



**BIG WEST GIRLS FASTPITCH
SOFTBALL LEAGUE BYLAWS**

ESTABLISHED 2017

REVISED 2/21/2024

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ARTICLE I – PURPOSE

Big West Fastpitch League of Minnesota is a 501(c)(7) that was established to promote fast pitch softball for girls in the St. Paul/Minneapolis Metropolitan Area but is not limited to that area. The league acts as a clearinghouse for interested associations and limits itself to the scheduling of league games between member associations, determine state tournament advancement, and corresponding player eligibility standards.

1. Definitions. Whenever used in these by-laws, unless otherwise specifically mentioned, the following word, terms, and phrases are defined as follows:
 - a. **Annual Report** – Describes in detail the league’s annual financial statement.
 - b. **Association** – An area or community or club that is a member or seeks membership to the league.
 - c. **Berth** – Status given to a team to advance to another tournament.
 - d. **Completed Game** – A game that is a minimum of three (3) innings, 2 ½ innings if home team is ahead, or used the allotted time limit.
 - e. **Designee** – A person assigned to attend meetings on behalf of an association or team.
 - f. **Doubleheader** – An event in which two games or contests are played in succession at the same venue, typically between the same teams.
 - g. **Double Elimination** – A type of bracket that allows all teams with less than two losses to continue playing. Teams without losses play in the winner’s bracket. Teams with one loss play in the loser’s bracket.
 - h. **DP/Flex** – A rule that allows for a team to replace a defensive player with an offensive player. One player will play offense, the other will play defense.
 - i. **Forfeit Due to No Show** – The result of a team not showing up for a scheduled game.
 - j. **Gate Fee** – A predetermined amount of money that each team at a tournament pays to the tournament host.
 - k. **League** – The Big West Girls Fastpitch League.
 - l. **League Tournament** – An event that takes place after the regular season is completed and is used to seed teams into the state tournaments.
 - m. **Membership** – A person or association that has been accepted to the league through majority vote or appointment.
 - n. **Postpone** – Arranging for a game to take place later than originally scheduled.
 - o. **Roster** – A document with the list of the participants on that team.
 - p. **State Organization** – A body of individuals from other leagues that convene periodically to discuss rules. The provider of state and post season softball tournaments.
 - q. **Suspended** - When a game is stopped before it can be completed. When a game is suspended, the game is to be completed later.
 - r. **Tournament Director** – A person nominated by the league to represent the league to the teams. The tournament director will assemble a team to operate the tournament, update brackets, and handle all eligibility disputes.
 - s. **Umpire-In-Chief** – A person nominated by the league to represent the rules of the game on behalf of the league to the teams participating in the tournament. The umpire-in-chief handles all on field protests.

- t. **Umpire Organization** – A group of umpires that typically assigns games in certain geographic areas.
- u. **Unplayable Conditions** – The status of a field that cannot be used due to its condition most commonly due to standing water and weather.

ARTICLE II – AFFILIATIONS

The league is affiliated with Minnesota Softball and USA Softball Minnesota.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Associations from the St. Paul/Minneapolis Metropolitan area are eligible. Exceptions can be granted by achieving a vote of 60 percent in favor of the membership.

1. Associations can gain membership to the league by achieving a vote of 60 percent in favor of the membership.
2. Associations must be made up of at least three (3) teams. The members may elect to waive the minimum team stipulation.
3. Association membership shall be revoked for failure to field a team in the league during a playing season.
4. If membership is revoked, an association may apply for membership the following season.
5. Current membership of the league. (This list will update following the membership meeting after the director meeting).

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

1. The league Board of Directors shall consist of the following members:
 - a. The league director.
 - b. The website/technical support for the league.
 - c. Central area director (An area described as but not limited to south of Interstate 694 extending westward and north of the Minnesota River)
 - d. North area director (An area described as but not limited to north of Interstate 694 extending westward).
 - e. South area director (An area described as but not limited to south of the Minnesota River).
 - f. An at-large director.
2. Officers' duties are as described below.
 - a. The league director
 - i. Shall preside over all meetings.
 - ii. Submit an annual report to the members of the league.
 - iii. Work closely with the state and association directors on all matters relating to fastpitch softball.
 - iv. Provide general guidance to the league and its members.
 - v. Be responsible for the annual league schedule.
 - b. The website/technical support.
 - i. Shall send out the meeting agendas.
 - ii. Shall keep the minutes of league meetings.
 - iii. Shall provide all correspondence, send out all notices, and official correspondence.

