



STMA Girls Fastpitch Association Policies

Version Control

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STMA Girls Fastpitch Association at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts of the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice.

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Introduction

This document is the set of policies and procedures used by the St. Michael-Albertville Girls Fastpitch Association (STMA GFA) for In-house and travel softball.

Dates on the front page show the revision history of this document.

This document is considered a “living” document and the STMA GFA welcomes any comments or suggestions. Comments can be mailed to:

STMA Girls Fastpitch Association
PO Box 297
St. Michael MN 55376

Disclaimer

While every effort is made to keep the contents of this document current, STMA GFA reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate any of the policies, procedures, and/or benefits if the STMA GFA Board determines it is in the best interest of the program to do so.

Mission

The mission of the St. Michael-Albertville Girls Fastpitch Association is to provide a program for St. Michael-Albertville area girls to learn softball skills, build self-confidence, and enjoy the benefits of being on a team while having fun!

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors governs the STMA GFA. The Board is responsible for maintaining the overall policy and direction of the STMA GFA. Nominations for new and incoming Board Members are accepted frequently and can be filled throughout the year as needed or at the Annual Meeting as noted in the Association By-Laws. A majority vote will decide election of each Board Member. Each Board Member may serve multiple terms, but each term requires an election by the STMA GFA Board. Any Board Member may resign at any time by giving “written” notice to the STMA GFA Board. Email may constitute as “written” notice. In the event of a vacancy on the Board, the Board can nominate an individual and approval shall meet a majority vote. Any interested parties are encouraged to contact the Board. Please visit: www.stmagirlsfastpitch.com for the listing of current board members.

The Board reserves the right to confidential meetings when discussing any problems associated with a specific athlete, coach, parent, coordinator, Board member, or any other individual involved with the program. The Board shall meet on at least a monthly basis (off season may require less frequent meetings), at an agreed upon time and location. If a Board member misses three meetings in a row, that Board member may be removed from the board by majority vote.

A Board Member may be removed from their position by the STMA GFA Board due to their inability to carry out mutually agreed upon duties or for conduct that is detrimental to the STMA GFA. In order to remove a Board member, a written complaint must be presented to the STMA GFA Board. The complaint will be reviewed and investigated by the Board, exclusive of the Board Member in question. Pending sufficient justification, a hearing before the STMA GFA Board will be held. A majority vote by the STMA GFA Board, exclusive of the Board member in question, is required for dismissal.

Duties of the Board Members

PRESIDENT: (Voting Member/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 3 years

- Oversee the entire STMA GFA and is responsible for management of the association
- Call and conduct regular Board meetings
- Oversee the registration process for STMA GFA
- Responsible for reviewing State and National tournament requests
- Liaison with STMA High School Varsity Fastpitch program
- Responsible for all financial matters of the STMA GFA
- Manage coach selection
- Oversee travel team selection with Vice President
- Coordinate travel team selection with Vice President and Travel Coordinator
- Distribute annual survey

VICE PRESIDENT: (Voting Member/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 3 years

- Organize coaches' selection committee and conduct selections
- Organize scholarship criteria
- Perform all duties in absence of the President
- Assist in updating handbook annually
- Assist in the registration process for STMA GFA
- Assist in coordinating off season camps and clinics dedicated to player development
- Responsible for management, registration, and promotion of the STMA GFA home tournament
- Work with Volunteer Coordinator to determine DIBS needs
- Coordinate travel team selection with President and Travel Coordinator
- Liaison with MFA and other Associations for travel evaluators and skills/coaching clinics as needed
- Responsible for scheduling umpires for all games and recruitment of umpires

TREASURER: (Voting Member/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 3 years

- Responsible for all financial matters of the STMA GFA
- Prepare a yearly budget
- Responsible for annual tax preparation
- Summarize financial report to the STMA GFA Board on a monthly basis
- Monitor all spending
- Sign checks – President Approval required for all costs over \$100.00

SECRETARY: (Voting Member/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 2 years

