

BLOOMINGTON FASTPITCH ASSOCIATION

PARENT HANDBOOK



WELCOME TO BLOOMINGTON FASTPITCH ASSOCIATION

Bloomington Fastpitch Association is legally known as the Bloomington Girls Fastpitch Softball Association. It is herein referred to as Bloomington Fastpitch Association (“BFA”) or Bloomington Fastpitch. It is also known as the Bloomington Blast.

Bloomington Fastpitch Association (“BFA”) is a highly competitive, community based, non-profit, volunteer organization serving the city of Bloomington. BFA is a member of the Big West League. Summer leagues are our primary focus, with a fall league, dome ball, and clinics also included in our program.

BFA sponsors girls traveling Fastpitch teams in the following age groups: 8 and under (8U), 10 and under (10U), 12 and under (12U), 14 and under (14U), 16 and under (16U) and 18 and under (18U), if possible.

Started in 2018, BFA runs an in-house fastpitch program at the 8U level. The in-house program will follow the same basic guidelines and principles described herein for the traveling program where it is applicable. Any deviations and in-house specific information will be outlined in the attached Appendix A.

BFA is a volunteer organization. We welcome volunteers at all levels, from scorekeepers to coaches to Bloomington Fastpitch board members.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Bloomington Fastpitch Association Board of Directors consists of six officers elected to two-year terms which also constitutes the Executive board and ten directors elected to one-year terms.

Board meetings from October thru March are usually held the first Monday of the month at the Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. From April thru October, the board meetings are usually held the first Sunday of the month. All Bloomington Fastpitch members are invited to attend these meetings. If you do not regularly attend, please check the BFA Web site (<http://www.bloomingtonfastpitchmn.org>) to verify the date, time, and location before the meeting.

Officers and Directors for the 2018 - 2019 fiscal year are:

Officers:

President: Molly Belmont

Secretary: Dave Powers

Treasurer: Mike Kopischke

Vice President Administration: Kathy Love

Vice President Strategic Planning: Vacant

Vice President Development: Jim Leicht

Directors:

Tournament Director: Brian Kremer

Marketing Director: Rebecca Rudquist

Player Development Director: Amy Munsinger

Facilities Director: Preston Renstrom

Equipment Director: Daren Anderson

Corporate Sponsorship Director: Jennifer Rosas

Coach Development Director: Sean Skibbie

Membership Services Director: Monica Kremer

In-House Director: Megan Bernard

Communications Director: Jayson Knudson

BLOOMINGTON FASTPITCH PHILOSOPHIES

Bloomington Fastpitch Mission

The mission of Bloomington Fastpitch is to provide a safe, drug-free, and enjoyable environment in which girls and young women can develop and enhance their skills as athletes in preparation to compete in high school and beyond.

Bloomington Fastpitch Objectives

The objectives of Bloomington Fastpitch are:

- Demonstrate and encourage fun and instill a love of, and respect for the game with all participants.
- Teach the skills, tactics and strategies of the game and promote a balanced approach to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to improve as an individual and contribute to the team.
- Demonstrate the importance of physical development and healthy lifestyle choices.
- Capitalize on teachable moments that have value beyond the playing field.
- Support Bloomington Kennedy's and Bloomington Jefferson's high school programs.
- Be competitive.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY, REGISTRATION AND TRYOUTS

Player Eligibility

Age levels at 10U and 12U are not open divisions. At the 10U and 12U level, players must live or attend school in the Bloomington community, or be "waived in". A "waived player" from another community may be eligible to participate but only with the approvals necessary to comply with the league rules, and in accordance with BFA's waiver policy prior to registering. Please contact the President or Vice President if you are requesting a waiver for a player. Players at the 8U and 14U age level do not need a waiver to play outside their community.

Softball Age Level

A player's age level is determined by their birth year. A player's age ON January 1 determines the age level at which the player will play that year. Fall ball players will typically play at the level they will play the following summer season. All players must provide a copy of their birth certificate (or alternative proof of birthdate, if a birth certificate is not available) to BFA prior to participation in league or tournament games.