- iv. Shall post all schedules on the official league website.
- v. Shall write all brackets for the league director to review.
- vi. Attend all as needed meetings when they are requested by the league director.
- c. Area directors.
 - i. Attending all official league meetings.
 - ii. Attend all as needed meetings when they are requested by the league director.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

1. There shall be an association director meeting held every year on the fourth Monday of January at a site to be determined by the league director. The date may be changed as needed by the league director as they see fit. The business conducted at the director meeting shall be:
 - a. New league membership applications from associations.
 - b. League rules change discussion and voting.
 - c. League bylaws change discussion and voting.
 - d. Other business matters pertinent to the league.
2. There shall be a coaches' meeting held on the second Thursday of April at a site to be determined by the league director. The date may be changed as needed by the league director as they see fit. The business conducted at the coaches meeting shall be:
 - a. Dividing the teams up into separate age groups, classifications, and geographies for the purpose of playing league games.
 - b. Scheduling the league games.

ARTICLE VI – TEAM FORMATION

1. The league shall conduct play in the following levels and classes.
 - a. 8-Under
 - i. "A"
 - ii. "B/C"
 - b. 10-Under
 - i. "A"
 - ii. "B"
 - iii. "C"
 - c. 12-Under
 - i. "A"
 - ii. "B"
 - iii. "C"
 - d. 14-Under
 - i. "A"
 - ii. "B"
 - iii. "C"
 - e. 16-Under
 - i. "A"
 - ii. "B"
 - f. 18-Under
 - i. "A"

ii. "B"

NOTE: Teams in 16-Under and 18-Under will play in the same division under a "High School" designation.

2. Member associations with 8-Under teams shall play in the Metro Area 8-Under League.
3. Member associations with 16-Under and 18-Under teams shall play in the Metro Area 18-Under League.
4. Formation of the teams will be left up to the associations with guidance from the Minnesota Softball Competition Committee (<https://mnsoftball.com/pages/cms/competition-committee>). The league encourages associations to field teams at higher classes to protect the integrity of the sport. The league also encourages associations fielding multiple teams at one age/class to equitably divide the talent amongst the teams. For example, a community with three (3) 10-Under B teams should equitably divide players amongst the three teams. They should not stack or create a top B team.

ARTICLE VII – PLAYER AND TEAM ELIGIBILITY

1. Teams will roster their players in accordance with their local rules and national guidelines.
 - a. Teams may roster a maximum of twenty (20) number of players in league play.
 - b. In accordance with national guidelines teams must limit their tournament roster to 20 players.
 - c. Rosters shall be filled in with all relevant team data completely and accurately.
 - d. Rosters are due prior to your first league or tournament game, whichever comes first.
 - e. All on-field coaches will have completed SafeSport training.
 - f. Each team will have one USA Softball ACE certified coach on their team. A USA Softball background check is bundled into USA Softball ACE training.
 - g. All other on-field personnel will have had a successful USA Softball background check.
2. Teams may only roster players that follow the age table in Appendix IV.
3. Other league rules concerning eligibility and rosters will follow the state organizations rules.

ARTICLE VIII – LEAGUE SCHEDULING

1. Association directors shall submit their teams to the league at least three (3) days prior to the coaches' meeting.
2. The league board or directors shall place teams into predetermined leagues based on Age, Class, and Location.
3. One coach or designee from every member team shall attend the league scheduling meeting.
4. Each coach or designee shall work with the other coaches in their league to build a league schedule.
5. One representative from each group shall record the league schedule and turn it in to the league directors.