- Prepare, distribute, and maintain, meeting agendas, minutes, and other necessary publications
- Ensures handbook is updated annually
- Manages P.O. Box
- Helps manage and coordinate any special projects

TRAVEL DIRECTOR: (Voting Member on Travel Team related issues/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 2 years

- Oversee Travel team league (liaison for school and league schedules)
- Help assist in organizing practice fields and game fields
- Manage coach selection with President and Vice President
- Responsible for organizing the tryout process (evaluators, process, time) with President and Vice President
- Coordinates and manages team selection for Travel teams with President and Vice President
- Attend all Suburban League Meetings as needed
- Coordinates tournament participation as needed
- Work with player and coaches on development activities
- Responsible for requesting and scheduling fields for all games, practices and clinics
- Liaison with constituencies that control the fields (Community Ed, city, etc.)
- Responsible for scheduling umpires for all games

IN-HOUSE DIRECTOR: (Voting Member on In House related Issues/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 2 years

- Oversee all In-House teams
- Manage coach selection with President and Vice President for In-House program
- Coordinate and manage team selection for in-house teams
- Organize In-House games
- Responsible for requesting and scheduling fields for all games and practices
- Coordinate tournament participation as needed
- Work with players and coaches on development activities (hitting/pitching clinics)
- Responsible for annual uniform selection for In-House teams and coaches
- Manage EWCFL evaluation process and team selection.
- Responsible for coordinating EWCFL and 8U umpires and practice/game fields

WEBMASTER: (Non-Voting Member/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 2 years

- Maintain STMA GFA website
- Oversee the registration process for STMA GFA
- Maintain databases with information regarding players, coaches, and teams to support STMA GFA
- Assist coaches and administrators with website management

EQUIPMENT DIRECTOR: (Non-Voting Member/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 2 years

- Purchase, issue, and collect equipment, and supplies
- Maintain records for issued equipment and responsible for collecting at the end of the year
- Responsible for repair, maintenance, and storage of equipment
- Educate players, parents, and coaches on proper equipment usage
- Responsible for assisting or coordinating any field prep for STMA home tournaments

FUNDRAISING/VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR: (Non-voting member/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 2 years

- Identify and implement fundraising opportunities during the year
- Work to ensure there are sponsors on the website sponsor tab
- Identify and implement community fund-raising opportunities
- Bar Bingo/Meat raffle liaison/coordinator

DIBS COORDINATOR (Non-voting member/Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 2 years

- List all dibs on the STMA website
- Monitor that Dibs are getting filled
- Mark Dibs completed once the volunteer had fulfilled the scheduled dibs hours
- Reconcile the total Dibs hours fulfilled vs required for each family (to see who we need to cash volunteer checks for)
- Work with Vice President on needed Dibs hours

At-Large Board Members (Non-voting member/ Registration fee waived for 1 child/Volunteer credits waived) Term: up to 2 years

- Assistant Travel Director – assist in Travel Director duties including scheduling fields and umpires
- Assistant In-House Director- assist in In-House Director duties including scheduling umpires
- Assist with uniforms
- Assist with photo day
- Assist with fundraising coordination

GENERAL INFORMATION

Senior Scholarships

Each year the STMA GFA strives to provide a senior scholarship program. The number of scholarships and dollar amounts can vary based on budget considerations. Interested recipients must complete a written application and submit that application by the due date. The STMA GFA Board will review all applicants.

Each recipient must meet the following award criteria:

- Recipient participated in the STMA GFA
- Recipient must attend St. Michael-Albertville School District

Selection is based on the following:

- High standards of personal conduct
- Leadership qualities
- Academic achievement
- Demonstrated support of the STMA GFA program

Refunds

The amount of refund granted will be at the discretion of the STMA GFA board. A full refund will be granted to a player who does not make a traveling team but not in cases where they do not make the team of their desire. However, the tryout fee will not be refunded. Once teams are determined, any potential refund, if any, will take into account any costs incurred for that player

and for the team based on the budget that anticipated the player's fee. Submit any requests to the STMA GFA President. All requests must be in writing.