Player Registration Payments, Refunds, Discounts, and Exemptions

Registration and fee payment is completed on-line. Payment options include credit card or ACH bank transfer with payment in full or 3 scheduled installments. Player registration with a payment selection must be completed prior to a player participating in tryouts. A player will not be placed on a team if there is a past due balance at the time of try-outs.

A full refund will be issued if BFA cannot field a team (due to unavailability of coaches or insufficient number of player registrations), or if a player withdraws from the program before tryouts begin. Other than the exceptions just listed, there will be no refunds made once tryouts have begun, unless approved by the board.

Multi-Player Discount: Families with more than one registered player will pay the full registration fee for the highest age level player and receive a 15% discount on all additional players in the program.

Head Coach: Registration fee is waived for one player on the team coached. In the event of a co-coach situation the co-coaches each receive a 50% fee reduction for the player on the team coached. Head coaches can participate in the multi-player discount program.

Board Members: All registration fees for one player are waived per board member family. Board members can participate in the multi-player discount program.

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Scholarships

Scholarships may be available to families of players in need. The BFA Financial Assistance Policy and Application can be found on the BFA website on the Registration page.

Player Tryouts (Traveling Teams only)

Tryouts are typically held in late February or early March for the summer season. A parent or guardian of any player unable to attend tryouts must contact the VP of Development in advance of the tryout date. Failure to do so could affect team placement. Prior to or on the day of tryouts, parents should also let the Director of Player Development know if there any known dates the player will miss during the season.

Our goal is to provide a tryout environment that allows all players to demonstrate their abilities to a group of well-qualified evaluators. Evaluators will not have a vested interest in the age level they are evaluating. Our evaluators have Fastpitch experience and are vetted by the VP of Development.

The tryout drills are predetermined drills commonly used in the free winter clinics. The drills are intended to be familiar to the players and demonstrate specific skills for the evaluators. Evaluators rate various skills on a predetermined point scale.

Team Formation and Selection (Traveling Teams only)

Each player is to be evaluated to determine the player's skill and ability level. The BFA Board's primary goal of evaluations is to evaluate each player impartially and objectively so that they may be placed on a team with players of similar ability, who in turn play against other traveling teams with comparable skill levels. Information on each player may be compiled from observations, clinics, workouts, practices, and/or games. The BFA VP of Development will have evaluators rate the tryout participants on a variety of skill stations and situations. The BFA VP of Development will determine how many evaluators and assistants will be in attendance at the tryouts. No parents are permitted to observe tryouts unless specifically authorized by the VP of Development.

Participants that wish to be either a pitcher or catcher **must** so indicate at time of registration prior to tryouts. These participants may be judged and ranked for these skills in addition to the regular tryout skills.

The Team Selection Committee reviews the tryout results and organizes teams based on the tryout scores. The make-up of the committee is described in the Bylaws. Teams will be split by skill level based on a tryout process. Questions about the tryout process should be sent to the VP, Player Development. Team rosters will be posted on the BFA website when available.

Regardless of age group, the players' skills will be rated and ranked based on predetermined criteria. Players may perform the same drills more than once. Tryouts may occur on multiple days in order to ensure each girl is given an equal chance to succeed. Pitchers and catchers will have additional skill sets evaluated. A scrimmage may be held to assist in the evaluation process. The VP of Development reserves the right to make any changes necessary to the team and player selection process, including moving any player(s) from any age group or level to another age group or level.

Players are not allowed to wear any clothing that contains their name or indicates in any way that they played on a traveling softball team or any other club team. All such attire would need to be replaced prior to the player being allowed to participate in tryouts. Players are only to be known by the tryout number assigned to them during check-in. The players will keep this number until all of the tryouts are completed at their age level.

