



Stillwater Area Fastpitch Association
Board Meeting Agenda
Wednesday
8/14/2025
6:00 pm
Acapulco Restaurant

Purpose

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

- 1) Call to Order
 - a) Time – 6:02 PM
 - b) In-person: Mike M., Carly, Jen, Damen, Jeff, Terisa, Andy, Mike G.
 - c) Remote: N/A
- 2) Review and Approval of March Minutes
 - a) Motion to approve – Terisa
 - b) Second – Andy
- 3) Treasurer's Report
 - a) Jeff Boser shared that spending has started for fields ahead of the season.
 - b) Checking: \$22,300 and Savings: \$19,900
- 4) High School Report
 - i) Brad Horstman is the new Stillwater Area High School Varsity Coach. More information to come.
- 5) Role call/attendance – open forum:
 - Noah Schumacher
 - Brian Wittner
 - Sabrina Buivid
 - Katie Thomas
 - Nick Haag
 - Kyle Kraemer
 - Aaron Forstner
 - Nicole Wriskey
 - Tom Sebo
 - Kari Junker
 - Alan Jacobson
 - Justin Blovesug
 - Joe Schneider

Open Forum:

- *Open forum discussion – question: would like to know about the connection between SAFA and Boom.*
 - a) Board discussed: the difference between USSSA and USA Softball – USSSA Minnesota created a 12U club softball option in 2023. Club teams were created that begin as low as 12U for players looking for advanced experience. USSSA softball in Minnesota: 12U-18U. USA Softball is MN Softball, which SAFA is part-of. USA Softball: 8U-18U.
- *Open forum discussion – question: if someone would like to join the board, how do they find out about open positions.*
 - a) Board discussed: They advertise it in the newspaper and it is on the web site. Bylaws state a notice is put into printed newspaper, St. Croix Valley Gazette as notice.
- *Open forum discussion – question: how can other associations have “elite” programs.*

- a) Board discussed: other associations have created “A” teams and brand them as “elite” and continue to play USA Softball in addition to USSSA tournaments.
- *Open forum discussion – question: how many other associations have 14U programs?*
 - a) Board discussed: very few associations today have 14U programs in the Twin Cities. Unsure of total number, but it has continued to decline over the last 5 years.
- *Open forum discussion – question: what is the plan/how can we continue SAFA through 18U?*
 - a) Board discussed: if players continue to register and there are coaches willing to volunteer, SAFA can field teams through 18U. The biggest challenges have been keeping pitchers/catchers through 18U and finding coaches who are willing to volunteer at the older ages.
- *Open forum discussion – question: how can we build from a lower level (younger). How can we start at younger levels, like 6U.*
 - a) Board discussed: there has been discussion on starting a 6U program that is considered developmental, like what Lake Elmo baseball has implemented with “Little Lions”. This approach would support teaching correct fundamentals at the youngest ages. SAFA would need volunteers to run a program like this.
- *Open forum discussion: question: can we have more opportunities to have more pitching training at younger levels?*
 - a) Board discussed: there will be a winter training opportunity this year. Prior to COVID, SAFA ran “Little Ponies” clinics and this included pitching training. SAFA is taking back over the winter training in 2025-26 and will include pitching trainers as part of the offering. There has been feedback shared with SAFA about the pitching training provided by the SAHS Booster last winter, and there is an opportunity to improve on that experience.
- *Open forum discussion: question: how can we have more chances to develop in the winter.*
 - a) Board discussed: there will be a winter training opportunity this year. Information will be provided in October with more details.
- *Open forum discussion: question: are other 8U programs pitching clinics.*
 - a) Board discussed: yes, other programs participate in pitching clinics. The earlier the better. 8U players can sign-up for pitching lessons with a trainer in the Twin Cities and work on pitching fundamentals on their own and with a parent. Discussion: pitching happens outside of the practices. Catching training also happens outside of the season and players as young as 8U can look into getting catching lessons in the Twin Cities.
- *Open forum discussion: are we able to get instructors to come out once or twice per season to build a season.*
 - a) Board discussed: there will be a winter training opportunity this year. we will have winter training from Strike Zone Sports and the ask is for coaches to attend
- *Open forum discussion: what is the goal – what is the future of SAFA?*
 - a) Board discussed: the goal continues to prepare athletes for high school-level competition. The organization is committed to fostering skill development, teamwork, and sportsmanship.
- *Open forum discussion: is there an option to play 8U softball without the pitching machine?*
 - a) Board discussed: No, MN Softball requires use of pitching machines in competition.
- *Open forum discussion: what is the transition like going from 8U going to 10U?*
 - a) Board discussed: in 10U, players get a lot more reps as they have more practices, games and tournaments. These opportunities, in addition to the
- *Open forum discussion: how do we do more advertising, like SABA does? Can we do PeachJar?*
 - a) Board discussed: absolutely open to doing advertising prior to tryouts. If there is a volunteer who would like to connect SAFA with PeachJar email advertising, we can provide social media posts and update for the email.
- *Open forum discussion: could we do an all-team Sunday evening training/practice that goes across multiple age levels?*
 - a) Board discussed: yes, if there is an interest in running younger ages and coaches willing to instruct, that can be included for training. Like what was discussed earlier for 6U where we run practices on Sunday evenings across multiple younger ages.
- *Open forum discussion: could we call it a “evaluation” instead of “tryout”?*
 - a) Board discussed: yes, it is called an “evaluation”.
- *Open forum discussion: you look as you are coming off as “defeated” on some stuff discussed.*
 - a) Board discussed: disagree For new ideas, we would look to volunteers to support the implementation of volunteers. Having coaches come to SAFA board meetings is a great start to getting new ideas implemented.
- *Open forum discussion: should there be SAFA minutes once every month?*

