**Big Lake Fast Pitch Association Bylaws**

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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 Pre-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 Pre-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 equipmentand 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. Any participant, who after completing the evaluation process and/or being placed on a team roster subsequently quits or no longer participates in team activities without a valid reason as determined by the board, shall no longer be considered in good standing and ineligible for team registration for the next 13 calendar months. Valid reasons for non-participation after evaluations will include, but are not limited to, season ending injury, family relocation, or similar events that are beyond the player’s control.

F. 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 forth in the BLFPA policies and procedures.

If a participant has been found to be ineligible for team placement in accordance with sections 4 (E) or 4 (F) 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

1. Vice President

V. High School Varsity Coach

VI. In-House League Coordinator

VII. Travel League Coordinator

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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. The registration fee shall be waived for one player during the current term year of each serving Board Member. For the Ice Breaker Tournament Director, the registration fee will be waived for one player in the next calendar year after serving as Tournament Director.

G. Other waiving of registration fees for other non-voting positions must be approved by majority vote of the board upon successful completion of committee positions tasks.

6) Annual Meeting:

The Board of Directors shall select a day in the month October 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 in good standing are granted one vote each. Voting rights are suspended if participation fees are not paid, unless previously waived due to financial hardship. Eligibility of attendees at the annual meeting will be verified before ballots are distributed.

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. Nominees must have attended a minimum of (2) open board meetings in the previous twelve months. This requirement will be waived if there are no eligible candidates for an open position.

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 or due to actions deemed not in the best interest of the association 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:

1. Discussing tryout evaluations.
2. Discussing coaching positions.
3. 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 and Appendix B) to the current bylaws. The Policies and Procedures of the BLFPA will be reviewed and updated as needed. Any changes to the policies and procedures must be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

13) DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of this organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

**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 applicants. If there is more than one applicant , the Board will review applications from 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, in addition to completing SafeSport, CDC Concussion Training and any other checks required by the league. 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. See Appendix B – Code of Conduct for further guidance.

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 outlined in Section X and Appendix B – Code of Conduct.

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 USA Softball age regulations or league guidelines.

B. TEAM FORMATION

6U/8U:

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.

10U thru 18U:

 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 those positions on a higher level team an opportunity to play down in order to pitch/catch on a lower tier team. This request must 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 TO A HIGHER LEVEL**

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 team at the higher age level based on the results of the evaluation scores 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 higher age group if numbers are 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 based on evaluation scores. The player or player’s parent/guardian may decline having the player move up.

The request to play up must be made in writing to the Travel Director 7 days PRIOR to the evaluation date.

**VI. EVALUATION PROCESS**

Within the limits of a volunteer organization, BLFPA strives to make the evaluation process as impartial as possible. Prior to evaluations, a number of judges (to be determined based upon the number of participants) will be selected by the Board of Directorsto 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 evaluation tests or procedures are to be made once the evaluation process begins. Call backs maybe used to assist in making final roster selections.

**VII. EVALUATION ATTENDANCE**

Players are required to attend the full evaluation 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 a member of the board. The Vice President will then 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**

The association wishes to encourage and support teams that are successful during the season. In order to help defray the costs of participating in a National Tournament for those teams that earn a NAFA, USSSA, or ASA berth, Big Lake Fast Pitch will establish a “Nationals Fund”.

Fund raising for the Nationals Fund shall be accomplished with board approval and as an association sponsored event(s) preferably held during the off season and prior to evaluations. The President shall appoint a Nationals Fundraising Committee Leader in accordance with Section 10. The Committee Leader will be credited with fulfilling the volunteer requirements for the upcoming season upon successful completion of fundraising activities as determined by the board. No other volunteer credit shall be given in connection with Nationals Fundraising.

The Nationals Fund balance will be kept in a separate ledger by the treasurer.

Qualifying teams may request disbursement from the fund ONLY for the following expenses related to the National Tournament:

1. Registration Fee
2. Gate Fee
3. Trading Pins (30 pins per player max)

In the event of insufficient funds to cover all costs, the balance of the Nationals Fund shall be split equally between the qualifying teams in any given year.