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BFA will make every effort to place all registered players on a team. However, at age level 10U and up the number of teams formed will be limited to the extent there are sufficient pitchers, catchers and coaches to support a team. In the event BFA has no option except to limit the number of teams due to insufficient players, pitching or catching; team roster decisions will be based on player try-out scores, with no guarantee of placement on a team. Specialized position players (pitcher/catcher) if needed to form a team and Bloomington players (players that live in or attend school in Bloomington) will have priority for team placement over non-Bloomington players.

Pitchers and Catchers

At tryout check-in, each pitcher and catcher will be required to complete a form indicating their preferred team placement. Each pitcher or catcher will need to choose one of the following, sign the form, have their parents sign the form, and turn it in prior to the start of tryouts.

The two choices are:

- a) If I do not rank as the top pitcher or catcher (based upon pitching or catching evaluation score), but I otherwise qualify for the upper team, I would prefer to be placed on the upper team, even though I may receive little to no pitching or catching.
- b) If I do not rank as the top pitcher or catcher (based upon pitching or catching evaluation score), but I otherwise qualify for the upper team, I would prefer to be placed on a lower team and potentially receive more pitching or catching time.

The VP, Development has the right to make any changes necessary to pitchers'/catchers' team assignments so as to ensure an adequate distribution of the pitcher and catcher positions.

Appeals to Tryout Process

A player may request a meeting with members of the Team Selection Committee to discuss their tryout process. The discussion will focus on the player's strengths and opportunities for improvement ONLY. SCORES OF OTHER PLAYERS WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED OR DISCUSSED. Requests for such a meeting should be sent to the Vice President of BFA in writing. *The player as well as a parent must attend the meeting.*

“Playing Up” Policy (Traveling Teams only)

It is understood that there are occasions players may benefit from playing up. Players may request to play up and must do so at registration. If the Vice President of Development and Director of Player Development agree; the player will be notified, and required to attend the upper age level tryouts. The player should also attend their own age level tryouts as there is no guarantee of making an upper level team. Moving up requires the approval of the Vice President of Development, the Director of Player Development and the Team Selection Committee.

HOME PLAYING FIELDS

BFA plays its home games at eleven locations in Bloomington. We ask your cooperation in assisting to keep these fields clean. Please observe the City of Bloomington rules for park use. Pitching and batting into fences is not allowed. We ask parents to volunteer to rake the fields after each practice and game to keep them in good playing condition. Home fields are:

1. Dred Scott #2 Dred Scott fields are located at 10820 Bloomington Ferry Road
2. Dred Scott #3
3. Dred Scott #6
4. Kelly #2 Gene C. Kelly Youth fields are located at 185 E. 102nd Street
5. Kelly #4
6. Olson North Olson fields are located at Olson Middle School 10344 Johnson Ave S

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7. Olson South
8. Penn/Washburn North Washburn fields are located at 8401 Xerxes Ave S
9. Penn/Washburn South
10. Cedarcrest Cedarcrest field is located at 8700 Bloomington Ave S
11. Nativity of Mary Nativity of Mary field is located at 9900 Lyndale Ave S

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Tournament Work Requirement

BFA hosts the annual Bloomington BASH in June and may host other tournaments during the year. These tournaments are a significant source of BFA’s annual operating revenue. All BFA families are required to work to support a tournament and must pay a tournament work deposit unless the buy-out option is selected at the time of registration.

Volunteer hours and deposit requirements are summarized in the table below. In addition to the exemptions listed below, each traveling team is allowed 9 additional exempted hours to be distributed as the head coach desires. Each In-House teams is allowed 3 additional exempted hours to be distributed as the head coach desires. BFA board members are exempted from tournament volunteer duties, however will make every effort to help out at concessions and fields during tournaments/games that BFA hosts.

<u>Age Level</u>	<u>Deposit Required</u>	<u>Hours required</u>
All Traveling	\$250.00	9 hours for one child, 12 for multiple
Head Coach	\$250.00	Exempt from 9 hours (non-transferrable)
In House	\$50	3 hours
In-House Head Coach	\$50	Exempt from 3 hours (non-transferrable)

Deposits must be paid at the uniform sizing event. Once Head Coaches are named, their checks will be returned.

