

Sooner State Softball Association, Inc.

By-laws

Revised, February 2022

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Article 1: Name of the Organization

1.1 The name of the Organization shall be The Sooner State Softball Association, Incorporated, hereinafter referred to in these By-laws as the SSSA.

1.1.1 The SSSA consists of a North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA) Open Division which is separated into divisions based on player skill levels in accordance with NAGAAA Player Rating Guidelines.

Article 2: Objectives

2.1 The objective of the SSSA is to foster local, regional, national, and international sports competition, predominantly for the gay and lesbian community, dedicated to the promotion of the amateur athletic experiences for men and women in slow-pitch softball, for anyone of any skill level and athletic ability, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender, race, creed, religion, or national origin.

Article 3: Membership

3.1 SSSA membership is open to any adult (as defined in the SSSA Division Rules & Regulations) who wishes to participate in the activities of the association, provided that they:

- a) Agree to abide by the By-laws of the SSSA and the Division Rules & Regulations as designated to govern competition,
- b) Agree to abide by the SSSA code of conduct,
- c) Pay all applicable membership fees

3.2 Honorary Membership to the SSSA may be granted to any person who has shown exceptional service in his/her contribution to the SSSA. Honorary Membership is granted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors/Members' Council. Honorary Membership may be revoked by a majority vote of the Board/Members' Council. Annual player or non-player fees, if ever set by the SSSA, are waived for Honorary Members.

3.3 Inducements (financial or in any form) to SSSA members to play for a certain team is strictly prohibited. Penalties for violating this rule are determined by a majority vote of the Board.

3.4 Any member of the SSSA (player or non-player) may voluntarily resign from the association, in writing, submitted to the Board and/or by being removed from the roster of a SSSA team by the team's Coach. Such resignations or roster removals do not relieve the member from the financial obligations to pay any outstanding fees, unless such fees are waived by a majority vote of the SSSA Board. Previously paid team, player, and non-player fees are not refundable.

- 3.5 Membership in the SSSA is not transferable or assignable to another person or team.
- 3.6 Membership records of the SSSA, including but not limited to the names, addresses, birthdates, phone numbers, email addresses, and mobile phone numbers are considered private records of the SSSA and will not be sold, rented, or disseminated to any other person, organization, corporation, or group. Reproduction, sale, rental, lease, or use of the SSSA membership records by any other person or group, for any purpose, is prohibited. Instances of unauthorized use of the SSSA membership records will be sent to the Board for further evaluation and action.
- 3.7 Any SSSA member can be suspended from SSSA activities and competition by the Board for failure to pay required fees owed to the SSSA, for behavior that is unbecoming and/or recognized as unsportsmanlike and is considered detrimental to the SSSA, or for violation of By-laws or Division Rules & Regulations. (See Division Rules & Regulations for specific suspension related procedures.)
- 3.8 Any SSSA member may be expelled from the SSSA for severe By-laws or Division Rules & Regulations infractions. Expelling a member from the league for misconduct shall be done by majority vote of the Board at a legally constituted meeting, provided that the SSSA member in question receives written notice of the charges against them at least five (5) days in advance of the date of the meeting, and is given the opportunity to rebut those charges at that meeting.
- 3.9 Disputes pertaining to membership eligibility in the SSSA shall be resolved by majority vote of the Board.

Article 4: SSSA Members' Council

- 4.1 The SSSA Members' Council, hereinafter referred to as the Members' Council, shall consist of the team Coach or their appointed player or non-player team representative who are current members of the SSSA in good standing.
- 4.2 Meeting of the Members' Council shall be held from time to time, in conjunction with the Board. The Members' Council participants will be notified of the meetings in person, by mail, email, or text message in advance of the meeting. Participants on the Members' Council are strongly encouraged to attend meetings during the active softball season and strongly encouraged to continue participating at monthly meetings during the non-active softball season.
- 4.3 The decision of a majority of the Members' Council present at a meeting, at which there is a quorum (2/3) in attendance, shall be deemed a valid act of the Members' Council.
- 4.4 The participants in the Members' Council, similar to members of the Board, shall serve voluntarily, without compensation.
- 4.5 The Members' Council duties include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Assisting the Board in selecting teams to represent the SSSA at the Gay Softball World Series (GSWS).
 - b) Bringing to the Board grievances about players or teams who are violating the rules.
 - c) Advise the Board on their input concerning any changes or adjustments to the SSSA that they would like considered.
 - d) Perform any duties that the Board, may from time to time, assign to the Members' Council.
- 4.6 Each participant on the Members' Council shall be entitled to cast one vote pertaining to issues that are presented at the Members' Council meetings with the exception of the acceptance of the year's operating budget, ratings issues, protests, suspension/expulsion decisions, or other topics designated as votes by "the Board" in this document or the Division Rules & Regulations. In the case of a tie vote, the Commissioner of the SSSA shall cast the tie-breaking vote. Meeting of the Members' Council will be governed by guidelines written in *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Article 5: Board of Directors of SSSA