ARTICLE IX – UMPIRES

1. The league does not require the use of a specific umpire organization.
2. The host association shall obtain USA Softball registered and trained umpires for all games.
3. If a non-registered umpire is used, the umpire shall not be the husband or wife of a coach. Coaches from each team may agree to waive this requirement.

4. If a non-registered umpire is used, the umpire shall not be under 16 years of age. Coaches from each team may agree to waive this requirement.
5. Umpires are expected to enforce all playing rules.
6. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their own coaches, players, and fans.
7. Abuse of any kind directed at an umpire will not be tolerated and will result in outs, suspensions, and disqualifications.

ARTICLE X – LEAGUE GAMES

1. Scheduled Games

- a. These games may be rescheduled by mutual agreement of the respective coaches.
- b. All teams shall play double headers with the first game starting at 6:15 PM and the second game will start five (5) minutes after the completion of the first game.
- c. The games shall be seven (7) innings long.
- d. When the time limit rule is in effect time begins with the first warm up pitch.
- e. Games that are not a completed game will not count toward seeding.
- f. Any rescheduled game shall play a new game. The new game will not begin where the inning left off during the postponed game. Coaches must decide on the field if the game will be rescheduled.
- g. The tiebreaker rule is used starting in the eighth inning with the last batter on second base.
 - i. 10-Under C will start the half inning with one (1) out.
 - ii. 12-Under C will start the half inning with one (1) out.
- h. No new inning can start after 65 minutes, and league games can end with a tie. These are doubleheader games, and it is the responsibility of the umpire to keep the games going to complete both games.
- i. Any team not in attendance fifteen (15) minutes after the established game time will forfeit the game. Teams not in attendance within an additional fifteen (15) minutes will forfeit the second game.
- j. The run rule during league games shall be, any team ahead by fifteen (15) runs after three (3) innings, twelve (12) runs after four (4) innings, and eight (8) runs after five (5) innings of play shall be declared the winner and the game is complete.
- k. On deck batters will be placed to the back of the batter for safety purposes.
- l. The host team will be the home team during the first game of double header. The visiting team will be the home team for the second game.
- m. All teams are required to play ten (10) games in the league in order to advance to the qualifier/state/nationals. This is required as team winning percentages help determine league playoff seeding.
- n. Teams can move scheduled games to other nights to facilitate multiple team schedules. Any game schedule changes must be agreed upon between the two teams and changed on the website to reflect the change.
- o. Home team coaches are required to enter the final scores of their games within twenty-four (24) hours of the completion of the games. Visiting coaches may enter the scores as well.
- p. The following rules are specific to the 10-Under division:
 - i. Games shall be played on Tuesday nights in May adding Thursday nights in June.
 - ii. Teams are limited to five (5) runs per half inning.

- iii. If the batter was not out or part of the fifth run of the inning will be the first up to bat the following inning.
 - iv. Teams will play with an eleven (11) inch softball.
 - v. The pitching distance shall be 35 feet.
 - vi. In 10-Under C games a dropped third strike, the batter will be out whether the ball is caught, dropped, or missed. The batter will not be out on a foul ball.
 - q. The following rules are specific to the 12-Under division:
 - i. Games shall be played on Monday and Wednesday nights.
 - ii. The pitching distance shall be 40 feet.
 - iii. Teams are limited to five (5) runs per half inning. This applies to B and C teams only.
 - iv. If the batter was not out or part of the fifth run of the inning will be the first up to bat the following inning.
 - r. The following rules are specific to the 14-Under division:
 - i. Games shall be played on Tuesday and Thursday nights.
 - ii. The pitching distance shall be 43 feet.
 - iii. Players may wear steel cleats.
 - s. The following rules are specific to the 16-Under division:
 - i. Games shall be played on Monday and Wednesday nights.
 - ii. The pitching distance shall be 43 feet.
 - iii. Players may wear steel cleats.
2. Postponed Games.
- a. Teams needing to postpone a game shall notify the opponent at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the game. Umpires shall be notified by the host team.
 - b. The host team shall notify the opponent and the umpires as soon as possible if field conditions warrant a postponement. A fee may be charged if the call does not reach the umpire prior to the game start.
 - c. The home team coach may postpone the game for unplayable conditions until 4:00 PM. After the game begins the umpire shall decide if the field is playable.
 - d. The rescheduled game shall play a new game and not where the inning left off during the postponed game.
 - e. Postponed games shall be made up within a reasonable time. If an impasse develops, the League Director shall have the authority to set a game date and time. If a team cannot play the opponent at the rescheduled place and time, the winner shall be declared a winner by forfeit. In the event neither team can show up, the games will be listed as cancelled with no changes in the team's records.
3. No Shows.
- a. A team must contact their opponent by 4:00 PM on game day if they are not able to play. Failure to do so results in a "Forfeit due to no show." This will be recorded as a 7-0 win. Any team forfeiting three league night games will be ineligible to play in the league tournament.
4. Equipment
- a. All equipment shall meet the specifications as described in the USA Softball rulebook.
 - b. Each team will provide one "new" softball for the doubleheader.
 - c. ASA or USA Softball approved yellow optic, .47cor 375 lbs. softballs will be used for all games.