The deposit is held by BFA until the required shift(s) are completed. If a family does not complete 100% of their required tournament work shifts the entire deposit is retained and used to cover the paid staff needed to work those hours. A family’s volunteer requirement can only be met by volunteering at a tournament.

Fundraising Requirement

Each year the BFA Board may decide on additional fundraisers. These fundraisers would be mandatory, and a set minimum level of participation will be communicated. A deposit may be required of families and a buyout option would be offered.

Team Volunteer Needs

BFA is primarily a volunteer organization that depends on everyone carrying a small part of the load so that no one person is over-burdened. In particular, the head coach must be able to delegate a large number of tasks to assistant coaches and parents so that he/she can focus on developing quality players. Jobs and responsibilities that should be delegated may include, but are not limited to Team Manager, Scorekeeper, Field Preparation, Social Activities, Photographer

Travel

With the exception of the in-house league, all BFA teams are traveling teams and will be required to travel to different communities to participate in league games and tournaments. We understand that unavoidable conflicts arise, but when you register to play you are making a commitment to the coaches and team to make every effort to attend practices and games.

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Feedback

Parents are provided with an opportunity to provide feedback to BFA via our survey system. These parent and the player survey results are reviewed by the Board and used as a tool to continually improve our programs, evaluate coaching staff and assess additional training needs.

Uniforms and Equipment

BFA provides uniforms for its players. Each summer traveling player receives one uniform (top and pants), one belt, and one pair of softball socks. Each in-house player will receive a T-Shirt. Players choosing to play fall ball only, will receive a T-shirt or Jersey only. Additional items required to play are the responsibility of the family. These items include, but are not limited to:

1. **REQUIRED ITEMS:** Fielding glove, batting helmet with mask and fielders mask (required to play all infield positions for ages 8U-12U and strongly encouraged for all other ages). All Fastpitch batting helmets must be equipped with a securely fastened NOCSAE approved face mask / guard.
2. **Optional items:** Sliding shorts, sliding pad, batting gloves
3. **Softball shoes.** 8U-12U Levels - No metal spikes are allowed. Hard plastic or polyurethane spikes similar to the metal sole and heel plate are allowed. 14U-18U players are allowed to wear metal or polyurethane spikes.
4. **Team bats** are available for use by players. Should you wish to purchase your own bat, be aware that all bats must conform to the USA bat performance standards.
5. **Bag.** Players will need something in which to carry their equipment and possessions.

Length of Season (Traveling Teams only)

The summer season runs from April through July. Indoor practices begin in April. Teams at 8U, 10U, and 12U will use this indoor practice time more than older teams. Because many players on 14U and 16U teams are also playing for their high school teams, practice times before the end of the high school season may be limited.

The typical 8U schedule includes a practice or game 2 times nights per week. Practices start mid-April and games begin in May. The season ends in June with team participation in a state tournament in early July.

The typical summer schedule for age levels 10U and up includes practice once or twice a week, league doubleheaders once or twice a week in May and June, and weekend tournaments. Usually teams participate in five tournaments: one in May, two in June, and two in July.

It is possible that your team will qualify for optional post-season tournament play, regional or national. Please be aware that this may extend the summer playing season.

Summer Team Costs for 2018

These costs are covered by the player registration fees and are subsidized by revenue generated by BFA Catch the Fire Fundraising efforts, Corporate Sponsorships, net income generated by the BASH tourney, and hosting other tournaments. Individual teams may have costs above and beyond those funded by BFA, such as extra tournaments or team parties.