- 5.1 The Board of Directors, hereinafter referred to as the Board, consists of current SSSA members who fill 2-year terms, voluntarily, and are elected by a majority vote of all the SSSA members at an annual election held on game day during the spring/summer season, no later than the last scheduled day of play.
- 5.2 There are eight (8) voting Board positions: Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Secretary/Treasurer, Fundraising Coordinator, Ratings Officer, Web Master, Player Representative/NAGAAA Representative, and Public Relations Coordinator.
- 5.3 Regularly scheduled meetings of the Board occur on a monthly basis at a place and time determined by majority vote of the members of the Board. The Commissioner can also convene additional meetings of the Board (also referred to as Executive Board Meetings) at any time and place.
 - 5.3.1 Executive Board Meetings may be deemed “closed” meetings by the Commissioner when sensitive or confidential information will be discussed.
- 5.4 Any member of the Board who is absent from three (3) consecutive Board meetings, without good cause, will be subject to removal from the Board.
- 5.5 If a Board position becomes vacant for any reason prior to completion of a term, the position will be filled temporarily by majority vote of the Board until the next regularly scheduled annual election, regardless if it is an odd or even year.
 - 5.5.1 If a position is vacated before the first official board meeting after the election results, the board will offer the open position to the runner up of the position, allowing up to one week to accept or decline the offer, if longer than a week passes the board will default to the NAGAAA by law of a commissioner appointment to fill the position until a special election can be had
 - 5.5.2 If the term of an elected position is unable to be fill in full due to a resignation, without a valid reason, the person who left the role would not be allowed to run for any elected position for one full term (2years)
- 5.6 Each voting member of the Board, except the Commissioner, shall be entitled to cast one vote on each issue presented for a majority vote. In the case of a tie, the Commissioner shall cast the tie-breaking vote.
- 5.7 Significant others may serve on the board at the same time but may not occupy the positions of commissioner and secretary/ treasurer at the same time
- 5.8 The Commissioner shall chair all meetings of the Board. In the absence of the Commissioner, the Assistant Commissioner shall chair the meeting. If the Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, or their appointed proxy are not present at a meeting of the Board, a quorum is not valid. The meeting may proceed but all decisions which require a vote from the Board must be postponed. Meetings of the Board will be governed by guidelines written in *Robert's Rules of Order*.
 - 5.8.1 A proxy may be appointed to vote in the place of any voting member of the Board, with advance written notice provided to the Commissioner. The

Commissioner may serve as a proxy for another Board member in his/her absence, but would then lose the right to cast his/her vote in the case of a tie.

5.9 Commissioner: The duties of the Commissioner include, but are not limited to:

- a) Presiding at all meetings and hearings of the Board and Members' Council Meetings.
- b) Appointing members to various Standing Committees of the SSSA.
- c) Ruling on the interpretation of the By-Laws and Division Rules & Regulations of the SSSA.
- d) Overseeing the daily functions of the SSSA.
- e) Coordinating and overseeing the facility requirements of the SSSA.
- f) Providing all the required league information to NAGAAA by the required deadlines, such as non-resident player forms, team rosters, lists of teams and Coaches/Captains, division designation of the teams based on skill-level (A, B, C, or D).
- g) Serving, in conjunction with the Public Relations Coordinator, as the official spokesperson for the SSSA with media.
- h) Acting as one of two Board Members whose signature is listed on the checking account(s) signature card.
- i) Maintaining, in conjunction with the Secretary and Ratings Officer, a database of NAGAAA player ratings from the previous season and delivering those ratings to each team Coach and to the Ratings Officer prior to the start of the current season.
- j) Serving as the official representative of the SSSA at NAGAAA meetings.
- k) Overseeing SSSA league play and Code of Conduct for league members.
- l) Reserving slots for SSSA teams in the Gay Softball World Series.
- m) Preparing the rosters for SSSA teams participating in the Gay Softball World Series and sending them electronically by the required deadline to NAGAAA.
- n) Sending electronically by the required deadline, the Players Ratings database, to NAGAAA.