In extreme financial circumstances, the Nationals Fund may be used by the board of directors for other purposes by a majority vote.

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.

**Appendix B**

**Big Lake Fast Pitch Association Bylaws**

1. **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Big Lake Fast Pitch Association has adopted the following Code of Conduct Contracts so that a clear understanding of behavior expectations is established for all players, parents and coaches. When a possible violation is discovered, the board of directors may take whatever action it deems necessary regarding enforcement of these rules. The board may impose additional consequences and conditions for continued participation when appropriate.

1. **COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT CONTRACT**

The Big Lake Fast Pitch Association is dedicated to raising the standard of service to youth in sports through the creation and enforcement of the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct defines the expectations for coaches. The Big Lake Fast Pitch Association firmly believes that for the sports experience is to be a positive, safe, and an enjoyable learning experience for youth of the league.

**Coaches’ Code of Conduct:**

* I **will** place the emotional and physical wellbeing of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
* I **will** treat each player as an individual, and expect age appropriate skills from all my players.
* I **will** direct my players at all times to play by the rules and to show respect for the other players, coaches and the umpires.
* I **will** do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
* I **will** teach my players in a positive, nurturing manner. I will not berate, intimidate or bully my players into learning.
* I **will** lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players on and off the field.
* I **will** exhibit respect for the umpires and other coaches. I **will** speak with the umpires and other coaches in a civil, calm manner. I **will not** openly berate, taunt or otherwise comment negatively on the umpires or other coaches.
* I **will** remember that I am a youth sports coach and that the game is for the children and not the adults.
* I **will** adhere to the **Coaches Code of Conduct** while participating in any activity related to this league.
* I **will** **not** use vulgar or discriminating vocabulary at any time.
* I **will** abide by the guidelines and policies of the facilities that I practice and play games in which are set by **Big Lake Fast Pitch Association** and /or the School District.
* I **will** demand a **drug, alcohol and tobacco-free sports environment** for my team and agree to assist by refraining from their use at all games and practices.

In the event a coach is deemed to be not in compliance with this code of conduct the following will occur:

 **1St offense** Verbal Warning

 **2nd offense** Written Warning

 **3rd offense** Dismissal from the program

**Coach’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

1. **PARENTS CODE OF CONDUCT CONTRACT**

**I WILL:**

1. Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating support for all Players, Coaches and Umpires at every game.

2. Demand a sports environment free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol at all events.

3. Remember that the games are for the kids.

4. Do my best to make sure that youth sports are fun and positive.

5. Not berate or openly dispute an umpire’s call. I understand that I may be asked to leave if I can’t abide by the rules.

6. Not use profanity.

7. Not undermine the Coaches instructions and directions.

8. Treat other players, coaches, umpires and volunteers with respect.

9. Communicate my concerns through the proper channels in a dignified following a 24 hour cooling off period, away from other players/ parents and in a calm manner.

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT CONTRACT**

1. I will behave appropriately at all games and tournaments. I will respect the volunteers and property of the host site and understand I represent the Big Lake Fast Pitch Association.

2. I will NOT argue with umpires, opponents, fans or coaches. I understand my job is to play the game.

3. I will support my teammates and coaches. I understand that bullying, spreading rumors, treating a team member in a disrespectful manner or behaving in any way that divides the team is unacceptable.

4. I will encourage good sportsmanship and will not trash talk opponents or their fans.

5. I will be on time for practices and games and will give 100% effort. I understand that practice is a time to learn, not socialize.

6. I understand that travel softball does not always mean equal play-time. My coach may reduce my game playing time for being late or unexcused absence from practice or games.

7. **Consequences or Non-Compliance with this contract:** If a player does not, cannot or will not comply with the above guidelines and team rules as specified by the head coach, that coach may:

 A. Reduce playing time

 B. Bench the player

In cases where this contract is repeatedly or deliberately violated the BLFPA Board may:

1. Suspend a player from the team for the remainder of the season.

B. Review status of player for following season.

**I have read the above contract and understand the guidelines and consequences as stated:**

**Players Name (print):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Players Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent/Guardian Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**