IN-HOUSE PROGRAM

Philosophy

The In-House League provides an excellent opportunity for your daughter to enjoy the game of softball. Sportsmanship, learning the fundamentals of the game, being part of the team, and having fun are the goals at this level.

Expenses and Fees

The cost for playing in the In-House league covers the following expenses:

- General administration fees (copy fees, equipment storage fees, post office box, etc.)
- Equipment expenses
- Team insurance
- Miscellaneous fees (field preparations, game balls, umpires, etc.)
- Team shirts - shirts may be kept by each player at the end of the season.

Season

Players play two nights a week with practice one night and a game the other. Practice typically starts mid-May with the first game in early June. The 8u age level will have a league tournament at the end of the year.

Age Divisions

The following age/grade divisions are generally used in the In-House league.

- 6u Age level: Coaches pitch to players. Score is not kept. 2-3 innings are played with the full line-up batting in each inning.
- 8u Age level: Players learn to pitch. Score is kept, and 3 out innings apply. No walks allowed, and the coach will step in to give the batter an opportunity to hit. Player may strike out from player pitch or coach pitch.
- 10u Age level: Players pitch and will follow EWCFL League rules and can enter tournaments at the coach's discretion. Tournament must be a "C level tournament or Recreation tournament".
- 12u/14u Age level: Players pitch and will follow EWCFL League rules and can enter tournaments at the coach's discretion. Tournament must be a "C level tournament or Recreation tournament".

6.5 Player Time and Player Development

Equal playing time is emphasized at this level. A child's safety must be considered when player rotations are developed. Each coach is responsible for assuring this happens. The coach has the authority to limit playing time due to disciplinary reasons with Board approval.

Playing time can also be limited due to one or more of the following:

- Disciplinary action is being taken
- The player has been suspended
- The player is injured or sick
- Games have been shorted due to limited time or inclement weather

1.6 In-House League Rules

Refer to the In-House league Rules posted on www.stmagirlsfastpitch.com.

Traveling Softball

Philosophy

After playing at the in-house level, girls are offered an opportunity to try out and play in a more competitive traveling league. Traveling softball requires a greater commitment from both players and parents. Each participant is expected to attend all scheduled practices, league games, and weekend tournaments during the season. Unexcused absences will be dealt with at the discretion of the coaches. Emphasis is on skill development, teamwork, cooperation, sportsmanship, and respect for others.

Recognizing that individuals will have different skills and needs, a positive environment will be created to foster contribution, accomplishment, confidence, and a feeling of self-worth in all players. Coaches will strive to see that each participant will be treated fairly and know they are an important part of the team and that their contribution is valued.

Age Divisions

The following age divisions are offered:

- 10 and under
- 12 and under
- 14 and under (if numbers allow)
- 16 and under (if numbers allow)

Teams are formed according to age guidelines set by the American Softball Association (ASA) and American Fastpitch Association (AFA), availability of coaches, and tryout results, if necessary.

Fundraising

Individual teams may fundraise for special events (for example, out-of-state tournament play). Fundraising funds must be reported to the treasurer and receipts should be submitted. The board must approve any travel and entertainment activities. Fundraising for hotel costs may be permitted with Board approval if travel is more than 60 miles from STMA. Dependent on Board discretion and availability of funds, the Board will consider giving a contribution out of general funds to teams qualifying for an ASA or AFA National tournament to help offset travel expenses. Receipts must be remitted to Board Treasurer to verify expenses.

All fundraising events MUST be approved in advance by and coordinated through the STMA GFA Board.

Program Goals

The following are the program goals for travel softball:

- Provide effective, high-quality training for players and coaches at all levels.
- Provide programs that are cooperative with and respected by other community programs.

- Strive to create a fun and entertaining environment for players, families, coaches and community.
- Seek to maximize the potential of every player in the program.
- Encourage and foster player participation for the full length of a player's youth sports career.
- Foster the importance of teamwork and the understanding that all team members play an integral part in the success of the team.
- Increase the number of District 885 girls participating in competitive sports.
- To promote skill development and create a positive self-esteem for every player.

