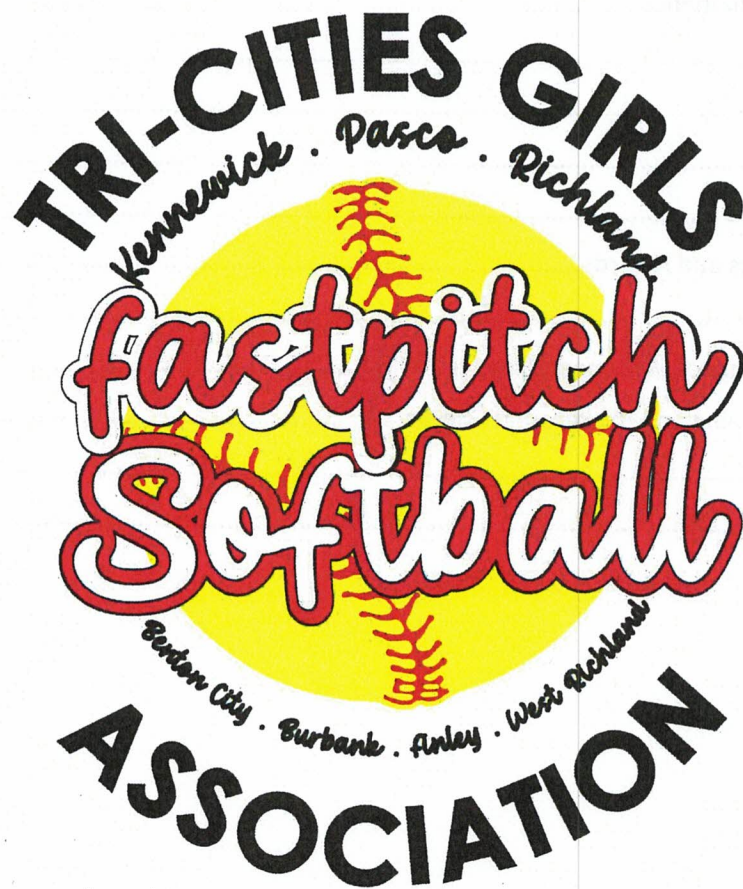


TRI-CITIES GIRLS FASTPITCH SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION



BY-LAWS

2025

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1.0 Player Registration

- A. A player is a registered member of the Tri-Cities Girls Fastpitch Softball Association (TCGFSA) when a completed registration has been submitted and paid via the Association's online system, and proof of age has been provided or is on record from previous TCGFSA membership. Membership extends from the date of submitted registration through the end of the fiscal year (August 31).
- B. TCGFSA requires each player and player's parent or guardian to sign a code of conduct form, a statement releasing TCGFSA from liability for any injuries in conjunction with TCGFSA activities, and a concussion form during the registration process.
- C. Requests for membership fee refunds must be submitted to the President prior to the player's league playing season. If a player is injured during the first half of the season, a partial refund may be granted, subject to Board discretion.

2.0 Team Assignment

- A. One of the TCGFSA's primary goals is to provide fundamental instruction and game experience to players. Players are assigned to age divisions based on the USA Softball Association Junior Olympic age qualifications. A player's age as of August 31st determines the youngest age classification the player is eligible to play each year.

Spring Playing Season 2025	
Age Classification	Birth Date Range
6 & Under (6U)	9/1/2017 – 8/31/2019
8 & Under (8U)	9/1/2015 – 8/31/2017
10 & Under (10U)	9/1/2013 – 8/31/2015
12 & Under (12U)	9/1/2011 – 8/31/2013
14 & Under (14U)	9/1/2009 – 8/31/2011
16 & Under (16U)	9/1/2007 – 8/31/2009
18 & Under (18U)	9/1/2005 – 8/31/2007

NOTE: Players new to TCGFSA must play in the age-appropriate age division.

- B. Teams are limited to 12-14 registered players; however, TCGFSA may adjust roster numbers as required to balance teams.

C. Players will not be assigned to a team until their registration has been completed. Rosters for each team assembled by the age-specific League Coordinator are determined by the following:

- a. CoachRequests – Players may request a coach they would like to play with. If there are too many requests for a specific coach, the following criteria will be used to assign players:
 - Player has played previously with requested coach.
 - Registration date.
 - Player attends the same school as most of the team.
 - Player has specific transportation hardships that may require carpooling with another player/family.
- b. Geographic location/school
- c. Sisters, or family members in the same household, that can play in the same age group will be placed on the same team, unless the parent requests different teams.

NOTE: When registering sisters or family members in the same household that need to be on the same team, indicate that information in the team request field during registration.

- d. Coaches will have their daughter(s) assigned to their teams unless a request is placed to have her on a different team.

D. USA Softball registered competitive/travel teams may register as a team to play in the league, with the following stipulations:

- a. They must play in the next older age division.
- b. do not receive awards for league play but are eligible to receive the sportsmanship award.
- c. do not participate in pre or post season tournaments
- d. are not issued uniforms or equipment and must provide game balls
- e. Coaches must turn in a signed roster and insurance documents prior to the first Association event
- f. must register individually in the Associations online system

NOTE: 14U teams are the last age group to be eligible to play in rec.

