2. Each team will consist of one head coach and two designated assistant coaches. Other parents may assist in any manner in which the head coach and his/her staff feel is appropriate and which league and state rules will allow during games and tournaments.
3. If more than one person expresses a strong desire to be a head coach on a particular team, the Association Executive Board will request a resume with three references from each of those candidates. Coaches will be named following tryout results being finalized.
4. Upon review of resumes and any additional discussion, the President and age-level coordinators will vote to determine the most qualified candidate.
5. If a conflict of interest or a split vote arises, one of the other Executive Board members will act as a supplemental voting member, in the following order: Secretary, and Treasurer.
6. Assistant coach selections must be approved by the Executive Board.

H. Registration and Team Selection

1. Teams of the St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association will be comprised of females living or attending schools within Independent School District 834 boundaries. Exceptions may be made if a team is having difficulty acquiring an appropriate number of players for its level of play.
2. Players in 9th grade and above must attend an Independent School District 834 school.
3. Registration for 10U, 12U, 14U will be conducted in January or February each year. Registration for 16U and 18U will be conducted in March Each year. Forms and announcements regarding tryouts may be distributed in the elementary and junior high schools and on the association's web site. A registration announcement may also be submitted to the local newspapers announcing registration. The secretary and treasurer will handle the necessary mailings and collections with assistance from the Coaches Advisory Group and Executive Board upon request.
4. Summer registration fees for 10U, 12U and 14U must be paid in full prior to spring tryouts. Fees for 16U and 18U must be paid in full prior to the registration deadline. Fees for all players within an age level will be the same.
5. Scholarship requests will be reviewed by the executive Board. Approval or rejection of the scholarship request will be determined by the executive board.
6. Team selections will be conducted in the spring each year. Specific times will be announced through web site postings or mailings or announcements in the schools. Tryouts will be held for the following age groups 12U and 14U in the spring prior to any tournament or league play. 16U and 18U teams may have tryouts if the number of players not selected for the in house club team will require cutting players. The 16U and 18U teams may be selected with input from the varsity high school coach and his/her coaching staff. Tryouts for 16U & 18U if necessary shall be completed in the spring of the year prior to any tournament or league play.
7. The tryout process will consist of hitting, bunting, infield and outfield stations on a rotating basis during the evaluation process. Evaluators will also rotate through each station in order to evaluate all players at all stations using a point rating system.

Pitching try-outs will be held separately on a date designated by each level coordinator. A point rating system will also be used for evaluating pitchers at each level.

The age level coordinators will have primary responsibility for conducting the try-outs with assistance from the Executive Board upon request. The 16-and-under and 18-and-under teams may be selected with input from the high school coach.

8. Players at the 10U, 12U, 14U age levels must play at the age level for which they are eligible. Playing up an age level or levels is not allowed. There are two exceptions to this rule:
 - a) A player is selected to the in house club team.
 - b) The Executive board may approve moving players up to fill teams at different age levels only when this is required to roster a full team at any given age level.
9. In an effort to keep St. Croix Valley softball athletes playing for the St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch the association may form one (1) in house club team each year. This team shall be selected by the club team selection committee which will consist of the varsity head coach and his/her coaching staff, 14U coordinator, 16U coordinator, 18U coordinator and Association President. This team will play at either the 16U or 18U level. Tryouts may be held for the club team. The decision to hold tryouts for the club team will be at the discretion of the club team selection committee.
10. Under some circumstances a player may be added to a team roster after the close of registration only by approval of the Executive Board. The request to add a player to a specific team must be presented to the Executive Board by the age level coordinator responsible for the team or teams making the request.
11. The association shall have a formal written team selection procedure.
12. Association teams in all age categories will generally roster between 12 and 14 players per team.
13. Names of players, dates of birth, and addresses shall be on the submitted roster.
14. All coaches' names and phone numbers shall be placed on the roster form.
15. Birth verifications in the form of a copy of each player's birth certificate will be provided to each coach by the Association secretary or their designate.
16. League rules, official rule books, official roster sheets, schedules, weekend tournament listings, coaches' phone numbers, and score books will be distributed to coaches by the League by early May each year through either a mailing or a pick-up point format.

I. Fee Structuring

1. Registration fees will be evaluated and set annually by the Association's governing agency and be assessed to each participant. Fund raising monetary requirements could also be assessed to each participant.
2. Due to the necessity for early equipment and uniform orders, payment of team entry fees, and other preseason budgetary obligations, all registration and fund raising fees will be non-refundable to those who qualify for and are placed on a team. Under extenuating circumstances to be determined by the Executive Board, A 30% administrative fee will be withheld from the registration fee for those individuals who drop any association sponsored program prior to completion of the tryout process or clinic start date. Fund raising fees are not refundable. 70% of the registration fee

minus the fund raising fee will be refunded to those individuals withdrawing from the association.

3. Refunds may be issued under some circumstances. The decision to refund all or part of a players registration fees will be at the discretion of the Executive Board.

J. Post Season Tournament Funding

1. Subject to availability of funds Association teams competing in sanctioned national tournaments will have their entry fee paid, if the fee is not paid by the state organization. There will be a limit of one entry fee per team per year.
2. Subject to availability of funds Association teams competing in sanctioned state or national tournaments will have their gate fee paid, if the fee is not paid by the state organization. There will be a limit of one gate fee per team per year.

