



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

As of November 12, 2011

This document is subject to revision. An updated version can always be found on our league website, <http://www.santamonicagirlssoftball.org>

This document spells out league policies and procedures. As the Board of Directors changes those procedures, this document will change accordingly.

TEAM STAFF/PLAYERS

- Three or more staff members will be rostered on each team: a head coach, assistant coach or coaches, and a team administrator. Team staff must include at least one (1) female.
 - The league's Board of Directors must approve all team staff.
 - The Board of Directors must also approve practice coaches
 - All adults who will have direct interaction with players must have Board approval.
 - Background checks are required for all team staff, including practice coaches. Staff, not the league, must provide required paperwork and pay fees.
 - The board retains the right to remove co-coaches and/or managers, if the board determines that doing so is in the best interest of the team or the league.
 - Practice coaches may assume the staff position of a rostered coach on a temporary basis, when a staff member is absent.
 - The team administrator has the authority to remove any practice coach by notifying the board of her intention to do so.
 - The board retains the right to remove practice coaches, if they determine that doing so is in the best interest of the team.
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- ◆ An adult female must be present at all team activities. No practice will be allowed if this rule is not honored.
 - ◆ Only SMGF registered players are allowed to participate in practices and games. Non-registered players are not covered by league insurance.
 - ◆ Team Administrators must have received each player's signed medical release form before allowing her to participate in any softball activity.
 - ◆ Team staff is not allowed to use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco during league games or practice sessions.
 - ◆ All individuals must have paid all applicable fees (registration, etc.) to be eligible to be on team staff.
 - ◆ All adults must sign the SMGF social media policy. Players in the 12U division and higher must also sign the policy.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- Each player is expected to provide her own glove, batting helmet with face guard and chin strap, and sliding protection (sliding pants and/or sliding pad) in all divisions except 6U.
- Cleats are required in all divisions.
 - Metal cleats are not allowed, except in the High School and 14U division.
- Bats must be marked "official softball" and ASA approved for interleague play. Bats may not exceed 34" in length.
- Batting helmets and face guards must bear the NOCSAE seal.
- Any player catching for a pitcher must wear a catcher's mask, both during games and at practices.

Some parents like to have their daughters wear face masks while playing in the field. The league recommends that you consider this option. It is mandated by league rule that pitchers wear defensive facemasks. There are no ASA standards for such equipment, and the league does not recommend any specific type or brand of face mask.

TEAM EQUIPMENT

The league provides the following equipment to each team:

Equipment bag
Bats – if requested
Balls
Catcher's gear: mask, helmet, chest protector, shin guards
One Pitching facemask

Equipment will be distributed before practices begin. Teams must return their equipment at season's end before pictures and awards will be distributed.

RULES

All games will be played according to the ASA Official Rules of Softball, except as modified by the Board. Such modifications will be embodied in a Rules Modification posting on the league website and reviewed annually by the rules committee.

Interleague games will be played under the prevailing interleague rules (e.g., LA South Bay district, California State, etc.)

FINANCES

It is the express philosophy of the league that no girl will be denied an opportunity to play softball because of lack of money. The league will offer partial scholarships to families who cannot afford to pay the full registration fee. All families must contribute some amount of money, however, in addition to the other obligations set out later in this document.

The league's Spring Rec Season refund policy:

- A 100% refund (registration fees only) will be issued if the player drops up to one week before team draws
- A 50% refund will be issued if the player drops in the week immediately prior to the team draws
- A 25% refund will be issued if the player drops after the draw but prior to the first team meeting
- No refund will be issued for players who drop after the first team meeting
- If you drop at any time, you forfeit your entire fundraising fee.

No refunds will be issued for All Stars or Fall Ball.

PROGRAMS

The league will run three programs every year:

- Spring rec league
- Summer All Stars
- Fall Ball
- Select – When deemed appropriate by the board.

DIVISIONS

There are currently six divisions of play in Santa Monica determined by "program age". Program age is defined as the player's age on December 31 of the previous year

6U:	4 - 6*
8U:	7 & 8
10U:	9 & 10
12U:	11 & 12
14U:	13 & 14
16U/HS:	15 & 16 FOR 16U, 15 & OLDER FOR HS. (DOES NOT PLAY IN SPRING.)

**Six year olds may play in the 8U division if evaluated at a skill level appropriate to the older (8U) division.*

SPRING REC LEAGUE

Team Staff: The player agent in conjunction with the division director and division commissioner will determine team staff.

Coach Training: Attendance at ASA coach training is mandatory for all-star staff and strongly encouraged for all coaches and parents.