NOTE: First year, unestablished, or newly formed teams may seek an exemption to play in their age division. This will be subject to a vote by the Board.

E. Individual competitive players, whose team is not playing in the league, may register to play with TCGFSA. Team/Age division is at the discretion of the Board. Once a competitive player is registered in the Association, they may be used as a pick-up player in the same age division they are playing in.

NOTE: Competitive players who are pitchers may have a limit on the amount of innings they can pitch per game

NOTE: Competitive teams playing up in the next age division must follow all rules for that age group, to include pitching distance. 10U competitive teams will be allowed to use an 11-inch softball when playing 12U rec, but must pitch from the 12U distance, and must supply a game ball for each game.

- F. For the purpose of these by-laws, a competitive team is defined as:
 - a. A group of players who practice together outside of the dates established by the league
 - b. A group of players who have been hand chosen by the coach
 - c. A group of players who may or may not provide their own uniforms and equipment
 - d. A group of players who are registered and insured as a team by USA Softball
- G. If 3 or more competitive teams of the same age division would like to join the Association, they will become their own "upper level" division. For example, if 5 teams of 12U competitive teams join the league there would be an upper level 12U division. They would only play each other and be able to participate in a post season tournament.

3.0 Coaches/Team Support Staff

- A. Coaching requires a significant investment of time for supervising and running practices, pre-game warm-ups, and coaching games. Coaches must be willing and available for 90% of the time required for these activities and MUST:
 - a. Attend the pre-season coaches meeting.
 - If the head coach is unable to attend, they must send someone in their place.
 - b. Fill out, initial and sign the Application for Head Coach form.
 - c. READ and ABIDE by the by-laws. An "open book" exam will be given to demonstrate understanding of TCGFSA by-laws.
 - d. Be at least 18 years of age (and four years older than the oldest player on your team).
 - e. Be of good moral character.
 - f. Have a clean criminal record as indicated by the results of a background check using the *Tri-Cities Girls Fastpitch Softball Association Volunteer Waiver and Background Check Authorization Form* and USA Softball.
 - g. Pass the ACE Certification and Safe Sport training through USA Softball prior to beginning any TCGFSA affiliated coaching activities. This is a yearly USA Softball requirement intended to provide a basic level of coach training in softball fundamentals and the principles in positive coaching for youth sports.
 - h. Be responsible for player/parent conduct at all practices and games.
 - i. Assure all persons in contact with the players have completed and passed a background check.

NOTE: Any coach that allows an unapproved person to have access or contact with players during team practices, games or functions shall be suspended for a minimum of 1 game.

- B. Coaches new to the league will be paired up with an experienced coach for the first few practices.

Please see the Coach Application for a full list of all responsibilities. Coaches must re-apply each playing season. There may only be 1 person identified as the Head Coach. Requests to coach more than one team must be made to the League Coordinators and are decided at the discretion of the Board based on past coaching history, ages of teams requested, and need. The maximum number of teams that can be coached by a single individual is two.

NOTE: Approval or rejection of a coach is solely at the discretion of the Board.

- C. Assistant coaches may help the head coach at practices, pre-game warm-ups, and games after completing and submitting the *Tri-Cities Girls Fastpitch Softball Association Volunteer Waiver and Background Check Authorization Form*.
- D. Assistant Coaches must also:
- Be at least four years older than the oldest player on the team.
 - Be of good moral character.
 - Assistant coaches are NOT required to fill out a coach application.
 - Assistant coaches are subject to Board approval.

4.0 Uniforms and Equipment

- A. Recreational teams are issued shirts for each player and 2 Coaches. If a team has more than 2 coaches, additional shirts may be ordered, however the cost for these extra shirts will be the responsibility of the Head Coach.
- B. Shirts must not be modified by any type of cutting or the addition of names and must be worn during games.
- C. Any player that alters her uniform shall be suspended for a minimum of one game and shall bear the cost of purchasing a new shirt.
- D. Teams should coordinate socks and pants in an attempt to be uniformed in an identical manner.
- E. Shirts shall be tucked in.
- F. Jewelry of any kind (except Medical Alert ID) and sharp or inflexible hair restraints are not allowed to be worn by players during games.
- G. During inclement weather, a sweatshirt or jacket may be worn over the uniform.
- H. Equipment (bats, balls, catching gear, T's and face masks) are supplied by the Association. During the season, the Head Coach is responsible for keeping the equipment secure and in good repair. At the end of the season, equipment shall be turned into the Equipment Coordinator. Any Association supplied equipment that is suspected of being unsafe should be brought to the attention of the Equipment Coordinator for replacement.
- I. Batting helmets are available and will be provided if specifically requested by the Coach.
- J. Players may supply their own equipment if it is USA Softball compliant.
- K. All batters, on-deck batters, base runners, players that are coaching bases and team support staff under 18 must wear approved batting helmets when on the playing field.

- L. All batting helmets must have a USA Softball approved mask attached. The helmets for 6U through 10U must have a chin strap. 12U-18U teams don't require use of a chin strap.
- M. Catchers must wear complete catcher's gear (helmet with mask and throat protector, chest protector, shin guards) while catching during a game and, at a minimum, a catcher's mask or batting helmet must be worn when receiving pitches from a pitcher during relief warm-up.
- N. Cleats are required for 10U players and above. Metal cleats are allowed for 14U and up.
- O. Face masks are not a USA Softball requirement for pitchers, however, TCGFSA strongly encourages their use.

