

Stillwater Area Fastpitch Association (SAFA)

OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Section A - Purpose:

The Stillwater Area Fastpitch Association (SAFA - commonly referred to as Stillwater Fastpitch) was established in 1984 to promote the development of a quality, competitive level of girl's fastpitch softball in the St. Croix Valley Area. This program is committed to the development of potential Stillwater Area High School softball players.

Section B - Authority:

The authority to establish this policy is provided by Section C – Governance and Operation of the SAFA Bylaws.

Section C – Levels of play defined:

- 1) SAFA offers two levels of play:
 - a) Competitive Spring/Summer Fastpitch Softball League
 - b) Developmental Fall Fastpitch Softball League
- 2) Reference the SAFA Bylaws Section E – Levels of Play for details.

Section D - Registration Meeting and Parent Handouts:

Parents are invited to the organization informational meetings held before registration opens. Age Level Coordinators provide information to parents about programs and expectations.

The following documents are all published online at www.stillwaterfastpitch.com under Parents Corner

8U Parent Letter

10U Parent Letter

12U Parent Letter

14U Parent Letter

Programs at each level defined

Opportunities for Development

Players must be properly registered, fees paid or arrangements made, and in good standing with SAFA to be eligible for tryouts and placement on an SAFA roster. Late registrations and/or fee payments (after the formal registration dates) are subject to roster availability and will be assigned to teams at the discretion of the Executive Board.

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Section E – Tryout Requirement:

To be eligible for selection with the exception of in house club teams, all players registering for 8u, 10u and 12u SAFA must live or attend schools within Independent School District #834 boundaries. Extenuating and unusual circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the SAFA Executive Board.

All players must participate in tryout/evaluation procedures as determined by the appropriate Age Level Coordinator and approved by the SAFA Executive Board.

Section F – Tryout Procedure Guidelines 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U, and 18U :

Individual tryouts for 10U through 18U, shall be conducted to evaluate players' overall ability. The tryout process will consist of hitting, bunting, infield, and outfield stations on a rotating basis during the evaluation process. Evaluators will also rotate through each station in order to evaluate all players at all stations using a point rating system.

Pitching tryouts will be held separately on a date designated by each Age Level Coordinator.

Age Level Coordinators are responsible for following tryout procedures and guidelines established by the Association and approved by the Executive Board. Deviations from procedures and guidelines must be signed off prior to the start of the tryout process.

Competitive coaching candidates selected prior to the tryout process will be invited to observe all or part of the tryout process for the age group they have been selected to coach. The coaching candidate shall not contribute nor attempt to influence scoring decisions of the independent evaluators.

Tryout scores are the property of SAFA and shall be kept private and in confidence. Anyone who is given access to tryout scores is responsible to maintain this confidence. Violation of this confidence may result in disciplinary action up to expulsion from the SAFA program.

All questions regarding Tryout Procedure Guidelines should be directed to the Age Level Coordinator.

Evaluation

Hitting & Bunting

Each girl will have five opportunities to bunt and eight opportunities to swing away. The girls will be told that they are to bunt and swing away at strikes only. A swing or bunt attempt at a ball outside of the strike zone is counted. Failure to swing at or to attempt a bunt at a ball in the strike zone is considered a missed opportunity.

Infield, Catching & Throwing

Each girl will be judged on her ability to field ground balls at both shortstop and 3rd base. They will be given 4-5 opportunities at each position, with some being hit to the left and right sides of them. We want the girls to be pushed a little here so that you can see their range. If a ball is deemed to be uncatchable, the crew hitting the grounders to deliver another. Evaluators will be asked to judge the girls

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both on their catch and their throws to first base a part of the infield score. Evaluators will also be asked to score the player on first base on her ability to catch the ball. Girls will be instructed that they are not playing 1st base and are not to keep one foot on the base.

Fly-balls

At the fly ball station, the girls will be asked to start at one of the four cones. Evaluators will be asked to judge their ability to move to a fly ball in front of them, behind them, to the left and to the right of them. They will do this by rotating through the order once. Evaluators will be asked to judge the girl's ability to break to and track the ball. The throw to the cut off person is to be considered a part of the evaluation.

General

Evaluators will be asked to score the girls in each category by placing a circle around the numbers 1-10.

With 1 being poor, 3 being below average, 5 being average, 7 being above average and 10 excellent.