5.10 Assistant Commissioner: The duties of the Assistant Commissioner include, but are not limited to:

- a) Performing all the duties of the Commissioner if the Commissioner is absent, temporarily disabled, resigns, or is removed from office.
- b) Ruling on Parliamentary procedure at all Board Meetings and Members' Council Meeting.
- c) Providing the Playing Schedule for the current SSSA season.
- d) Coordinating the scheduling of umpires for the current SSSA season with the Umpire-in-Chief.

- e) Serving as the liaison between the SSSA and the venue of our playing fields.
- f) Attending the monthly meeting of the Board.

5.11 Secretary: Within the combined Secretary/Treasurer position, the duties of the Secretary include, but are not limited to:

- a) Keeping sign-in sheets and writing the minutes at Board Meetings and Members' Council Meetings and distributing the minutes from such meetings prior to the next scheduled meeting.
- b) Maintaining a current record of the SSSA By-laws and Rules & Regulations.
- c) Maintaining, in conjunction with the Commissioner and Ratings Officer, a database of NAGAAA player ratings from the previous season and delivering those ratings to each team Coach and to the Ratings Officer prior to the start of the current season.
- d) Distributing the database of NAGAAA player ratings information to each team Coach within 2 weeks of the team roster deadline.
- e) Filing mandatory documents with city, state, and federal agencies in regards to the SSSA Sooner State Softball Association.
- f) Preparing and distributing the ballots for elections.
- g) Attending the monthly meeting of the Board.

5.12 Treasurer: Within the combined Secretary/Treasurer position, the duties of the Treasurer include, but are not limited to:

- a) Collecting the team, sponsor, and player fees that are owed the SSSA.
- b) Accounting for monthly income and expenses of the SSSA with a monthly report and copy of the actual bank statement of SSSA account(s).
- c) Having custody of the actual SSSA checkbook(s) for funds managed by the SSSA, deposit all money collected by the SSSA into the appropriate account(s), write checks to pay SSSA bills, and serve as the treasurer for any tournaments sponsored by the SSSA.
- d) Helping to create an annual budget for the SSSA.
- e) Chairperson of the SSSA /Standing League Budget Committee.
- f) Act as one of two Board Members whose signature is listed on the checking account(s) signature card.
- g) Attending the monthly meeting of the Board.

5.13 Fundraising Coordinator: The duties of the Fundraising Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- a) Organizing all SSSA fundraising activities with sponsors, team Coaches, and members of the SSSA.
- b) Serving as the liaison between sponsors and the Board.

- c) Serving as the primary trustee on organizing and operating concessions for SSSA league play and SSSA tournament(s).
- d) Actively pursuing field sponsors, league sponsors, small business, and corporate donations to the SSSA.
- e) Support the Public Relations Coordinator related to social media presence/postings.
- f) Support, in conjunction with the Web Master and the Fundraising Officer, photographic and video graphic efforts that enhance the visibility of the SSSA.
- g) Chairperson of the SSSA Annual Tournament Standing Committee unless another person is designated by the Board as the Tournament Director.
- h) Attending the monthly meeting of the Board.

5.14 Ratings Officer: The duties of the Ratings Officer include, but are not limited to:

- a) Providing team Coaches with a clearer understanding of how the NAGAAA Player Ratings Guidelines are implemented, and the importance of consistency and fairness in the application of these guidelines among all team Coaches.
- b) Assessing the overall competitiveness of teams in the SSSA to determine if division changes or additional divisions should be established.
- c) Overseeing SSSA player ratings, changes in a player's rating, and protests to a player's rating.
- d) Maintaining, in conjunction with the Commissioner and Secretary, a database of NAGAAA player ratings from the previous season and delivering those ratings to each team Coach and to the Ratings Officer prior to the start of the current season.
- e) Chairperson of the SSSA Players' Ratings Standing Committee.
- f) Attending the monthly meeting of the Board.