5.0 Practices and Schedules

- A. Teams are not allowed to practice prior to the date specified on the Association's Calendar of Events.
- B. Teams may get together up to 3 times per week, for practices and/or games. Additional practices may be held, but cannot be considered required, and failure to attend these additional practices can't count against players that do not attend. No disciplinary action should be taken against a player for non-attendance.
- C. A minimum of two coaches (or coach and parent helper; 18 or older) must be present at all practices and games and must have successfully passed a background check.
- D. If an unapproved person (no background check (Washington State Patrol background check) on file, or denied participation based on result) is discovered to be helping with practices, the coach of the team shall be called before the Grievance Committee (see Section 14) for disciplinary purposes.
- E. Practices are coordinated through the Scheduling Coordinator. The Association has fields available through the school districts that can be scheduled. If a team can get a field outside of what the league has available, they must notify the appropriate League Coordinator and Scheduling Coordinator as to where and when they are practicing.
- F. Schedules for all Association games are prepared by the Scheduling Coordinator. Coaches must provide written notification to the League Coordinator and Scheduler of dates when their team cannot play no later than one week after rosters have been issued. Coaches may request one day of the week they are unavailable to coach, and two additional dates.
- G. Once a team receives their game schedule, the coach shall set up practices for the remainder of the season. . A team must practice, at a minimum, once a week after games begin.
- H. In the event of inclement weather, games will be rescheduled as allowed by field availability. Weather delays and cancellations will be announced by 4:30 pm on the Association website and Facebook page. Coaches will be notified by the League Coordinator via phone call or text. Coaches are responsible for notifying their teams.

NOTE: If the heat index is forecasted to be 105 or greater (according to the OSHA/NIOSH Heat Safety Too App), games will be cancelled

- I. Once a game has started, the game Umpire and/or an onsite Board Member have the responsibility to delay or suspend the game.

- J. If more than half of the time has elapsed and the game is called due to weather, the game will not be rescheduled. The official score will revert to the last complete inning.

6.0 Association Playing Rules

- A. The Association determines the type of pre-season jamboree, regular season and post-season tournament for each age division. There is no guarantee of the number of games that will be played or what day(s) of the week games will take place.
- B. Games are played in accordance with the rules contained in the Official USA Softball rulebook with age division exceptions for 6U, 8U and 10U, as detailed in Sections 10, 11 and 12.
 - NOTE – Exceptions in Section 12, “10U League Rules” do not apply to “upper level” 10U teams.
- C. If a team arrives for a game and there are not at least seven (7) players at the scheduled start time, they must promptly notify their League Coordinator and coach of the other team. Their team automatically forfeits the game and a score of 7-0 will be recorded as the official score.
- D. The home team is the second team listed on the official schedule and will occupy the third base dugout. If a team is scheduled for a double header on the same field, they do not have to change dugouts.
- E. The home team is responsible for providing the official scorekeeper. Scorekeepers must include both the uniform number and name of each player on both teams in their scorebook. The Association will randomly check scorebooks to assure that only Association registered players are participating in the game.
- F. The scorekeepers from both teams should compare scores after each inning.
- G. The home team is responsible for providing the game ball and getting the game ball back at the end of the game.
- H. Each team is allowed warm up time prior to game time on the game field, if available. If the infield has been prepped (chalked/lined) for the game, no infield practice may take place.
- I. Coaches need to be ready to start the game at the appointed time. The game starts and ends with the umpire’s time.
- J. Teams playing late games shall warm up outside the park.
- K. Only players, coaches, approved assistant coaches, Board Members and umpires are allowed on the field at any time during warm-ups or during games.
- L. No new inning may start after 80 minutes have elapsed. There is no drop-dead time limit. See exceptions for 8U.
- M. When 80 minutes have elapsed and:
 - a. Visiting team is ahead, the home team gets a final at bat, regardless if they can’t come back and win. The game is over when the home team completes their turn.
 - b. Visiting team is batting AND behind, they get to finish their at bat. (See Exception in Section 8.0) If they do not take the lead, the home team does not get to bat. The game is over.

- c. Home team is batting AND ahead, the game will be called at the end of current batter's at bat.
 - d. Home team is batting AND comes from behind, the game ends when the winning run is scored.
- N. Regular season games may end in a tie.
- O. An inning is complete after three (3) outs, or five runs have been scored. No more than five (5) runs can be scored in a single inning per side. The 5-run rule may or may not apply during post season play. The next inning begins immediately after the third out or fifth run. See exceptions for 6U, 8U and 10U.
- P. There is a 15-run mercy rule after three (4) innings of play are complete.
- Q. Open substitution is allowed on defense, and an injured base runner may be substituted out for the player that made the last out after safely making it to first base.
- R. Each player must be scheduled to play a minimum of two defensive innings prior to the end of the 4th inning in each game. Failure to comply with the minimum play rule will result in forfeiture of the game. Exceptions to this mandatory play rule must be cleared in advance with the League Coordinator and/or Player Representative.
- S. The home team coach is responsible for reporting the final score to the League Coordinator within 24 hours.
- T. All team members present must bat in a pre-established order. Players who show up after a game has started must be added to the end of the batting order. Injuries or illness constitute justification for dropping a player from the batting rotation pending their ability to continue to play. An out will not be recorded for dropping an injured player.