Team Draws

New teams are drawn at the beginning of each spring rec ball season with the goal of evenly distributing players by age and experience.

New teams are drawn at divisional meetings chaired by the Player Agent with the Division Director and a representative (preferably the head coach) from each team in attendance. There will be a draw meeting for each division except the 6U. The Player Agent will form 6U teams and inform team staff.

In divisions 8U through 14U, girls are grouped in pools based on age, skill and experience as follows:

Pitchers pool: Players will be rated as pitchers based on previous seasons play, information from private instructors, and coach recommendations.

Catcher's pool: Catchers may be similarly placed if age appropriate.

Returning All Stars: Girls who played on or who were elected to on an All Star team in the previous season are placed in this pool. First gold then silver followed by bronze all-stars will be placed on teams

Graduating All Stars: This group includes girls who played on or were elected to an All Star team in a lower division in the previous season.

Impact Players: Players deemed to have to affect competitive balance that were not all-stars will be placed based on the knowledge of their skill level.

Returning players: Returning players are placed in this pool and are drawn to teams in descending age order.

New players: Experienced players – 10U and above only – who are new to our league are evaluated and placed into the “experienced” pool.

Once the number of teams in a division is determined, pitchers are placed on teams by the number they are ranked in the pitching pool (e.g., the best pitcher is team #1 and so on). This in turn determines the order in which players are selected. Teams draw in serpentine order, from the first team to last team and then in reverse order. For example, if there are 4 teams in the division, teams will draw in the following order:

Round 1: Team 1, Team 2, Team 3 and Team 4 – pitcher & catcher placement

2: Team 4, Team 3, Team 2 and Team 1

3: Team 1, Team 2, Team 3 and Team 4

4: Team 4, Team 3, Team 2 and Team 1

The process begins by placing pitchers from pitchers pool, catchers from the catching pool, followed by returning All Stars, graduating All Stars, returning players and new players. Rounds continue until all players are placed on teams. Integrated into this procedure is the fact that daughters of staff members will be placed on their parents' team. Player requests to be on the same team with friends are also considered (see "Player Requests" later in this handbook). Adjustments may be made at the discretion of the player agent (with the input of the training committee and each teams representative at the draw meeting) to create an equitable distribution of talent.

- Girls may be added to teams after the draw if space permits. Interested players must register on-line to be placed on a waiting list.

- Once teams are formed and have met as teams, the waiting list is dissolved: players on the waiting list will still be considered for placement onto teams on an ad hoc basis, but there will not be a priority order within the waiting list.
- Upon receipt of registration materials, the Player Agent will review the registration, evaluate team balance and place the new player on an appropriate team. Although every effort will be made to accommodate reasonable requests, no request can be guaranteed.

AWARDS

Trophies: All players in spring season will receive a participation trophy, medal, or other acknowledgement of their participation. Teams with the best overall season records (10U – 14U) will receive championship trophies. Teams who participate in the end of season tournament finals will also receive championship awards.

Most Improved Player Trophy: Staff on each team (8U and older) will select a Most Improved Player who will receive a special trophy in addition to her participation trophy. Teams who wish to name more than one Most Improved Player may purchase additional trophies at their own expense (approximately \$10 per trophy).

End of season tournament(s): All teams 8U and older will compete in an end of season tournament. The last two teams in contention in a division will play for the tournament championship on closing day.

6U (Minis): The Mini program provides an introduction to softball for girls 4 - 6. All 6U activities, with the exception of special events, are restricted to Saturdays. Teams practice during the preseason and then combine their Saturday practices with short games. Players in the 6U division begin their season batting from a tee, but by season's end, most are hitting balls pitched by an adult. Team standings are not kept and games are not scored.

OBLIGATIONS

Team Sponsorships: Each team must find a team sponsor. An individual, family, business, or corporation may sponsor a team for \$500.

Snack Bar: Families may elect to fulfill their fundraising requirement by volunteering to work in the snack bar at Memorial Park for two 2-hour shifts on a Saturday for each of their children registered in the program. Proceeds are shared with Little League Baseball. Alternatively, families may buy out of this requirement for \$50 per registered child. Failure to satisfy this commitment will result in the following penalties.