Description	In-House	8U	10U	12U/14U	16U/18U
Big West League Fees ¹	\$0	\$25	\$595	\$595	\$595
Team Insurance	\$195	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Tournaments ²	\$0	\$170	\$325	\$650	\$650
State Tournament	\$0	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Umpire Fees	\$0	\$0	\$375	\$375	\$375
Uniform Expenses	\$325	\$715	\$715	\$715	\$715
Equipment Expenses	\$705	\$270	\$270	\$270	\$270

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Administration (postage, printing, etc)	\$0	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600
Clinics and Coaches (assumes no paid coaches)	\$0	\$1800	\$1800	\$1800	\$1800
Total Team Cost	\$1225	\$3930	\$5030	\$5355	\$5355
Per Player Cost ³	\$111.36	\$357	\$457	\$487	\$487

¹ League Fee includes entry fee for State Qualifier Tournament

² Allowance for tournament entry fees

³ Per player cost estimate is based on 11 players per team

PLAYER EXPECTATIONS

Practice

Players are expected to attend all practices, games and tournaments. Coaches may excuse a player when notified in advance of any scheduled church activities, school activities, or other legitimate reason that prevents a player participating. Players can expect to practice 2-3 times a week, for 60-90 minutes, with additional game days / tournament weekends during the season.

Player and Coach Relations

Every coach and player should be treated with dignity and respect. Any player who feels she is not being treated appropriately should discuss the issue with her coach. If speaking with the coach does not resolve the issue please refer to BFA's grievance policy.

Batting Expectations

Coaches will be responsible for rotating the batting order to the best of their ability. This will allow each player to get as close to the same amount of plate appearances as possible during League games in order to develop each players hitting skills. This applies to players who attend the vast majority of the games and practices while maintaining a good attitude and being a good team member. Part-time players who frequently miss practices or games should not expect to play as often.

Pitcher Expectations

Coaches will be responsible to the best of their ability to identify game time opportunities for pitchers developing their skills. These opportunities will generally be during league games.

Fielding Position Expectations

Players will be given playing time at a variety of fielding positions to allow them to be the most successful and safe. Pitchers and catchers will also be rotated to develop as multi-position players. Players may begin to identify a position preference at the 12U level and may choose to pursue a starting spot at any position on the field. Every effort will be made to develop the skills necessary for every player to play at multiple positions in addition to her preferred position.

Playing Time Expectations

Coaches will be responsible, to the best of their ability, to insure players get as close to the same number of innings played in the field and at bat, as possible during League games. This applies to players who attend the vast majority of the games and practices while maintaining a good attitude and being a good team member. Part-time players who frequently miss practices or games should not expect to play as often.

Each team is required to keep the normal and ordinary game statistics and attendance records for the team. The game statistics should show innings played and at bats by game and for the entire season for each player. If requested by the board, the coach will be asked to provide statistics that will verify compliance to this policy.

FALL LEAGUE (Traveling Teams only)

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Fall league allows players an opportunity to learn new aspects of the game in a less intense, shorter season, environment.

- Registration is typically mid-July.
- The season runs mid/late August through September.
- Fall teams typically consist of 11 to 13 players.
- Evaluations are conducted by current and former BFA Coaches, and/or others selected by the Vice President of Development.
- Team Formation and Selection will follow the same guidelines as the summer season.
- Players generally register at the age level they would play the following summer season, however the league has granted exceptions allowing a player that does not feel ready to move up to the next age level to play down in the fall.
- Practices are typically twice a week.
- There are three league double headers played on a weekend day, one State Qualifier Tournament played on a weekend day, and one State Tournament played over two days during the last weekend of the season.

APPENDIX A

In-House Program

Player Eligibility, Registration and Tryouts:

Our in-house league will not have tryouts. Teams will be formed to maximize player experience by trying to honor friend request and balance experience and age. Our goal for this league is to give all girls an opportunity to try fastpitch and learn about the game; we will aim for all teams to be of similar skill level. BFA will make every effort to place all registered players on a team. Our ideal roster is 10 players, but it may vary if needed based on registration numbers

Parent Expectations:

Due to the younger ages requiring more hands-on instruction, all parents are expected to help the team in some way. There are many roles that will need to be filled, but please be prepared to help on the field at practices and games.

Length of Season:

The in-house season runs from April through June. Indoor practices begin in April, changing to outdoor practices, as weather permits. There will be a practice or game two nights each week with an end-of – year in-house tournament at the end of June.

League rules: We will follow Minnesota Softball rules for 8UY.