Eligibility

Players are eligible to participate subject to the following criteria:

- Resident of School District 885 area (regardless of school attended) – non-residents will be allowed to play if the Board determines that additional players are needed to field a team at any age group or to provide a team needing pitching and catching.
- Must have paid all applicable fees – past and present.
- Must have filled out all required forms and registered.
- Must meet age guidelines for the age group signed up for (as determined by ASA and NAFA – current rules are based by the age as of December 31st of the current calendar year (summer season)).

Note: If parents choose to coach a fall team, the age is determined by the age as of the following December 31st (age for next summer season).

Note: The age rules are scheduled to change before the 2024 season.

Playing Up

The Board's position is to keep players at the proper age level as much as possible regardless of ability. All players must register & tryout at their current age level (the youngest age group they qualify for). A player can play up based on the position that is determined by the Board to be needed. If there is not a position needed or player participation is high, players will not be allowed to play up.

To be considered for playing up to a higher age level, all of the following must apply:

- Player must be in the final year of their age group or grade level to be considered.
- If old enough, the player is currently playing at the high school Varsity level.
- If the Board determines that additional players are needed to field a team at any age group or to provide a team with needed pitching and catching, a player may move up.
- Players can move up if the number of players participating is agreeable to allow the movement of players. This will be decided by the STMA GFA Board after registrations have been completed.
- The Board must vote and approve any player playing up.

Each player requesting to play up to a higher age level must submit a formal written request to the STMA GFA Board prior to tryouts.

The STMA GFA Board must approve the request by simple majority of the voting members. Players trying out must meet all of the requirements listed below:

- Must finish ranked in the top 5 in evaluation points/rankings of the higher age level tryout final totals.

- Must finish in the top 5 in evaluation points/rankings of their normal age level tryout final totals.
- If the player's position is a pitcher, the player must meet the requirements above, tryout for both age levels, and meet the following two requirements:
 - Player must finish ranked in the top two pitchers at the higher age level.
 - Player must agree that if selected, she may, depending on ability (at the coaches' discretion) have limited playing time at other defensive positions.

Players electing to play up, but who choose not to participate, will not be refunded any fees paid.

Playing Time

Every effort will be made to ensure equal playing time occurs. Over the course of the season, coaches will ensure that each player gets an ample amount of playing time, but not necessarily at the player's or parent's desired position. As the season progresses, players will "settle into" playing positions so that the team is competitive. For younger age groups (10U & 12U), individual player development and equal playing time is stressed. For older age groups (14U & 16U), team development and placing the most competitive team on the field is stressed. Once a team is selected, coaches shall treat all of the players on the team as part of the team.

Playing time is at discretion of the head coach/assistant(s) based on the following:

- The need to develop talent at every position
- Unexcused absences at practices and game situations
- Effort of the players in practices and game situations
- Commitment of the player to improve her skills
- Skill level of the players on the team

Playing time can also be limited due to one or more of the following:

- Disciplinary action is being taken
- The player has been suspended
- The player is injured or sick
- Shortened games that are shortened due to the time limit or inclement weather

Player Development

Player development, depth of talent, and skills at each position is extremely important. As a result, coaches will try to ensure that every player receives numerous opportunities during games/practices to learn to perform in all game situations. However, not all players have the attributes or training required to play certain positions (for example, pitcher, catcher, or shortstop). Therefore, not all players will be given the opportunity to play at their "favorite" positions during games, but coaches are required to continue working with players during practice. This will help ensure player development at every age group. Safety first is a key consideration when making these decisions for all players on either the home or away team. Players should be given opportunities to play at positions where they will be successful and will build player confidence.

Team development shall consist of teaching teamwork and the concepts of working together towards a common team goal. Care must be taken to make certain that every player is part of the team regardless of their position. Positive reinforcement is an absolute necessity as new positions and skills are developed. Coaches must avoid negative comments and reinforcement.