We try to group the girls so that there is a wide spectrum of talent in each group. **We encourage Evaluators to use all of the numbers to help us in the evaluation process.** Evaluators are asked to use whole numbers only. No fractions. If an Evaluator feels at any time that they need to see a player get a couple of reps in order to judge her fairly, please ask the people running the station to give her more. There will be 3 rotations. We will try to maintain consistency throughout a complete rotation. If an Evaluator feels that something needs to be adjusted, please inform one of the people running the stations and we can make some minor adjustments for the next rotation.

Tryout Stations -

Rotation will be REST, Fly Balls, Infield, & Hitting

Hitting Station –

Pitch speeds: Varied each round from 35 - 65+ mph depending on age level

Call a ball if the hitter lies off the pitch, say nothing if it is a strike.

Reset the pitch height if machine is not pitching to the players strike zone

5 bunts & 8 hits (bunts first)

In Field Station –

Rotate players so the same person is not catching for the same thrower.

Split Girls by odd & even send half to 1st to catch and half to third to field.

Fly Balls –

One person needs to make sure the players rotate through the cones correctly

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Left, Right, Back, and Front

We need to make sure the distance from the center of the place the ball lands is equal.

Each rotation distance of cones increases to challenge the players

12U through 18U Pitching Format

12U through 18U Pitching Initial Tryout Format

- 1) 50 total pitches will be thrown within a 15-minute period. You may use as much of your 15-minute time allotment as needed.
- 2) Pitchers will be directed to throw 20 pitches in a sequence of 5 inside, 5 outside, 5 high, and 5 low.
- 3) Then they will be directed to throw 20 pitches in the sequence of change up, fastball, change up, fastball, and change up. Two series each of 5 inside and then 5 outside for a total of 20 pitches. You should practice this sequence of pitches before the tryouts.
- 4) You should practice the two sequences of pitches described above before the tryouts. The two sequences above are mandatory.
- 5) Finally, they will have the option to throw 10 more pitches of their choice, for example: fast ball, change-up, rise, drop, curve, other, after announcing each pitch.
- 6) You will throw to a catcher who may or may not be wearing catcher's equipment.
- 7) There will be a batter in the batter's box, and you will throw to a catcher who may or may not be wearing catcher's equipment. The batter will not swing the bat.

There will be multiple evaluators. None of them may have daughters at the 12U level. Evaluation scores are not revealed to anyone outside the team selection committee.

10U Pitching Initial Tryout Format

- 1) 25 total pitches will be thrown within a 15-minute period. You may use as much of your 15-minute time allotment as needed.
- 2) Pitchers will be directed to throw 20 pitches in a sequence of inside, outside, high, low fastballs

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- 3) You should practice the sequence of pitches described above before the tryouts..
- 4) Finally, they will have the option to throw 5 more pitches of their choice, for example: fast ball, change-up, other, after announcing each pitch.
- 5) You will throw to a catcher who may or may not be wearing catcher's equipment.

There will be multiple evaluators. None of them may have daughters at the 10U level. Evaluation scores are not revealed to anyone outside the team selection committee.

8U Evaluations

- 1) 8U team(s) shall be selected by the selection committee. This committee shall be assigned by the Executive Board, and may consist of the Varsity Head coach and his/her staff, Age Level Coordinators, Head Coach and/or coaching candidates, Association President, and/or others deemed qualified by the Board. Any exceptions to the above are subject to approval from the Executive Board
- 2) The goal of the 8U evaluation process is to ensure player safety and that players are placed at the right level and appropriate tier of play. 8U Evaluation Procedure Guidelines, including stations/drills, will be put forth by the level coordinator and the executive board.
- 3) If a player wishes to play in an older classification (e.g., an 8-year-old would like to play 10U), the player must complete a full tryout at both their actual and desired age levels.

Whether a player qualifies to play at the next level up will be determined pursuant to the following:

- a) There is a need for players at the 10u level due to the number of girls registered;
- b) Allowing the player to “play up” will not result in any player in the higher age group to be cut;
- c) When there is a need to move 8u players up, they will be **asked based on their evaluation scores.** Players scoring the highest will be asked first; and
- d) The Executive Board feels there would not be a safety risk by moving the player up.