7.0 Pick-Up Players

- A. During regular season play, a team may pick up other registered players (no more than 3 players) to fill their roster (not to exceed 10 players) provided there are 7 original team members playing. .
- B. If/When pick-up players are used, the coach must submit their game roster to the League Coordinator before the start of the game in which they are used.
- C. Pick-up players must bat at the bottom of the order, and preference for playing time must be given to original team players.
- D. Teams must select pick-up players from teams of the same or one lower age division.
- E. If a team wishes to pick up a player from two age divisions lower, the Player Rep will evaluate any safety concerns the age difference may represent.
- F. Coaches may request the help of any Board Member to help identify potential pick up players.
- G. Pick-up players must be currently registered to play with TCGFSA and have their coach's permission to play with the other team (coach permission is only required if that age group is still playing). A coach should approach the prospective player's coach for permission before the player may be approached. The pick-up player must be clearly identified on the roster..

- H. The League Coordinator (or Player Representative, if the League Coordinator is not available) must be notified before the first inning of a game in which pick-up players are used. Notification (call, voicemail, text or email) must include dates, circumstances, and the names of the pick-up players. Failure to do so will result in the forfeiture of that game.
- I. A pick-up player may not be used as a pitcher or catcher.

8.0 Post Season Tournament

- A. The format of the post season tournament shall be decided during the current season play and will depend on the number of teams playing, field availability and umpire availability.
- B. The format will be shared with coaches at least 10 days prior to the start of the tournament.
- C. Pick-up players may be used during post season play. Standard pick-up player rules apply (See Section 7.0) with the following additions:

NOTE: A maximum of 3 pick-up players may be used, not to exceed 12 players.

- D. Pick-up players can be from one lower age division or from a team that is not participating in the tournament.
- E. A roster must be turned in to the League Coordinator three (3) days prior to the first day of tournament play.
- F. Once the roster has been turned in, it is considered frozen, and no additional players may be added.
- G. The open inning will be an option if the following conditions are met:
 - a. Open inning must be called in the last 10 minutes of regulation play.
 - b. Open inning must be called at the top of the inning.
 - c. The open inning may only be called by the coach of the team that is behind. If the score is tied, either coach may call the open inning.
 - d. An open inning may only be called if the difference in score is 6 runs or less.
 - e. The coach calling the open inning must notify the umpire, opposing coach and official scorekeeper.
- H. If at the end of regulation play the score is tied, the International Tie Breaker Rule will go into effect.
 - a. At the start of each "extra" inning, a runner is placed on second base – the runner will be the last batter scheduled to bat in this inning. (e.g., if the number five batter is the leadoff batter, the number four batter in the batting order will be placed on second base). At least one full inning is played, allowing each team the same chance to score. If the score remains tied, the same process is used in each inning until a victor emerges.
 - b. During the International Tie Breaker, there will be no run limit in place.

9.0 Umpires

- A. Umpires for Association games must be USA Softball qualified and registered.

- B. Any umpire disputes must be addressed to the Umpire in Charge. If at any time during the game there are gross violations of any of the Association By-Laws, a TCGFSA representative has the authority to end the game. For scorekeeping purposes, the score will revert to the last correctly played inning.
- C. If no USA Softball umpire is available or doesn't show up for a game, the game may be played with a volunteer umpire approved by both coaches. The coach of the winning team must report the absence of a USA Softball umpire to their League Coordinator within twenty-four (24) hours.

10.0 6U League Rules

- A. General playing rules under Section 6, items A through G apply with the following special conditions:
 - a. League teams can play ten (10) players on the field; the tenth player is an outfielder playing along with the outfielders no closer than the edge of the grass.
 - b. Equal playtime is required for each player unless injured or ill.
 - c. During the 1st and 3rd inning, the visiting team will bat their first 5 batters. Teams will switch and home team will then bat their first 5 batters.
 - d. Innings 2 and 4 will consist of batters 6 through last player batting.
 - e. The last batter from each team in inning 4 may hit a "home-run" to finish things off.
 - f. The game is over after 4 innings, or both teams have batted each player 2 times, not to exceed 60 minutes.
 - g. Walks are not allowed.
 - h. Base runners are not allowed to steal or lead off.
 - i. At the end of a play, runners may not continue to advance during the throwback to the pitcher as it is being returned for the start of a new pitch.
 - j. The official game ball is a 10 inch softball
 - k. Batters will hit off a tee. There is no live pitching.
 - l. No more than 5 adult helpers (background check cleared) may be out in the field to help direct the game.

11.0 8U League Rules

General playing rules under Section 6, items A through G apply with the following special conditions:

- a. League teams can play ten (10) players on the field; the tenth player is an outfielder playing along with the outfielders no closer than the edge of the grass.
- b. Equal playtime is required for each player unless injured or ill.
- c. Games are 75 minutes. The game is over when time expires.
- d. An inning is complete after three outs, or three runs have been scored.
- e. Walks are not allowed.