- d. All bats shall have the ASA or USA Softball stamp on them and are not on the ASA banned bat list or they will not be allowed for use in the games.
5. The team with the highest winning percentage will get a league championship plaque.
6. Minimum amount of league games participated in to advance to state.

ARTICLE XI – BIG WEST LEAGUE TOURNAMENT

1. The league shall conduct a league tournament (state qualifier) for each age and classification.
2. The format of the tournament will be double elimination.
3. Every effort will be made to complete the following games as these will eliminate teams from advancing to state tournament play. The league director will not reduce the time limits of these games.
 - a. The first two (2) rounds of the winner's bracket.
 - b. The first two (2) rounds of the loser's bracket.
4. The league tournament shall adhere to the following seeding.
 - a. The league record for all teams will be used to seed the teams using the cutoff dates listed on Appendix I.
 - b. In the event the host does not have enough fields, the site may get less teams. The league director will determine how to equitably divide the amounts of teams.
 - c. In the event there are more than 26 teams in an age/class, a second site may be used.
 - i. Tournaments will be divided with odd seeds going to one site, and even seeds going to the other site.
 - ii. In the event there is an odd number of teams one site shall get one extra team.
 - iii. In the event there is a third site needed, each site will get one third of the teams.
 - d. Associations outside of the league wishing to play in the league tournament may apply.
 - i. The league board of directors will review applications.
 - ii. The associations must provide a complete list of all games and scores participated in throughout the season. This will assist in appropriately seeding outside teams.
 - iii. Teams must pay the tournament entry fee of \$250, payable to the league with the application.
 - iv. The gate fee for outside teams will be payable to the league and is \$100 per team.
 - e. Seeding for the league tournament will be by the following:
 - i. Winning percentage.
 - ii. Runs allowed average.
 - iii. Average runs differential per game.
 - iv. Coin flip.
 - f. Once all teams have been seeded, the team names will be placed on a double elimination bracket.
 - g. The league tournament host may specify which field they want their team(s) to play on.
 - h. The schedule will come out the weekend before the start of the tournament. The seeding will be established at that point in time. Any league games occurring during the week prior to the tournament will not cause seeding changes.
5. The league will provide the following at the league tournament:
 - a. Umpires (at an agreed upon rate of \$60 to the umpire assignor).
 - b. Umpire-in-Chief (at an agreed upon rate of \$300 per day to the individual).