- Player will not receive the end-of-season pictures, awards etc...
- Player will not be eligible to participate in All Stars
- Player will not be allowed to register for future seasons until the commitment has been settled

PLAYER REQUESTS – 6U and 8U only

We allow **one** request per player. Although we cannot guarantee any request, we will do our best to accommodate them, with the following conditions:

- Players may request **one** friend only. We cannot honor multiple requests, or requests to place several girls on the same team. (This is not true in the 6U division.)
- The request **MUST BE MUTUAL**. We cannot honor requests unless both girls and their families agree.
- We **DO NOT GUARANTEE** any request. All requests are subject to review by the Player Agent, who retains the right to reject any request that he or she feels will disrupt the balance of teams. For example, if player A is a returning All Star pitcher, it is quite unlikely that her request will be honored if she is requesting Player B, who is also a returning All Star pitcher.
- 6U requests will be honored and teams formed based on school affiliation.
- We will consider only **ONE** request **per** family. We cannot honor a player's request when her parent has asked to work with the parent of a third player, if doing so disrupts the balance of the teams.
- Adults who ask to work on teams with other adults are subject to the same restrictions. If, for example, parent A asks to coach with parent B and both their daughters are All Star pitchers, the request may be rejected. Similarly, we may reject requests from adults who make multiple requests, asking to work with several other adults, if, in doing so, the composition of the team is inappropriate.

ALL STAR PROGRAM

Players must have participated in at least 50% of their teams' games and at least 50% of practices to be eligible to play in All Stars. No player who has played for a travel ball team after March 31 is eligible for All Stars.

Approximately two weeks prior to the All Star Vote, meetings will be held in each division with the team administrators, coaches, player agent, league president, and division director. There will be a round table discussion about the skills of players mentioned. Anyone may bring up any player for consideration for gold, silver, and/or bronze teams. Staff from all teams are encouraged to observe those players in the weeks leading up to the voting, to aid them in casting an informed ballot. Players not mentioned by staff in this meeting are still eligible to be voted on, assuming they meet eligibility requirements.

Near the end of the spring rec season team administrators and rostered coaches who have attended an All Star certification meeting will be asked to choose 9 players (10 in 8U) from all teams in their division. Voters do not have to select a certain number of players per team; voters may choose all 9 players from as many or as few teams as they like. The head coach and TA of the All Star team will pick the final 3 players to make a team of 12. If more than one person shares administrative duties, those people will *share* an All Star vote. In no instances will any team be entitled to more than three votes. The 8U Division will roster 13 All Stars.

The player's availability to participate has no bearing on her nomination to the All Star team. Twelve players will be elected to the team (in the 8U, 13 players will be elected). The twelve (13) girls who comprise the All Star team will be rostered alphabetically with no distinction existing among them. Alternates selected by team staff will replace players who cannot participate.

Each elected player must receive a majority of votes based on the participation of eligible voters. If 9 (10 for 8) players do not receive a majority, eligible voters will revote and cast as many votes as exist remaining positions on the roster. For example, if 6 players receive a majority on the first ballot; each voter shall vote for 3 players on the second ballot in an attempt to fill the final 3 elected spots. If a majority can not be reached after 3 extra ballots, team staff will make selections to fill any remaining roster spots.

Invalid ballots: Ballots are invalid if an incorrect number of players are listed or if ineligible players are listed.

The board will approve and book tournaments in advance for the number of all-star teams deemed appropriate in each division based on information from division coaches and the training committee.

Voting committee: All managers and coaches in their respective divisions may submit ballots for All Star elections. Ballots must be complete and filled out correctly to be valid. Managers/Coaches must be certified to have an All Star vote.

All Star Staff: Prior to All Star players being selected, rostered staff within each division who have attended an All Star certification meeting vote to elect an All Star TA and an All Star coach. The elected coach and TA then select a second All Star coach. Team staff from the spring season will be given priority to be all-star staff. If no staff member from the recreation season wishes to be head coach or TA, then other willing volunteers may step forward and be considered.

All Star Funding

All Star registration fees will cover tournament entry fees, field permit fees, insurance, and other league incurred expenses in running the all-star program.

Uniforms (if necessary) and jackets billed separately, at cost.

HS – teams may be formed with board approval

- If teams 8U-14U qualify for tournaments beyond Districts, the league will pay registration fees for State and National tournaments. If HS (16U/18U teams) qualify for National tournaments, the league will pay registration fees for National tournaments.

Select Teams

Travel Program

FALL BALL

The fall season typically begins in August or September and may continue through December, depending on the program in which the team participates. Teams practice during the week and play double headers on Saturday or Sunday. The fall programs are often highly competitive, challenging girls who wish to participate in a more advanced level of play. Fall teams travel to other cities in the area to play games against teams from other leagues. The fall program may include teams from all age groups, depending on interest and availability of coaching staff.