- f. Base runners are not allowed to steal or lead off.
- g. At the end of a play, runners may not continue to advance during the throwback to the "pitcher" as it is being returned for the start of a new pitch.
- h. The USA Softball official pitching distance is 35 feet. The pitching machine shall be set up at the in-ground pitching rubber at 43 feet.
- i. Batters are afforded two pitched strikes with no attempt to bat the ball (these two pitches are not counted as strikes). These pitches are considered "warnings" and not strikes that count towards the players at bat. Any pitch that a batter swings at and misses is considered a strike and counts towards the players at bat. Therefore, three swings and misses that occur in total would be a strikeout.
- j. After receiving two warnings, the coach/umpire will warn the batter that the next and succeeding strikes will be counted if the batter makes no attempt to swing and will result in being called out if failing to attempt to bat the ball.
- k. An out must be assessed when a batter swings and misses or refuses to swing at the third strike pitched.
- l. Bunting the ball is not allowed.
- m. The coach-pitcher must step out of the way of any ball 'in play'. The ball is dead if the coach-pitcher interferes with a defensive play or is hit by the ball (runners are not allowed to advance). The batter shall get a "do-over". The count will remain as it was prior to the hit.
- n. Coach pitcher must be at least 4 years older than the age division they are playing in.
- o. Anyone under 18 who is a base coach or helping shag balls behind the catcher, must wear a helmet with a face mask.
- p. A player-pitcher (or defensive player at pitcher position) must always play within the 8' radius of the pitching rubber (next to, or slightly in front and to the side of, the coach-pitcher when on the field).
- q. The Infield Fly rule and the Dropped Third Strike rule are not applicable.
- r. Win/Loss records are not maintained by the Association.
- s. The home team shall be required to supply an umpire, an adult of at least 18 years of age, for each game. The visiting team will be requested to volunteer an umpire. One umpire will be in the field and the other will be at home plate. It is the coach's responsibility to assure that all volunteer umpires have a cleared background check on file with the Association.
- t. Runners may advance, at their own risk, one base on an overthrow. Runners may not attempt to advance another base on subsequent overthrows.
- u. A coach or support staff shall stand behind the umpire to retrieve passed balls.
- v. When a batter hits the ball to the outfield, they may, at their own risk, go to 2nd base. Batters are not limited to only singles.

12.0 10U League Rules

- A. General playing rules under Section 6 apply with the following special conditions:

- a. Teams can play ten (10) players; the tenth player is an outfielder playing along with the outfielders no closer than the edge of the grass.
- b. Game pitching distance is 35 feet.
- c. An inning is complete after three outs, or 3 runs have been scored.

NOTE: No more than 3 runs can be scored in a single at bat.

- d. Bunting is not allowed during the time the coach or assistant coach is pitching.
- e. Base runners are not allowed to steal.
- f. The official game ball is an 11-inch softball.
- g. Base runners may lead off a base. Lead offs should be for instructional purposes only and should not be more than 3-5 steps off the base.
- h. A base runner is not allowed to leave the base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. If a runner leaves a base early, the ball is declared dead, and the offending runner must be declared out.
- i. On a lead off, the base runner must return to the base as quickly as possible once the ball has been returned to the pitcher.
- j. The Infield Fly rule and the Dropped Third Strike rule are not applicable.
- k. The batter shall be awarded first base if hit by a pitch by a player pitched ball.
- l. A pitched ball that rolls and hits the batter's foot or bounces prior to hitting the batter is NOT considered being "hit by a pitch".
- m. The batter must try to avoid being hit by the ball.
- n. Batter's who are legitimately "hit" by a pitch, must take first base. The batter doesn't get to choose whether to stay and hit.
- o. After the count has reached ball four, the batter's coach or assistant coach shall deliver the remaining pitches as follows:
 - i. The coach or assistant coach shall pitch from the pitching rubber.
 - ii. The umpire must continue the strike count until the batter is out or puts the ball in play. There shall be no walks.
- p. Runners may advance, at their own risk, one base on an overthrow. Base runners may attempt one base on each subsequent overthrow. The play is over when the pitcher has the ball and is in the pitching circle.
- q. A coach or support staff shall stand behind the umpire to retrieve passed balls to assist with wild pitches and passed balls. It is prohibited for any coach or assistant coach to actively coach his/her team while behind the plate.

13.0 League Standings and Awards

- A. The League Coordinator keeps the official win-loss records for their Leagues (10U – 18U).

NOTE: A loss against competitive teams will not count towards league standings.

- B. The following criteria is applied to determine a tied team's place in their League for purposes of League standings and playoff position in the following order:
- Point total (2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, 0 points for a loss)
 - Win-loss record against each other (head-to-head).
 - Runs scored minus runs allowed in League play.
 - For teams that have not played the same number of League games, season standings will be based on winning percentage (Winning percentage is defined as the total number of League wins divided by the total number of League games played).
- C. Awards are given to teams following post-season tournament play in each division of each league, except 6U and 8U.

Post-season tournament awards are defined below:

Number of Teams	Number of Place Awards
3 or less	First Place
4 –6	First and Second Place
7 or more	First, Second, Third and Fourth Place

EXCEPTION: If there are three or less teams participating or the teams in a division do not want a post-season league tournament, the Board has the option of not having a post-season tournament.