- c. New softballs.
 - d. Awards package for three (3) teams to include:
 - i. Championship plaques.
 - ii. Fifteen (15) medals per team.
6. The league tournament host shall provide the following:
 - a. A tournament director (at an agreed upon rate of \$300 per day to the individual).
 - b. A person in charge of selling any league apparel (at an agreed upon rate of \$100 per day to the individual).
 - c. Maintenance staff that will be able to drag, chalk, and water fields at a minimum of every other game.
 - d. The host site shall provide at least a minimal number of concessions for purchase by the teams to include food and drink.
 - e. The host site shall have indoor bathroom facilities or provide one (1) portable bathroom per ten (10) teams.
 7. League tournament games are timed at 70 minutes or seven (7) innings.
 8. No new inning may start after 70 minutes.
 9. The tiebreaker rule shall be used after seven (7) innings or in the top of the first new inning after time expires. The last batter out is placed on second base beginning the first inning after 70 minutes. Games shall be played until a winner is decided on the field of play.
 10. The home team shall be determined by coin toss.
 11. All 10-Under, 12-Under, 14-Under, "A", "B", and "C" will bat all players on their bench.
EXCEPTION: 14-Under, 16-Under, 18-Under "A" will have the option to bat nine (9), use the DP/Flex, or bat as many players as they want.
 12. Batting lineup must be expressed at the pre-game meeting and adhered to.
 13. The run ahead rule will be fifteen (15) runs after three (3) innings, twelve (12) runs after four (4), and eight (8) runs after five (5) innings.
 14. The runs allowed per inning rule will be used for the following age/class:
 - a. 10-Under all classes, five (5) runs are allowed per half inning.
 - b. 12-Under class B/C, five (5) runs are allowed per half inning.
 15. In 10-Under C games a dropped third strike, the batter will be out whether the ball is caught, dropped, or missed. The batter will not be out on a foul ball.
 16. In the event of delays due to inclement weather or extenuating circumstances:
 - a. The league director is empowered to shorten game times with communication from the tournament director to no less than 45 minutes with communication from the tournament director.
 - b. Games suspended after three (3) complete innings or two and a half (2 ½) innings if the home team is ahead, which are not tied, may be declared complete by the tournament director.
 - c. In the event a game is suspended, and the inning is not completed, the game will revert to the score of the last complete inning of play.
 - d. Every effort must be made to complete the tournament. However, if playing conditions are untenable, the league director is empowered to cancel the tournament with communication from the tournament director.

ARTICLE XII – STATE TOURNAMENT BERTHS

2. State tournament berths are based on the number of entries granted the league by the organizers of the state tournament.
3. Teams will be awarded state entries based on their finish in the league tournament.
4. All “A” classification teams will advance to the state tournament if the following criteria are met:
 - a. They participated in the league tournament.
 - b. And without issue.
5. “B” and “C” classification teams will advance to the state tournament if the following criteria are met:
 - a. They participated in the league tournament.
 - b. And without issue.
 - c. Won a minimum of one (1) game at the league tournament. A game won by forfeit will not count as one (1) win.
6. In the event the league tournament is cancelled the state tournament seeding procedure shall be:
 - a. If no tournament games could be completed, state tournament berths shall be awarded in order of regular season seeding. Seventy five percent (75%) of the teams will advance.
 - b. If some games are completed, state tournament berths shall be awarded in order of:
 - i. The teams remaining in the winner's bracket in order of their incoming seed number. For incomplete games, both teams are considered to still be in the winner's bracket.
 - ii. Teams still in the loser’s bracket in order of their incoming seed number. For incomplete games, both teams are considered to still be in the loser's bracket.
 - iii. Teams with two (2) losses and at least one (1) win in order of what round their second loss occurred followed by incoming seed number.

ARTICLE XIII – NATIONAL TOURNAMENT BERTHS

Each league tournament will award the top four (4) teams with national tournament berths.

1. In the event the league tournament is cancelled the national berths will be distributed by:
 - a. If no tournament games can be completed, national tournament berths shall be awarded in order of incoming seed number.
 - b. If some games are complete, national tournament berths shall be awarded in order of:
 - i. The teams remaining in the winner's bracket in order of their incoming seed number. For incomplete games, both teams are considered to still be in the winner's bracket.
 - ii. Teams still in the loser’s bracket in order of their incoming seed number. For incomplete games, both teams are considered to still be in the loser's bracket.
 - iii. Teams with two (2) losses and at least one (1) win in order of what round their second loss occurred followed by incoming seed number.