- a) Board discussed: yes, there are minutes posted for every month that there is a SAFA board meeting after they are approved. Under “board” on web site toolbar.
- *Open forum discussion: it feels like the Boom teams are practicing at the Varsity field when the SAFA games are at field 3 and not chalked and we walk back to the fields, and it doesn’t feel good. The message it sends is that the organization cares more about Boom than SAFA.*
 - a) Board discussed: Scheduling is taken seriously and is complex. Only certain fields are allowed for SAFA to book, as SCVAA has priority at places like Elementary Schools and Lucy Winton athletic fields. Lake Elmo Baseball took over all Oak-Land fields this year. Through the first week of June, Varsity fields and the high school teams take precedent. In years prior, there were issues scheduling Tri-County league games the evenings of Varsity or JV games on certain fields and those games go long and then delaying Tri-County league games. This is getting worse next spring/summer with the delayed start times in the 2025-26 school year and we will continue to work on field scheduling. Tri-County league game schedules are not available until mid-April and are scheduled with other associations based on field availability.
- *Open forum discussion: who schedules the Boom practices and the SAFA games/practices?*
 - a) Board discussed: Jeff Boser schedules.
- *Open forum discussion: why do some cities not have “A” teams? In 12U, we played against Inver Grove Heights and their “B” team was really a top “A” team.*
 - a) Board discussed: unsure why other associations would have “A” teams playing down at a “B” level. This is undercutting the experience of the girls playing at that level.
- *Open forum discussion: it sounds like we are starting to have a plan to help make competitive teams moving forward including a new training program. When it comes to evaluation in the spring, we would consider fall evaluation?*
 - a) Board discussed: we considered it this year, but we are taking on the training program. It will be lighter in November and December, but the goal is 1-2 times per week.
- *Open forum discussion: can we have a connection to the high school players?*
 - a) Board discussed: yes, working with SAHS coaching staff, we can ask high school players to attend practices.
- *Open forum discussion: Can 12U coaches have an input in the team selection process at evaluations?*
 - a) Board discussed: we do not allow coaches to have input into team selection for SAFA as there is inherent bias if we take input from coaches. We also have discussed having the player evaluation completed at the end of next summer season with coaches input captured.
- *Open forum discussion: Could there be outside evaluators train the evaluators and have separate coaches’ rubric evaluation, etc.*
 - a) Board discussed: The current process is as fair as it can be by using a score-based system with a variety of volunteers from the SAFA organization. There has been discussion for the upcoming 12U season to use paid, outside evaluators.
- *Open forum discussion: Is there organizational fluidity with the levels?*
 - a) Board discussed: Yes, there is a way to bring a player up from a lower level from B to A during the season if a team needs a player for a game or tournament. However, we cannot take an A player and have them play on a B team.
- *Open forum discussion: is it possible to get gym space in elementary schools?*
 - a) Board discussed: the gym space is primarily owned by Stillwater Boys and Girls Basketball and SCVAA basketball, from mid-October through second week of March, 6 days per week.

Closing open forum comments by Damen: we discussed Winter Training, Little Ponies Training and there is an opportunity to have more winter training. The ask from the SAFA board is help us spread the word to other parents about off-season training. It will be critical to improve skill sets to practice in off-season.

- 6) Fall Ball Update
 - a) 12U: two 12U teams set. Coaches have been approved by the SAFA board and background checks are being finalized now.
 - b) 10U: two 10U teams set. Coaches have been approved by the SAFA board and background checks are being finalized now. A slightly larger roster size – 14 and 15, however given multisport athletes the coordinator feels good about this.
 - c) 8U: two 8U teams. Coaches have been approved by the SAFA board and background checks are being finalized now. Many returning players from the summer season.
 - d) 14U: only had 3 girls sign-up for 14U age.

- 7) Dibs
 - a) There has been a lot of back-and-forth for Dibs. There are certain items that considered "Dibs" worthy—this is defined as item that would cost money—for example, evaluators, cooking for the picnic, etc.
 - b) Example items that are not Dibs worthy (because they don't save money for the team): running GameChanger, running scorebook, chalking fields, etc.
 - c) Jeff is meeting with a new volunteer vendor (not SportsEngine) to improve the Dibs sign-up experience.
- 8) 2026 Summer Registration
 - a) 14U and 12U summer registration have been opened.
 - b) Carly recommended setting up fall 14U and 12U practice tryout warm-ups and she will run these tryout warm-ups to get players ready for tryouts.
- 9) Winter Training
 - a) Borad is discussing making winter training part of registration – currently consider if it will be part of the total registration, or separate.
 - b) The training space will potentially be at Hugo location.
 - c) Information on winter training will be provided in October to SAFA families.
- 10) Skills
 - a) Winter training session will begin with mandatory coaches training: infield/outfield, hitting/bunting and strategies for coaching.
 - b) SAFA board developed a set of skillsets and skill progressions at 8U, 10U and 12U in 2025.
- 11) Open Forum
 - a) The process for evaluations is explained on the SAFA web site.
- 12) Next Meeting: September 23, 2025
- 13) Adjourn – 8:32 P.M.
 - a) Motion – Terisa
 - b) Second – Andy