Section G – Selection of Teams:

A. Individual player selection **may** involve a four-step process as defined below.

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- 1) The first step will be an evaluation of the player's basic skills by knowledgeable evaluators in a tryout format. Evaluators shall not evaluate an age group in which they have a child participating. A specific rating system based on evaluation points will be implemented, and players will receive preliminary team assignments based on total points scored during these evaluations, as tabulated by a committee selected prior to tryouts which includes a neutral Executive Board member. All scores will be held and tallied after the completion of tryouts. The committee should be no less than 4 people participating in the data evaluation and team selections **by reviewing all scores from tablets together**
- 2) The second step may be further evaluation of the players by the coaches in their own age group done through combined team practice sessions and/or scrimmages.
- 3) The third step may involve evaluation of previous year's coaches and if necessary consultation to provide further input.
- 4) The fourth step may involve the coaches at each level finalizing their team. If a disagreement occurs in the placement of a player, the decision will be made by an arbitration panel consisting of one coach from each of the other age groups. Included in this group would be a consultant coach from the individual's previous year's team.

Exceptions:

Players who cannot participate in designated tryout procedures due to injury or family obligation will be placed based on:

- A) Tryout rankings from the previous year, provided scores from the previous year are available.
- B) Input from previous year's coaching staff.
- C) Input from current coaching staff and current/past Coordinators
- D) Participate in bubble scrimmage if available
- E) Extenuating and unusual circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

All players will be notified of their team placement at the same time by an online website notice, followed by an email blast announcing teams. Any player not placed on a team will be personally notified by the Age Level Coordinator prior to the posting of teams.

Pitchers:

B. Pitcher selection and placement may involve a four-step process as defined below.

- 1) The first step will be an evaluation of the Pitchers basic skills by knowledgeable evaluators in a tryout format. Evaluators shall not evaluate an age group in which they have a child participating. A specific rating system based on evaluation points will be implemented, and players will receive preliminary team assignments based on total points scored during these evaluations, as tabulated by a committee selected prior to tryouts which includes a neutral Executive Board member.

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- 2) The second step will be a further evaluation of the pitchers by the coaches in their own age group done through combined team practice sessions and/or scrimmages.
- 3) The third step will involve consultation with the previous year's coaches to provide further input.
- 4) The fourth step will involve the coaches at each level finalizing their team. If a disagreement occurs in the placement of a pitcher, the decision will be made by an arbitration panel consisting of one coach from each of the other age groups. Included in this group would be a consultant coach from the individual's previous year's team.

C. Parents may request their player's final tryout score which will include the score of the player above and below. No other player names are to be included. Player ranking is also not available to parents.

Section H – League Selection and tournament selection – Refer to Parent Letter

Section I - Youth Scholarships:

SAFA has elected to defer all requests for financial assistance through the Youth Advantage program. Youth Advantages processes and criteria are acceptable to SAFA. With Board approval, additional assistance may be allocated on a case by case basis.

Section J - Volunteer Buyout:

Adopted in 2011, all registered families will be asked to pay a fee for opting out of volunteering. The volunteer opportunities offered vary per season and all families opting out of paying are required to volunteer within the season their player participates. The fee for this buyout is to be determined each year. Any family that opts out of the buyout but does not fulfill any volunteer hours can pay the fee at the season end. Families who opt out and do not pay will not be allowed to register for the next summer program until resolved with the Association's President. Buy out checks are due for all registered players prior to tryouts.

Section K – Non-Parent Coaching and Clinician Compensation:

A. The Association may, with Board approval, compensate a non-parent coach at any level of play in any incremental amount discussed and approved by the SAFA Board for any softball season including Fall, Winter and Summer training, League and Tournament play. The expense will be divided equally among the parents of the team's roster. The Association may, with Board approval, compensate A non-parent Assistant Coach at any level of play in any incremental amount discussed and approved by the SAFA Board for any softball season, including Fall, Winter and Summer training, League and Tournament play. The expense will be divided equally among parents of the team roster.

B. Clinicians – All offerings and Clinician costs must be presented to the Board for review and approval. All Clinician Instructors receiving compensation must have their fees and payment approved by the Board prior to the clinic start.

Section L - Trading pins:

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SAFA's executive board will authorize the order of trading pins on an as needed basis for the Association players. All players attending an in state or out of state national shall receive 6 pins per season for a national tournament. Additional pins will be available for purchase from the Association.

Section H - Multi Player Discountstake out register at the same time****

This policy was introduced in 2010 and adopted and voted in for the 2011 summer season. The multi-player discount gives a family discount for families with more than one child in the SAFA program. The discount is as follows

1 player – no discount

2 players – 12%

3 players 24%

In order for the discount to be applied, all players must be registered online at the same time for the system to recognize the family.