Unexcused Absences

In an effort to maximize playing time, the STMA GFA Board believes in maintaining smaller roster sizes for our teams. In order to accomplish this goal, players are expected to attend all practices and games. It is the player's responsibility to contact the head coach if they cannot attend a practice or game. Below are examples of unexcused absences that coaches should reach out to the board with if they have questions on how handle:

- Absence due to conflicts with other sports
- Playing on another softball team (other than an in-season school team)
- Shopping
- Parties
- Movies
- Too tired

The head coach may determine exceptions to the above provided the same are enforced uniformly.

Recommended Consequences for Unexcused Absences

- Missing 1 practice - Player shall not be allowed to start the next game.
- Missing 2 consecutive practices - Player does not play in the next game but must attend.
- Missing 3 consecutive practices - Player shall be evaluated for possible removal from team. This shall be decided with approval of the head coach and the STMA GFA Board.
- Missing 1 game - Player shall not be allowed to start the next game, but must attend.
- Missing 2 or more games - Player shall be evaluated for possible removal from team. This shall be decided with approval of the head coach and the STMA GFA Board.

7.11 Registration

Registration for summer traveling softball is usually in January/February and can be made on-line at www.stmagirlsfastpitch.com. It is the player's and parent's responsibility to seek out registration information – watch for announcements and/or forms through District 885 schools or online at www.stmagirlsfastpitch.com.

A registration deadline will be announced and may be different each year. Players who register after the deadline line may incur a late fee. No registrations are allowed after tryouts for the travel league.

1.12 Summer Season

The summer traveling season is for those individuals who desire a competitive softball experience in the main part of the season. Teams participate in a league and play in tournaments on the weekends (see Tournament section).

Practices usually start in March/April and league games usually begin in May and continue through early July. League games are typically played one weeknight for 10u and two games per weeknight for 12u, 5 -inning double-header style (subject to change), and the first game

beginning at 6:15PM (dependent on league rules). They will be played at sites throughout the Metro area.

Post season play includes State Qualifier tournament. Based on the results, a team may qualify for an A, B or C – level State Tournament in mid-July. Based on the results at the State Tournament, a team could extend their season into Mid-August by qualifying for a National Tournament. Typically, Memorial Weekend and 4th of July Weekend are not scheduled for tournaments unless there is the agreement of the parents. However, the STMA GFA has no control over any dates for State Qualifier, State, or Nationals, and those dates could be scheduled over a holiday.

Practices

Practice begins in March/April with a goal of at least 6-10 full practices before the first game. (Pitchers and Catchers may be expected to put in more time). *Exception: teams with a significant number of players on the high school teams may not practice much prior to their first games.*

After league play commences, a typical week will consist of one or two practices each week. No matter what, one week night should be taken off each week. Coaches can schedule practice on the weekend as long as it's done in advance. However, a weekend practice can't be mandatory.

Expenses and Fees

The softball registration basic fee covers the following expenses:

- General administration fees (copy fees, equipment storage fees, post office box, etc.)
- Equipment expenses
- Team insurance
- Team uniform (jersey with number)

The Travel Fee covers the above fees as well as the following expenses:

- League fee
- Playing fees (game balls, umpire fees, tournament fees, chalk)
- Additional equipment expenses (higher end bats, score books, etc.)
- Team uniform (shirt, pants, belt and socks)

Additional expenses families may incur include:

- Additional uniform gear (extra socks, visor, pants, etc.)
- Gloves, cleats, sliding pads, compression shorts
- Extra tournament fees
- Travel expenses to and from games
- Possible overnight expenses for out of town tournaments

Tournament Funding

Each team is allocated a certain amount for tournament fees. This money may be spent on as many tournaments as team members are willing to play (generally this will fund up to three tournaments and will vary year to year – this does not include State Qualifier or State). Additional tournaments may be played at the players' expense – if desired by the head coach and majority of players' parents. Unspent tournament monies are the property of STMA GFA. Gate fees for State Qualifier and State will be split evenly amongst each player. Typically, those fees average around \$10.00 per player (subject to change).