The Board will decide which programs to participate in.

<u>BOARD</u>

Board Duties (remove specific descriptions)

- a. President. The President shall act as the chief executive of the League, and be responsible for the overall administration of the League. This position is responsible for calling and acting as chairperson for all Board meetings. The President shall maintain and distribute the high-level view of the League and its activities including the relationship with City, the League as an entirety, game coordination, practice coordination, budget, and fundraising events. The President will facilitate the smooth operation of the League and League activities, with the help of the Board. The President can be male or female and may be on a team staff. Will fulfill or designate an appointee to be city liaison and represent SMGF at city FSAC meetings.
- b. Vice-President of Operations.

- c. Vice President of Programs/Training.
- d. Player Agent. The Player Agent may be male or female, but may not be on any team staff during the spring season (e.g., Manager, Assistant Manager, Assistant Manager, Co-Coach). The Player Agent shall act as the representative of and advocate for the players. It is the responsibility of the Player Agent to ensure equal and balanced teams in all divisions. The Player Agent will be available during any recreation league, Inter-league, tournament or playoff season to contend with team and player issues that may arise. The Player Agent will supervise and facilitate all Division draws and all Division All Star Ballots. The Player Agent will work with the President and Division Directors to coordinate team staff.
- e. Umpire-in-Chief. The Umpire in Chief (“UIC”) is responsible for the administration of play in accordance with applicable rules and the safety of the players on the field. The UIC will recruit, select and evaluate umpires, schedule the umpires for games, and ensure that the umpires are adequately trained and are aware of the rules and how the rules differ from division to division. The UIC will work together with the President and VP Programs/Training. If the UIC is on a team staff, he/she will not handle disputes in the division in which he/she is on team staff. The VP Programs/Training will handle such disputes. The UIC can be male or female and may not be on a team staff without special approval of the board.

- f. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the League. The books of account shall at all times be open to inspection by any Board member. The Treasurer shall deposit all moneys and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the Board. The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the League as may be ordered by the Board, shall render to the Board members, whenever they request it, an account of all transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the League, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board.
- g. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a book of minutes of all meetings of the Board and its committees, with the time and place of holding, whether regular or special, and if special, how authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at Board and committee meetings, and the proceedings thereof. The Secretary shall regularly update this Policies & Procedures document, incorporating changes made by the Board.
- h. Safety Director. The Safety Director is responsible for maintaining and administering safety policies for the League, and for procuring and maintaining equipment and supplies necessary for carrying out those policies, including selection and distribution of first-aid kits and emergency equipment, etc. The Safety Director shall also maintain, distribute and file accident reports and conduct necessary follow up, as well as arrange for first-aid training, and safety policy enforcement, as appropriate.

- i. Inter-league Coordinator. The Inter-league Coordinator will work with other ASA leagues, overseeing all inter-league activities. This includes All-Stars tournaments and Fall Ball. Responsibilities include scheduling, budget, disbursement of information, and equipment procurement. The Inter-league Coordinator will work with other officers of the Board such as Uniforms, Equipment/Fields, Umpire In Chief and the City Liaison, to facilitate the smooth operation of inter-league activities. The Inter-league Coordinator can be male or female and may be on a team staff.
- j. League Fundraising Chair. The Fundraising Chair shall be responsible for coordinating special fundraising events, including but not limited to the silent auction, league wear, snack bar, etc. He/she will act as the liaison with Little League and the City of Santa Monica in operating the snack bar and collect the portion of money due to the league from the proceeds of the snack bar. The Fundraising Chair shall be responsible for coordinating the solicitation and collection of sponsorships, contributions of donations from local businesses and organizations for league and/or team sponsorship. The Fundraising Chair shall be responsible for ordering and displaying sponsor banners, as well as fulfilling other sponsor commitments. The Fundraising Chair can be male or female and may be on a team staff.
- k. Division Commissioner. There shall be a Division Director for each playing division (except for the high school division, which does not play during the spring). The Division Directors will assist the Player Agent in selecting team staff, and will supervise and coordinate team staff for their respective divisions. They will keep their division managers and team staff informed and involved in the league, including the dissemination of league policies and activities. The division commissioner will oversee the division directors and represent their interests at board meetings.