D. Sportsmanship Awards:

- If there are three (3) or more teams in a division during season play, individual sportsmanship awards are given to one team at, or near, the end of season play.
- Voting process for this award:
- The League Coordinator conducts a poll of the teams in each division to determine first, second, and third choices for the award.
- A team may not vote for themselves.
- The votes receive a numerical value of points with the first choice receiving 3 points, second choice receiving 2 points, and third choice receiving 1 point.
- The award is given to the team with the highest number of points.
- In the event of a tie, the applicable League Coordinator determines the winner.

EXCEPTION: If teams/coaches do not submit the requested information in a timely manner and not enough other votes exist to establish a winner, the League Coordinator may determine the winner.

E. College Scholarship Awards

- a. The President appointed Scholarship Committee must not have a member that currently has a high school senior in their family who has applied for a scholarship.
- b. The Scholarship Committee provides recommendations on granting awards to high school seniors, including the number and maximum amount for awards.
- c. All scholarship applicants must meet the following minimum qualifications:
 - i. Must be a high school senior
 - ii. Must have been or currently be a member of the Association.
 - iii. Played for at least two full seasons on one of the Association's teams, with one or more years in the Association between the summer prior to their freshman year and the fall of their senior year of high school.
- d. Awarding scholarship amounts will be contingent on the number of applicants, not to exceed Board approved maximum per each award. Each area is rated 1-10 with 10 being highest.
- e. Scholarship criteria include:
 - i. Academic performance
 - ii. Athletic achievement
 - iii. Community service
- f. Determined by a majority vote of the Scholarship Committee members and approval of the Association President.
- g. Review of applicants will be conducted through a "blind" process in which the reviewers do not know the identity of the applicants.

F. Financial Aid

- a. TCGFSA provides a limited number of scholarships for registration fees to children, who without financial assistance would be unable to participate in TCGFSA activities. Families, who find themselves in situations where the cost of registration is a burden to their budget, may apply for a scholarship for the child(ren)/grandchild(ren) in the household. An application will need to be filled out and submitted to the President for consideration. A full or partial scholarship may be awarded, on a case-by-case basis.

TCGFSA Board Members may receive a waiver for their child's (children) or grandchild's (grandchildren) registration fee for Spring/Summer season based on attendance of monthly board meetings (75%) and fulfillment of position duties (75%) as determined by the President and Vice President.

13.0 Game Protests

- A. During regular season play, coaches or assistant coaches must settle disputes with umpires within two (2) minutes. If an agreement can't be made a coach must notify an umpire immediately that they intend to protest.

- B. Protests must be limited to rule interpretations; decisions involving umpire judgment cannot be disputed.
- C. A protested game must be so stated at the time of the dispute and noted in the official score book by the official scorekeeper before play is resumed.
- D. Protests must be submitted in writing to the appropriate League Coordinator in writing within 24-hours.
- E. The appropriate League Coordinator and members of the Grievance committee must determine whether to uphold, reject, or modify the decision being protested and the decision made by the committee is final.

14.0 Discipline, Grievances, & Appeals (see Figure 1)

- A. Player Responsibilities:
 - a. A player must participate in all the games, practices, and activities of the assigned team.
 - b. A player must keep their uniform in good, (no modifications allowed), clean condition and take reasonable care of all equipment provided by the Association.
 - c. Players must be respectful to coaches, umpires, Board Members and other players. Assault type actions, taunting, baiting, disruptive criticism, cyberbullying or disrespectful words or actions will not be tolerated. Offending players will be subject to disciplinary action by the Board.
- B. A player who misses three (3) consecutive practices and/or games without justification may be suspended from the Association by the Player Representative.
 - a. The coach of the team, of which the player is a member, must contact the player/player parent in writing.
 - b. If there is no response from the player/player parent, the player may be suspended for the duration of league play without refund.
- C. Players may be benched during a game for violation of any of the above rules.
 - a. Players that have been benched on more than two separate occasions during games for violations under this Article may be brought before the Board, with their parent or guardian, for review of the situations and possible corrective action.
 - b. This action may include suspension from the Association.
- D. Coaches who bench a player for disciplinary reasons must complete a written statement about the incident and give it to their League Coordinator within three (3) days.
 - a. The written statement must contain the benched player's name, address and phone number.
 - b. The League Coordinator must give the statement to the Player Representative.
 - c. If either is personally involved with the player, the statement must go the Vice-President.
- E. Coach Responsibilities

- a. Coaches must abide by the Coaching Responsibilities as outlined on the Application for Head Coach.
- F. The Board has the authority to suspend any Association player (or their parent/guardian), coach or assistant coach after affording an opportunity to be heard, for conducting any improper actions including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Competing under an assumed name.
 - b. Being determined by the Board to be guilty of extreme unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - c. Playing on another team in an Association-scheduled game without prior authorization from the player's assigned coach.
 - d. Allowing players who are not members of the Association to participate in League games or activities.
 - e. Failing to adhere to Association rules contained in the Association's Constitution, By-Laws, Coaching Responsibilities, or vote of the Board.
 - f. Exerting, or attempting to exert, improper influence upon the player registration process, player assignment, team member, or Board Member. Improper influence may include, but is not limited to, any contact, either directly or indirectly, with any other member of the Association that is intended to circumvent or subvert the normal processes of Association business as authorized and intended in the Constitution or By-Laws.
- G. The President and/or Vice President has the authority to call before the Board any player (or their parent/guardian), coach, assistant coach or other team personnel, including Board Members, whose conduct is considered detrimental to the best interest of the Association.
 - a. The purpose must be for correcting, reprimanding, or suspending said person(s) from participation in Association activities.
 - b. A Grievance Committee will be formed to review the conduct and suggest an action to the Board. The Grievance Committee shall consist of 3 Board Members with at least one Executive Board Member.
 - c. Any action taken by the Board may be appealed in accordance with Appeals Section
- H. Grievances
 - a. A Player and/or their parent or guardian may grieve matters involving player - coach or player - assistant coach relations.