Tournaments played outside the metro area may require overnight stay at the player's expense. Any team that qualifies for a National tournament and chooses to participate will incur additional expenses, including travel for up to a week. Teams may do their own fund-raising to offset costs if approved by the STMA GFA Board.

Travel Team Determination

If numbers permit, there will be one or more teams at each age group. If there is only one team, it will generally be placed in an "A" level. If there are multiple teams, the Board will determine the make-up of the teams depending on the talent level involved determined primarily through the tryout process.

Generally, the following guidelines will be followed:

- 10U & 12U – The decision to play A/B is to be evaluated each year by the STMA GFA Board based on talent available, especially with pitchers and catchers.
- 14U & up – There will be an "A" team followed by one or more "B" teams. Final decisions will be determined by the Board and will be based on remaining talent levels.

Selection of players for the "A" team, if applicable, will be determined by the criteria established under the Tryout section. In some cases, there may be a need to distribute pitching and/or catching to all teams to ensure competitiveness of the teams.

7.17 Travel Team Selection

Teams are formed by the Team Formation Committee which will consist of no more than five Board members using the following guidelines:

1. Team selection from eligible players at each age group – the number of players on each team is ideally 10-12 players; however, this will be determined at the Board's discretion.
2. Cumulative tryout scores (pitching and catching scores not factored in) – Top 7 tryout performers at their age will automatically earn a roster spot on the top team.
3. Players desiring to play up if a position is available (see policy on Playing Up)
4. Team Formation Committee may choose to review players ranking from 8 and lower. At this point, the board will be allowed to fill out the rest of the roster as needed (up to 4 players). The goal of the Team Formation Committee is to put together the most competitive teams at all travel age levels.
5. Coaches available (the goal is to have the most qualified coach at each age level)
6. Players from outside the eligibility area if needed to field a team
7. Based on talent evaluation, the board may decide to form multiple A or B teams at any travel age level.

Player selection is ultimately the decision of the Board and the Team Formation Committee. Only the Team Formation Committee will be allowed to review the tryout results and form teams. If a Board member on the Team Formation Committees has a daughter who is part of a borderline decision, they must leave the room until the final decision has been made by the other members. The team selection committee which consists of the President, Vice President, and Travel Director must approve any movement in players who ranked 8 and lower.

Tryout scores will not be made public and only one hard copy of the results may be created for use by the Team Formation Committee. Once teams are formed the hard copy will be destroyed. Team rosters are final unless a parent or player requests to be moved from the team they are placed on – players will not be moved up in these instances. Parents wishing to dispute the team placement of their daughter may contact the Travel Director or President to discuss; however,

tryout scores will not be provided. If a player is placed on a team and chooses not to play, registration fees will not be refunded.

Teams should not have more than 12 players, especially at the older ages because of substitution rules. Depending on the number of players trying out at the 14U and 16U levels, some players may not be placed on a team, so roster sizes can be kept at a manageable level. The STMA GFA Board will assist to provide alternatives to players who aren't placed on a STMA team, and registration fees will be refunded.

7.18 Fall Season – Travel only

The STMA GFA **does not** have an official fall season in place; but will help manage registrations, coach selection, team selection, and equipment/practice fields. The cost of tournaments and any other costs such as league fees is the responsibility of the team. Teams shall be formed based on the ability of each individual, friend requests, and the availability of coaches. The goal as always is to keep each player safe and to make the experience enjoyable for all.

7.19 Elite Teams at 14U and 16U

The STMA Elite program was established to give STMA athletes an opportunity to play at the highest level of competition offered by the Suburban League. These teams will be run like Club teams and will be open to players from other communities. Tryouts for these teams will be held in late July or early August. Once teams are formed they will participate in fall ball, dome ball, and the following summer league seasons. Some form of off-season training may also be offered.