- i. Equipment/Fields Coordinator. The Equipment/Fields Coordinator shall be responsible for keeping an accurate and up-to-date inventory of equipment, and for reporting said inventory to the VP of Programs and to the President. The Equipment/Fields Coordinator shall coordinate the distribution of equipment to each team, game balls to each team at the beginning of the season and collecting equipment from each team at the end of the season. He/she will be responsible for batting machine maintenance and location (balls, extension cords), and sliding pad location and worthiness. This person will make recommendations to the board for new equipment as required to maintain a full complement of safe equipment. The Equipment/Fields Coordinator shall be responsible for coordinating the field preparation, field storage locker cleanliness and maintaining field preparation equipment. The Equipment/Fields Coordinator will make recommendations to the board for new equipment as required to maintain fields.
- m. Registrar. The Registrar shall be responsible for overseeing the player registration process for the spring, All Star, and fall ball seasons. Prior to the forming of teams, the Registrar shall on an ongoing basis provide the Player Agent and President with the names and playing divisions of registrants.
- n. Membership Director
- o. Training Director
- p. Community Outreach/Special Events

DISCIPLINE

- The President and Vice Presidents, working together, have the authority and duty to punish unsportsmanlike behavior by staff, players, parents, or other spectators.
 - Punishment can include written and/or oral reprimands or warning, suspension, or banishment from the league.
 - Any adults (staff or spectators) who are ejected from a game by umpires will automatically serve suspension for two games or two weeks, whichever is longer. Weeks in which the league does not play any games will not count toward the duration of the suspension.
- The President and Vice Presidents will notify the Board of any disciplinary action taken. The President and Vice Presidents may wish to consult the Board before taking action.

Any individual who has been suspended from league activities may not come within 1,000 feet of any league activity, except to drop off or pick up the individual's daughter.

- A first violation of this provision will result in additional sanctions, including additional terms of suspension, possible expulsion, and possible removal of the child from the team.
- A second violation will result in the expulsion of the individual and in the child's removal from the team.

Any individual who has been expelled from league activities may not come within 1,000 feet of any league activity, except to drop off or pick up the individual's daughter. Violation of the terms of the expulsion will result in the child's removal from the team.

Any individual who has been suspended or expelled from league activities has the right to protest or appeal the suspension or expulsion. A written request of such protest/appeal must be received by the League President within 48 hours of the individual's having been notified of the penalty. Upon receipt of such a written request, the President will schedule a special meeting of the Board of Directors. Such meeting will be scheduled at the earliest practicable time.

Following the meeting with the penalized individual, the Board will meet in a closed session to decide whether to affirm, overturn, or modify the suspension/expulsion. Modification may include increasing the duration of the suspension or the terms of the penalty.

Any and all penalties will remain in effect pending the Board's final decision.

INCIDENT REPORTS

- Injuries requiring medical treatment must be promptly reported to the Safety Director.
- Incident reports regarding unsportsmanlike behavior must be filed with the President and Vice Presidents, and Safety Director.

ON-FIELD PRIVILEGES

The only people allowed on a field or in a dugout during a game are:

- Players
- Coaches (2 base coaches in divisions 10U and older, 2 base coaches plus fielding coaches/pitching-machine operators in 8U and 6U)
- TA's & Coaches, between play to consult with umpires, talk to team during time-outs, etc.
- Limit of 4 staff in the dugout
- Umpires

If a photographer wants to be on the field, he or she must request and be granted the league's permission, must wear a helmet while on the field, and be insured through ASA or, in the case of a professional photographer, carry private insurance. If the umpires judge that the photographer has interfered or is likely to interfere with play, then the photographer must leave the field.

SPECTATOR CONDUCT

Santa Monica Girls Fastpitch has zero tolerance for unsportsmanlike behavior. Spectators must observe the following rules.

1. Spectators will never be allowed to heckle the umpires at any game. Over ninety percent of all umpire calls are based on judgment. Please remember that it is highly unlikely that an umpire will have an investment in the outcome of any game!
2. Spectators will never belittle the efforts of the players or staff, and may make only positive comments to players on either team.
3. Spectators are asked to stay away from the team dugouts and to avoid talking to players or team staff during games.
4. Umpires shall immediately stop any game if unruliness by spectators becomes a factor, or if team members are exposed to profanity or abusive language, or might become jeopardized by unrestrained behavior.
5. Absolutely no tobacco products are allowed at any SMGF event.
6. **SMGF has a zero tolerance policy for alcohol or controlled substances at any league events, including but not limited to practices, games, and tournaments. A first-time violation of this policy will result in a minimum mandatory suspension of:**
 - the remainder of the current playing season; and
 - one full calendar year following the end of the current playing season.

If any of these terms are violated at any time the Board can and will take the necessary actions outlined in these Policies and Procedures.