EXCEPTION: The following matters cannot be grieved:

 - i. The position(s) a player is assigned to play
 - ii. A player's position in the batting order
 - iii. The number of innings played unless the player is not scheduled to play at least two innings per game
 - iv. The specific innings being played
 - b. A written grievance must be submitted to any Board Member that explains the problem and persons involved.

- c. The Board Member must notify the President and the Player Representative and submit the written statement to the President.
- d. The Player Representative must investigate the matter with all persons involved and mediate the situation within five (5) days from receipt of the appeal.
- e. The Player Representative must submit a written statement detailing the situation, the findings from the investigation and the results of the mediation efforts to the Board.
- f. If the Player Representative is unsuccessful in mediation efforts, the Grievance Committee must attempt to mediate the situation. If mediation efforts are still unsuccessful after five days, the persons involved must meet with the Grievance Committee where they may present information regarding the situation.
- g. If the matter still cannot be resolved, the persons involved may proceed with an Appeal.
- h. All written material must be submitted to the Secretary to be held in the permanent records.

I. Appeals

- a. A member of the Association may appeal, during the playing year, any decision made by the Board.
- b. The Association member must submit, in writing, the basis for the appeal to the President of the Association who will then bring it to the board for a vote. The written appeal must be presented to the President that details the original situation presented before the Grievance Committee, the Grievance Committee's decision, and the reasons that the Grievance Committee's decision would adversely affect the member's well-being or ability to participate in activities of the Association.
- c. Prior to the vote, the Association member will have an opportunity to address the board.

EXCEPTION: Findings or arrests as a criminal suspect cannot be appealed.

- d. The President must convene the Executive Committee within five (5) days of appeal receipt either in person, or via email as necessary.
- e. The President must, with the concurrence of the Grievance Committee, prepare a written statement that details the situation before the Executive Committee, the Association rules involved, the options available to the Executive Committee and possible consequences of each option, the decision made by the Grievance Committee and the intent behind the decision.
- f. The Executive Committee must make a recommendation whether to uphold, reject or modify the decision being appealed.
- g. The Executive Committee must prepare a written statement of their findings, with justification for them, for presentation at the next Association Board meeting.
- h. The decision of the Board is final and binding.
- i. Once an appeal has reached a conclusion; all written materials must be turned over to the Secretary to be held in the permanent records.