5.15 Web Master: The duties of the Web Master include, but are not limited to:

- a) Ensuring the website is funded, maintained, and reflects current and accurate information on SSSA league play and SSSA tournament(s).
- b) Helping to develop a web-based registration process to collect player, non-player, team roster information, and on-line payments for league play and tournaments.
- c) Maintaining a database of the current SSSA Board and SSSA team Coaches, with names, mailing address, email, and mobile phone numbers.
- d) Maintaining SSSA team scores and standings. This record will be published on the website on a weekly basis during the season.
- e) Support the Public Relations Coordinator related to social media presence/postings.

f) Support, in conjunction with the Public Relations Coordinator and the Fundraising Officer, photographic and video graphic efforts that enhance the visibility of the SSSA.

g) Attending the monthly meeting of the Board.

5.16 Player Representative: The duties of the Player Representative include, but are not limited to:

a) Serving as a player liaison and voice between the SSSA players and the Board.

b) Helping guide new or beginner players in the league in finding a team on which to play.

c) Serving as an assistant to the Ratings Officer in regards to NAGAAA Player Ratings Guidelines and their implementation.

d) Attend the monthly meeting of the Board.

5.17 Public Relations Coordinator: The duties of the Public Relations Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

a) Coordinating league information and news articles with various publications, such as the *Gayly*.

b) Along with the Commissioner, serve as a spokesperson for the SSSA with media.

c) Creating and/or approving all advertising and marketing materials published on behalf of the SSSA.

d) Along with the Fundraising Coordinator, helping to organize pre-game, post-game, pre-season and post-season social events, gatherings, and banquets.

e) Helping to raise awareness of the SSSA in Central Oklahoma.

f) Coordinate all social media presence/postings, in conjunction with the Web Master.

g) Attend the monthly meeting of the Board.

5.18 All members of the Board, Members' Council, and Standing Committees shall return to the current Commissioner all documents and property of the SSSA upon leaving their position. SSSA membership will be suspended if such property is not returned within 30 days upon leaving the position, but can be reinstated once the documents and property are returned to the Commissioner.

5.19 The Board has the exclusive power:

a) To enforce penalties for violations of the SSSA Division Rules & Regulations, jurisdiction over the SSSA, and any changes pertaining to the Articles of Incorporation.

b) To prescribe additional duties to members of the Board of Directors and Standing Committees.

c) To set the league, team, and sponsorship fees for the SSSA.

- d) To enter into contracts required for the day-to-day functioning of the SSSA and transactions of SSSA business.
- e) To interpret the SSSA By-laws and Division Rules & Regulations at any league game unless the Board Member's team is involved in the ruling, at which point, another member of the Board must handle the issue.

Article 6: Election of the Board of Directors

- 6.1 The Secretary/Treasurer will mail or email all current SSSA members in good standing a list of upcoming vacancies on the Board. Those SSSA members who are nominated for a position on the Board will be notified by the Secretary, and those nominees have the right to accept or decline the nomination. From that information, the Secretary will compose a written ballot that will be distributed to SSSA members on the date of the election. The candidate receiving a majority of votes is elected. If a candidate does not receive a majority of the votes, the top 2 candidates will have a run-off election. Newly elected members of the Board begin their term in November but are strongly encouraged to start attending board meetings in September and October.
- 6.2 Elections for Commissioner, Ratings Officer, Public Relations Coordinator, and Player Representative will be held on odd years. If a vacancy exists for one of these positions in even years, the ballot will include the vacant position.
- 6.3 Elections for Assistant Commissioner, Secretary/Treasurer, Web Master, and Fundraising Coordinator will be held on even years. If a vacancy exists for one of these positions in odd years, the ballot will include the vacant position.
- 6.4 If a member of the Board fails to perform or violates the duties of the office, the board member may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Board. The member in question must be notified at least five (5) days prior to the meeting at which the Board will discuss the removal. The member in question has the right to rebut the charges at this meeting.