K. Playing Format

1. Coaches will play all players during league games unless disciplinary actions justify reduced playing time.
2. Games will be scheduled by the league. Head coaches are responsible for resolving scheduling conflicts and make up games.
3. Coaches of each team will be required to notify the appropriate league official for their level of play with an up-dated team record of wins and losses in accordance with league procedures.
4. League rules will take precedence over St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association rules governing but not limited to game scheduling and format, player eligibility, umpires, and league tournament stipulations.

L. Code of Ethics

1. League players and coaches are governed by the national sanctioning body's Code of Ethics.
2. Unbecoming behaviour by a player, coach, or fan, that breaches the parameters of an organized youth activity will be deemed unacceptable by both the League and the St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association.
3. The Executive Board will review all reports of situations involving unbecoming behaviour by Association players, coaches or fans. In the event fault is found with an Associations player, coach or fan, the Executive Board may elect to take action up to and including:

Players: a non-refundable expulsion from play for the season

Coaches: may be removed from their coaching position and sanctioned as deemed appropriate by the Executive Board

Fans: may be sanctioned as deemed appropriate by the Executive Board.

4. The Association assumes that all of its participants including players, coaches, and fans will approach each contest in a competitive spirit that reflects the highest degree of integrity and respect for the officials and for the players and coaches of both teams.
5. The possession and/or use of any alcohol, tobacco or drugs by a player is expressly prohibited by the Association. Any infractions of this rule discovered by a coach will be investigated by the Executive Board. If allegations are founded, players 12-and-under will be suspended for one (1) game, and players 14-and-under will be suspended for two (2) games. Players 16/18-and-under will be governed by Minnesota State High School League regulations which call for first time offenders to be suspended for two (2) contests or two (2) weeks, whichever is longer. Any player found guilty of a second offence will be removed from play for the season.
6. The Association shall have a formal grievance policy.

M. Postponed Games

1. Teams needing a postponement shall notify the opponent at least 24 hours prior to the game.
2. The home team shall notify the opponent as soon as possible if field conditions warrant a postponement.
3. Until game time the home team coach may postpone the game for unplayable conditions. After game time the umpire shall decide if the field is playable.
4. Each coach is responsible for notifying the opposing team, the umpire, and the Association field manager when rescheduling a postponed home game.
5. If an impasse develops in making-up a particular game the League Director shall have the authority to set a game date and time. If either team cannot play, the team in attendance shall be declared a forfeit winner.

N. Umpires

1. The St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association will provide sanctioned umpires for teams involved in Tier 1 at the 18, 16, and 14 and Under levels.
2. The St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association will provide competent individuals to officiate the 10-and-under, 12-and-under, and 14-and-under B and C levels of play.
3. If not sanctioned, the umpire shall not be under 16 years of age for games in the 18's, 16's, and 14's.
4. If not sanctioned, the umpire shall not be the husband or wife of a coach, unless agreed upon prior to the start of the game by the coaches of both teams.
5. Umpires are expected to enforce all playing rules. This includes the administration of the casual profanity rule, the "No Taunting" rule and the "Blood Rule".

O. Game Fields and Practice Scheduling

1. The primary game fields for summer play will include the three Stillwater Senior High School fields and Lily Lake Upper (Bonse) Field. Other fields will be utilized as necessary.
2. Coaches are responsible for setting up their practice sites and times through the Association Field Scheduler. The Association Field Scheduler will schedule fields through the ISD 834 Central Services Building and the appropriate City Park and Recreation department.

P. Fall League

1. If there is sufficient interest, the St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association will assign teams to the 18U, 16U, 14U, 12U and 10U age brackets of a chosen league.
2. Email notices and web site postings announcing fall ball registration will be sent and posted on the association web site in June or July each year. The registration deadline will be set by the Fall Ball Coordinator. All registrations and payments must be received by the association Registrar by this date. Fund raising monetary requirements could also be assessed to each participant.
3. Fees will be dictated by league entry fee requirements and will be established by the Fall Ball League Coordinator in conjunction with the Executive Board.
4. Team selection will be determined by the Fall Ball League Coordinator and coaches, and roster sizes will be dictated by the number of participants.
5. The season will consist of four doubleheaders played on successive Sunday afternoons, followed by a State Qualifying Tournament, and concluding with the Minnesota Sports Federation Fall State Tournament.
6. The philosophy of the Fall League will be developmental with an opportunity for additional participation in fast pitch softball.

Q. Off-Season Developmental Programs

1. The St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association will annually plan to conduct local pitching clinics on a weekly basis from during the winter months. Beginning and advanced levels will be offered, and fees will be assessed to participants to pay for gym space and instruction.
2. The St. Croix Valley Girls Fast Pitch Association will also plan to make available a batting cage facility on a weekly basis during the winter months each year. It will offer a pitching-machine batting station and also a possible area where interested individuals may acquire some throwing practice. A nominal fee will be assessed for this activity to pay for gym space and supervision.

3. Contact people for these activities will be made known at the conclusion of the fall meetings.