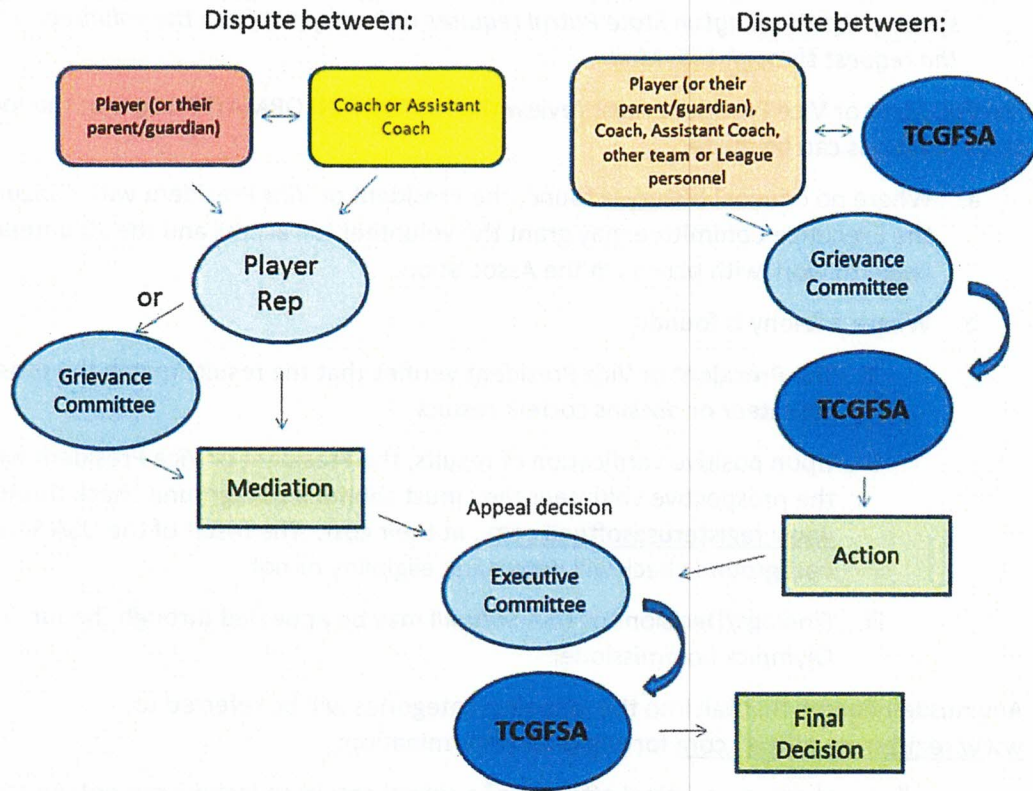


FIGURE 1. Schematic of Discipline, Grievance, and Appeal Process

15.0 Volunteer Screening and Background Checks

A. Overview

- The Association recognizes the overall priority of providing a safe environment for all our players and seeks to involve those adults who can contribute positively to our program.
- The Association has a practice of screening all volunteers who are working directly or indirectly with our players. This is most often done through the Washington Access to Criminal History (WATCH) background check system through the Washington State Patrol (WSP) but may also include reference checks or other screening procedures.
- WATCH is Standard Practice. Screening volunteers through WATCH is a standard practice with many agencies and organizations that serve children, youth and vulnerable adult populations in Washington State. Other states have similar systems. The WATCH is a minimal, online screening procedure that looks at crimes against persons within the State of Washington. For more information about WATCH, please visit the WATCH website at <https://watch.wsp.wa.gov/>

- Board Members, coaches, and team support personnel must complete and sign the *Tri-Cities Girls Fastpitch Softball Association Volunteer Waiver and Background Check Authorization Form*. The full name, date of birth and sex of the prospective volunteer are required.

NOTE: In rare cases when a person's name matches too many results in the WATCH system, the Washington State Patrol requires a thumbprint from the volunteer and sends the request through U.S. Mail.

- C. The President or Vice President must review the HISTORY INFORMATION so that the following determinations can be made:
- a. Where no criminal history is found, the President or Vice President with concurrence of the Executive Committee may grant the volunteer full access and the volunteer may begin to work with players in the Association.
 - b. Where a felony is found:
 - i. The President or Vice President verifies that the results match the prospective volunteer or obtains correct results
 - ii. Upon positive verification of results, the President or Vice President will notify the prospective volunteer they must submit a background check through www.registerusasoftball.com, at their cost. The result of the USA Softball background check will determine eligibility or not.
 - iii. Findings/Decisions of USA Softball may be appealed through the Junior Olympics Commissioner
- D. Any misdemeanors that fall into the following categories will be referred to www.registerusasoftball.com for eligibility determination:
- a. All sexual crimes, criminal offenses of a sexual nature to include but not limited to, rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, prostitution, indecent exposure, public indecency, and any sex offender registrant.
 - b. Any drug related offenses.
 - c. Harm to a minor or vulnerable person, including, but not limited to, offenses such as child abandonment, child endangerment/neglect/abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and DUI with a minor.
 - d. Violence against a person, force, or threat of force (including crimes involving deadly weapons and domestic violence).
 - e. Stalking, harassment, blackmail, violation of a protection order, and/or threats.
 - f. Destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief.
 - g. Animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect.

NOTE: If a background check is performed and reveals a conviction of any of the aforementioned offenses, then the application shall be reviewed by a member of the National Background Check Committee (or such person's designee) for a determination of eligibility. A denial of eligibility may be appealed by the applicant to the entire National Background Check Committee. In addition, if the background check reveals that the applicant is listed on a sex offender registry, then the applicant shall be ineligible for participation in USA Softball programs.

NOTE: Specific information about the criminal history, such as timing, cause and effect, multiple offenses, progress since the crime, etc. may affect the decision process.

- h. The President or Vice President in concurrence with the Executive Committee prepares a recommendation under the above guidelines and from any history with the Association involving discipline, grievances, and appeals.
- i. Notwithstanding the above provisions, in the event that a person has been convicted of any of the crimes listed previously, and this conviction was entered more than seven (7) years before the beginning of the current season (specified as league practice starts in the official annual calendar), the Board may utilize its discretion whether to disqualify that person.
- j. The President or Vice President submits the recommendation to the full Board in closed session for resolution.
- k. A copy of the *Tri-Cities Girls Fastpitch Softball Association Volunteer Waiver and Background Check Authorization Form* and results shall be kept in a confidential file maintained by the President or Vice President.

NOTE: Failure to disclose criminal history upfront may be considered negligent or an intentional effort to conceal information.

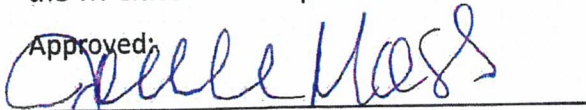
16.0 Amendments

- A. Amendments to these By-Laws may be made at any meeting of the Board, providing that seven (7) days' notice of an impending amendment proposal has been made known to all Board Members.
- B. An amendment must be validated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of the Board Members.
- C. A quorum, for the purposes of amending the By-Laws consists of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board but must include the President or Vice President and two other Officers.

17.0 Effective Date

These By-Laws become effective upon approval by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors of the Tri-Cities Girls Fastpitch Softball Association.

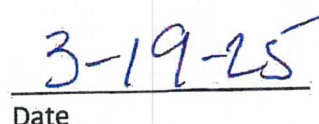
Approved:



Joelle Moss

President

Tri-Cities Girls Fastpitch Softball Association



Date