Article 7: Standing Committees

- 7.1 The Commissioner shall designate all standing committee chairpersons, except the Chairperson of the Budget Committee, who is the Treasurer, the Chairperson of the Tournament Committee, who is the Fundraising Coordinator, and the Chairperson for the Players' Ratings Committee, who is the Ratings Officer. The term of a standing committee chairperson shall expire when the Commissioner's term expires, but may be extended by the new Commissioner. The term of the chairpersons of the Budget, Tournament, and Players' Ratings Committees end when the term of the Treasurer, Fundraising Coordinator, and Ratings Officer end as members of the Board.

- 7.2 The Board may add or dissolve a standing committee by majority vote, as new objectives may present themselves or alternatively, the work of a current standing committee may have been completed.
- 7.3 The chairperson of a standing committee or a member of each committee shall regularly attend monthly meetings of the Board and present activities reports to the Board as needed.
- 7.4 A chairperson or member of a standing committee may be removed by majority vote of the Board.
- 7.5 Meeting of the standing committees will be governed by guidelines written in *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Article 8: Division Rules & Regulations

- 8.1 Division Rules & Regulations are approved and published by the Board of Directors. Changes to the Division Rules & Regulations require a majority vote of the Board/Members' Council and are effective immediately.

Article 9: National Sports Alliance

- 9.1 SSSA shall be a member of the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA). NAGAAA membership fees shall be included in the SSSA annual budget and paid by the SSSA Treasurer upon receipt of an invoice from NAGAAA.
- 9.2 SSSA members are to conduct themselves at all NAGAAA tournaments and NAGAAA functions in the same manner and under the same code of conduct set forth by the SSSA. Misconduct is not tolerated while representing the SSSA at NAGAAA events and such behavior will be handled by the SSSA as outlined in the SSSA governing documents.

Article 10: Expenses

- 10.1 Service on the Board is voluntary and no compensation is received by SSSA Board members. However, necessary and reasonable expenses that are pre-approved and incurred on behalf of the SSSA by any member of the Board may be reimbursed by the SSSA Treasurer, subject to a majority vote of the Board/Members' Council.

Article 11: League Finances

- 11.1 The SSSA shall generate necessary operating fees.
- 11.2 The SSSA may sponsor or organize fundraising events to generate funds for the operating expenses. The SSSA may accept outside contributions from individuals, small businesses, sponsors, and corporations.
- 11.3 The SSSA shall maintain appropriate financial accounts at an accredited bank. The Board, by majority vote, shall determine the financial institution used by the SSSA.
- 11.4 Operating funds and fees shall be deposited in SSSA account(s) in a timely manner. The SSSA shall disburse funds in the form of a check, prepared and signed.
- 11.5 There shall be two (2) signatures on the signature card for SSSA bank account(s). These include the Commissioner and Treasurer. Checks used to disburse funds shall have two (2) signatures on each check, unless authorize by the Board.
- 11.6 There shall be two (2) documented Board member written approvals before any online purchase is made. Said purchases must have been approved by Board vote or be a standing line item in the budget.

Article 12: Gay Softball World Series Financing

- 12.1 Any team winning a league championship which qualifies the team for participation in the Gay Softball World Series (GSWS) shall have the sole responsibility of financing all the costs associated with participating in the tournament. If the first-place team cannot attend the GSWS, then the next team below them on the standings is allowed to attend.
- 12.2 The Board may consider providing some financial assistance to SSSA teams going to the GSWS on a case by case basis, after evaluating the financial position of the team in question.

Article 13: Amendments, Dissolution and Ratification

- 13.1 Amendments to these By-laws may be made, as needed, from time to time.
- 13.2 Amendments require a majority vote of the Board/Members' Council. Amendments will become effective immediately, unless otherwise stipulated.
- 13.3 The SSSA shall be dissolved by a majority vote of the Board and Members' Council voting at a meeting called specifically for the dissolution of the SSSA, which will be clearly stated in the announcement for the meeting.
- 13.4 Upon dissolution of the SSSA, any remaining funds, once all debts are paid, shall be distributed by the Treasurer to a bona fide charity, selected by majority vote of the Board.

- 13.5 Division Rules & Regulations and the SSSA By-laws shall be made available to all SSSA members.