7.20 Elite Team Formation

Tryouts will consist of on-field ability testing using neutral evaluators, Board members, and team coaches.

The Board has the final say as to the make-up of the Elite Teams with primary consideration given to tryout results. Up to 12 athletes will be placed on the roster of each Elite team. The goal is fill at least eight of these spots with STMA players. If there are not enough Elite level STMA players to fill a team, the Board has the discretion to look outside of the organization for additional players to keep the team as competitive as possible. The Board will ensure that a minimum of two Elite level pitchers are placed on each team. Cuts are likely at the 14u and 16u levels.

7.21 Elite League Play & Tournaments

Elite teams will participate in the Suburban League and will compete with the top teams in this league. League games will take place on weeknights. In addition, coaches may elect to set up weeknight play dates with other Elite teams who are not members of the Suburban League. Teams will play in five to six tournaments during the summer season. The coach will determine the tournaments that best fit the competition level of the team and could include multiple out of town tournaments.

7.22 Additional Elite Team Costs

Participation in an Elite team typically involves costs in addition to the STMA GFA player fees. These costs may include uniform upgrades, equipment, team banner, coaching fees, travel expenses, and lodging expenses for out of town tournaments. The team budget will be determined and set before the onset of the season. With the approval of the STMA GFA Board, the team may sponsor their own fundraising activities to help cover these additional costs.

7.23 Elite Fee Payment and Return Policy

Once a player has been placed on an Elite team, a down payment will be required. The amount will be determined by the Board. This down payment is not refundable; however, certain circumstances, such as player injury, will be considered by the Board. The purpose of this deposit is to ensure a player's commitment to the STMA GFA program and that a player will not leave our program after being placed on a team. The balance of the team fees will be due the following spring before the start of the summer season. Fees for fall ball and dome ball will be paid before the start of those seasons.

7.24 Player Conduct

1. I will behave appropriately at games and tournaments and will respect the volunteers and property of the tournament site, and understand I represent STMA Girls Fastpitch.
2. I will not swear or disrupt games by arguing or harassing fans, other teams, or officials. We will play aggressive ball, but we will not play dirty.
3. I will support my teammates and coaches. I understand that jealousy, backstabbing, and gossip about teammates and coaches is unacceptable.
4. I will encourage good sportsmanship, and I will not trash talk fans or other opponents.
5. I will be on time for practice and games, and I will give 100% during practice as well as games. Practice is to learn - not socialize.
6. I understand that travel softball is not always equal playing time. I understand my coach may reduce my game time for lateness or unexcused absence from practices or games.
7. Consequences or non-compliance to player contract: If a player does not or will not comply with the guidelines of above stated contract or team rules specified by the head coach, the head coach may:

- A. Bench player
- B. Reduce playing time

Or, if a player contract is consistently ignored, STMA Girls Fastpitch Board may:

- A. Remove a player from the team for the remainder of the season
- B. Review status of player for following season

7.25 Parent Conduct

1. Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating support for all players, coaches and officials at every game.
2. Demand a sports environment free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol at events.
3. Remember that the games are for the kids.
4. Do my best to make sure that youth sports are fun and positive.
5. Not berate umpires. I understand that I may be asked to leave if I can't abide by the rules.
6. Not use profanity.
7. Not undermine the coaches' instructions or directions.
8. Treat other players, coaches, officials, and volunteers with respect.
9. Communicate my concerns through the proper channels in a dignified manner.
10. 24hr. rule – Regarding communication between parents and coaches in regards to any disagreements concerning game play.

After a 24-hour cool-down period, constructive communication is encouraged between parents and coaches.

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

1st Time: Verbal Warning

- 2nd Time: Written Warning**
- 3rd Time: Dismissal from the program**

7.26 Coaches Conduct

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

Coaches' Code of Conduct:

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

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

- 1st Time: Verbal Warning
- 2nd Time: Written Warning
- 3rd Time: Dismissal from the program

7.27 General

This section refers to guidelines for conducting tryouts within the STMA GFA traveling program. Tryouts are needed to select members when multiple teams are offered at a particular age group.