APPENDIX I

Annual Report

1. Dues shall be assessed member teams for the following services:

a. Rule and scorebook, sanction fees	\$75.00
b. League administration fee	\$35.00
c. League tournament fee	\$205.00
d. League trophies and awards	\$5.00
e. State tournament registration	\$250.00
f. Tournament facilities fees	\$100.00

Total per team **\$670.00**

2. \$100.00 per team facility fee will be given to the host association of league tournament by the league to cover the costs to host tournament.

APPENDIX II

Association Members of the League

612 Fastpitch (Minneapolis)	Delano	Rockford
Alexandria	Diamond Divas	Rocori
Andover	Edina	Rogers-Otsego
Annandale	Frights	St. Francis
Anoka-Ramsey	Eden Prairie	Sartell
Armstrong-Cooper	Elk River	St. Louis Park
Becker	Hopkins	St. Michael-Albertville
Belle Plaine	Jordan	Sauk Rapids
Big Lake	Le Sueur-Henderson	Shakopee
Bloomington	Mankato	Soderville (Blaine)
Brainerd	MN Twisters	Spring Lake Park
Brooklyn Park	MN Venom	Titans (Tri-City United)
Buffalo	Monticello	Tonka
Burnsville	New Prague	Waconia
Cambridge-Isanti	Orono	Waite Park
Champlin Park	Osseo-Maple Grove	Wayzata
Chanhassen	Princeton	Westonka (MN Chaos)
Chaska	Revolution (Rockford)	Zimmerman
Coon Rapids	Richfield	

APPENDIX III

League Key Dates

- January 23, 2023 League Bylaws/Rules Meeting, Medina Entertainment Center.
- April 1, 2023 Team Registration Deadline.
- April 10, 2023 League Coaches Meeting. Registration fees are due.
- May 1, 2023 12-Under league game start date and starts on the first Monday of May.
- May 2, 2023 10-Under league game start date and starts on the first Tuesday of May.
- May 3, 2023 8-Under league games start date and starts on the first Wednesday of May.
- May 23, 2023 14-Under league game start date and starts on the third Tuesday of May.
- June 5, 2023 High School league game start date and starts on the first Monday of June.
- June 16, 2023 Score reporting deadline 10-Under and 12-Under.
- June 23-25, 2023 10-Under State Qualifier Tournament.
- June 23-25, 2023 12-Under State Qualifier Tournament.
- July 7, 2023 Score reporting deadline for 14-Under, 16-Under, and 18-Under.
- July 14-16, 2023 14-Under State Qualifier Tournament.
- July 14-16, 2023 High School State Qualifier Tournament.
- July 22-23, 2023 High School State Qualifier Tournament.

Blackout Dates

Prior to setting any meeting dates the scheduler should refer to the dates below. Big West will not schedule meetings on the following dates:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Super Bowl
- NCAA Championship Basketball Game
- Tri County Meeting Nights
- Gold League Meeting Nights
- Easter (Wednesday through Sunday)

APPENDIX IV

Age/Eligibility Table

NOTE: If you turn 19 in 2023, you are eligible to play 18-Under Softball.

Any year prior	8U
2014 birth year	8U
2013 birth year	10U
2012 birth year	10U
2011 birth year	12U
2010 birth year	12U
2009 birth year	14U
2008 birth year	14U
2007 birth year	16U
2006 birth year	16U
2005 birth year	18U
2004 birth year	18U
2003 birth year	Not eligible

APPENDIX V

Sample League Tournament Schedule

Below is a sample league tournament schedule for 26 teams on 4 fields with a double elimination format.

Saturday	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4
8:00AM	1	2	3	4
9:30AM	5	6	7	8
11:00AM	9	10	11	12
12:30AM	13	14	15	16
2:00PM	17	18	19	20
3:30PM	21	22	23	24
5:00PM	25	26	27	28
6:30PM	29	30	31	32

Sunday	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4
8:00AM	33	34	35	36
9:30AM	37	38	39	40
11:00AM	41	42	43	44
12:30AM	45	46		
2:00PM	47	48		
3:30PM	49			
5:00PM	50			
6:30PM	51			