7.28 Eligibility

Players are eligible to participate in the STMA GFA traveling program tryouts provided they meet the eligibility guidelines of the program.

7.29 Participation

Players must participate in all scheduled tryout session(s) for their particular age group, unless an excused absence is granted by the STMA GFA Board. An excused absence from any of the scheduled sessions must be granted PRIOR to the start of the first tryout session. Excused absences will include illness or injury (w/a doctor's note), school, or religious functions, and games for in-season sports. Attendance will be taken at each tryout session. Players who are absent from all tryouts without being excused will not be eligible for top tier teams.

7.30 Makeup Tryouts

There are no set make-up tryout dates. All decisions are at the discretion of the STMA GFA Board.

7.31 Player Evaluation

Players are evaluated on the skills of fielding, throwing, hitting, bunting, and pitching. In addition, game situations may be created and players may be evaluated on their game sense.

7.32 Tryout and Team Selection Committees

The tryout evaluators will be comprised of individuals who are known by the STMA GFA to possess the knowledge necessary to evaluate a players' skill at a particular level. Those evaluators will not be related to any of the tryout participants involved in their assigned age level. The tryouts will be facilitated by the STMA GFA Board. The evaluation and scores and prior playing history (only if needed) will be the basis used by the STMA GFA Board to select players for traveling teams.

7.33 Tryout Philosophy

The STMA GFA Board is aware that there is no perfect method of selecting teams. The selection process that the STMA GFA has in place is similar to a number of similar associations and has come up with a tryout process that the STMA GFA Board feels offers all players a chance to make a team of their caliber and to be fairly evaluated.

The team selection process attempts to find a balance between evaluating players based on their current skills demonstrated in an impartial tryout process, and evaluating players on the skills and possibly game sense shown in prior year's games.

7.34 Tryout Scoring

Please refer to the STMA GFA website at www.stmagirlsfastpitch.com for updated tryout sheets.

8 COACH SELECTION PROCESS

8.1 Written Application

A written application must be completed by all coaches in order to be considered for either Travel or In-House programs. Please visit www.stmagirlsfastpitch.com for an application.

8.2 Head Coach Selection Criteria

A pool of potential coaches is generated during the registration process. Coaches are selected by the Board based on the team their daughter was placed on and discussion by the board. Parent

coaches are not paid by the STMA Girls Fast Pitch Association. However, non-parent and non-relative applicants may be paid by the STMA GFA.

Each coach (head, assistant, parent helper, etc.) will undergo a background check (at no additional cost).

Each coach must sign a Code of Conduct.

Each coach and/or assistant coach must complete a coach's application.

Anyone sitting in the dugout must take and complete the on-line concussion training.

Coach's feedback can be returned to the Board at any time during the season via email to the President of the STMA GFA.

9 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The best manner in which to work out a difference of opinion is for the parties involved to meet with one another. This is true whether the discussion is between parents, a coach and a player, a coach and a team representative, or a coach and a parent.

- Players and parents should first discuss the matter with the team's coaching staff.
- If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the matter should be presented to the Board for final resolution. In this case, the following steps must be adhered to:
 1. Notify the STMA GFA President of the grievance by emailing a written grievance.
 2. The Board will attempt to resolve the grievance by communicating with and obtaining documents from all parties involved if unresolved after seven days, or sooner at the discretion of the Board.
 3. The written grievance must include the following:
 - a. Description of the incident (including date and time, if available).
 - b. List of all parties involved and any witnesses.

The STMA GFA Board may use all means at their disposal to resolve the grievance including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Review documentation submitted
2. Meet with all parties involved separately, then together. This time will be equally limited so all parties must be prepared to summarize the issues and answer questions as directed by the Board. These meetings shall be closed to the public.
3. The Board will hold an open meeting within ten days of receiving the written grievance, to recommend a resolution and vote on it.

Upon completion of this meeting, all parties will be notified in writing, within ten days of the Board decision.