



LFSA 2017 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

General Membership Meeting – 2018 Commissioner’s Update

January 11, 2018

2017 LFSA Program Highlights

-Registration in our program continues to be strong with 230+ players participating in this summer’s programs and an additional 120+ players participating in fall programs.

-Traveling numbers were again solid with Fall Ball growth in particular, up 15+ players in 2017, which bodes well for future numbers. Our In-House numbers remains strong nearly twice the number from 2015 levels.

-LFSA is recognized as one of the largest and most competitive softball programs in Minnesota fielding a total of 34 teams in 2017.

- 2017 marked the second year of continued significant investment in the growth of our Minnesota ICE Club team for 14U and above. Kathy Niederkorn, who will speak later, is leading ICE in a full-time, paid position (our only one). ICE is designed to provide a competitive and affordable club team option based in Lakeville so Players don't have to play for more expensive and less convenient Club options like Speed or Sting. The ICE Program is already highly competitive with the 16U Olson-Zins team winning the 16U Gold NAFA Northern Nationals in 2016 and with both 14U and 16U teams performing well at competitive tournaments in the upper Midwest throughout the 2017 season.

-While we remain one of the largest organizations in Minnesota, we had been experiencing a significant drop off from previous years. 2015 was a year of stabilizing

and rebuilding a strong base and that continued in 2016, but Club Ball and other sports will continue to have a significant impact on our Association, in particular at 14U and up.

- We also significantly expanded the Board in 2017 and that will continue in 2018. LFSA Board members -- and for our overall Program -- is built upon VOLUNTEERS, the lifeblood of LFSA. We had some 1500 volunteer hours in 2017 and 97% were filled.

-We are adding four new Board positions in 2018 and will have a detailed discussion on them a bit later in the agenda.

-We field teams at every skill level ensuring EVERY Player who wants to play in Lakeville will have a chance to play, develop, grow and have fun as a Softball Player, as this is the core goal of our Association.

-Development was a major focus in 2017 and that will continue in 2018. We continued Summer Clinics with Minnesota Fastpitch Academy and we had a large Winter Clinics focused on a variety of skills and positions in 2017. In 2017 LFSA is running the Clinic with the assistance of leading local instructors versus in 2016 when Sting conducted it and previously when Sean Hall led it. This is the result of significant investment in player development and that will continue. We will also expand focus on Coach development.

-Lakeville continues to field competitive teams at every level of play. This is evident by the success our teams have had in league play and numerous tournaments this past year (our ICE and Traveling Directors will highlight these upcoming).

-We also participated for the third time in Family Fun night held in May at Ames Arena, and our participation attracted at least five new players to LFSA.

Fields

-Each year LFSA assesses opportunities to improve the fields and facilities that are the workhorse of our program. We continue to look at both independent and partner projects to improve these assets as we use fields at 7 separate locations in Lakeville.

-We have teams playing at Aronson, Lakeview, Lake Marion, Kenwood, Century, Lakeville North and Lakeville South nearly every evening in the summer.

- Each year LFSA also supports the High School programs in support of the ability to use their fields.

- We were also able to secure major investment upcoming for Aronson drainage/irrigation and without the expected \$18K expense to LFSA thanks to our partnership with the City of Lakeville.

- We do expect significant disruptions to operations at Aronson in 2019-2020 as Hwy 50 construction continues eastward. We will keep everyone updated on how this progresses and implications for play at Aronson over the course of 2018.

Equipment

- LFSA works hard to continue providing the best equipment possible for players.

- Specifically, we provide bats, catching equipment and balls along with supporting equipment such as pitching machines and development tools.

- This year LFSA spent significant money on new equipment for the program including 20+ new sets of Cather gear, after a complete revamp of the In-house equipment, as well as a revamp of uniforms. Major investments include a new net at Kenwood, and the potential need in 2018 for a new Toro for field support at Aronson.

Player & Coach Development

- Player and Coach development is an important responsibility of LFSA.

- LFSA again held a two-day coaches clinic last spring, which was well attended by our traveling coaches. We also held an In House coaches clinic. The clinics provide our coaches with a lot of basic coaching instruction along with handouts that contain many drills that they can implement in their practices. This is an area that we are looking at additional ways to better equip our coaches so they can provide a great experience for the participants on their teams.

- Each year LFSA contributes to furthering education of the sport by reimbursing coaches for clinics.

- This past year we continued our commitment to player development by offering pitching and catching clinics with qualified instructors. We had 25 players participate in these clinics.

-We also provided open gym time at Lakeville Schools for both individual and team workouts.

Tournaments

-Our Tournaments are considered some of the best in the metro area. Our midsummer gem, the Grand Slam attracted 48 teams in 2017. We had teams from four states and Canada attend.

-Our Classic tournament, held in the spring, also attracted 48 teams for B and C level players. We had teams from 3 states attend and the Tourney was 30% larger in 2017 versus 2016!

-We were also chosen for the eighth consecutive year to host state tournament games at Aronson, which brought numerous teams to Lakeville.

-Again this fall we were given the opportunity to host Sunday Fall Ball league games as well as fall state and qualifier tournaments. With a lot of help from volunteers, these tournaments have continued a tradition of success on the field and are a profitable form of fundraising for our organization.

MN ICE Program

Kathy N will provide more perspective shortly. Our ICE Program is competitive, affordable, and local. We are very excited that Kathy is aboard and building out our competitive Club program!

Volunteer Program:

-The volunteer program supported numerous events this year. Including tournaments, field days and tryouts.

-Of the 1,500 plus volunteer hours needed to support our program, 97% were filled by the membership (up from 90% in 2015).

-The volunteer program allowed LFSA's tournaments to increase their profitability by a significant amount. The Classic and Grand Slam tournaments are LFSA's largest fundraising opportunities. These fundraising opportunities allow our organization to

keep program costs reasonable and provide funds for capital improvements for the fields, dugouts and concession stand.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2018

-The new board will focus on a number of initiatives that continue the LFSA tradition of excellence within our community-based organization.

-Continued focus on program organization by implementing and maintaining a program schedule and by developing board duties that can be passed on to newly elected board members.

-LFSA will work with the city and school district to assess improvements that add to the safety and enjoyment of play at all of our fields.

-The board plans to continue their commitment to capital improvements. Future projects include additional amenities at our fields associated with the Hwy 50 construction (more news to come on this throughout 2018).

-We will continue our efforts to develop coaches by offering numerous opportunities for them to learn and grow as coaches and the investment in a new Coach Development Director.

-What makes our organization so successful is the tireless commitment of board members, coaches and parents. We should be very proud of the sacrifice and compromise these people make to ensure an opportunity for all players to participate in our program and develop their skills. Their commitment continues to create a strong base of players for the future of Lakeville.

Thanks to the many volunteers that make this organization a success.

ITEMS FOR VOTE

We have several board positions and support roles open with LFSA and we need your help! This is a great opportunity to help introduce youth to recreational and competitive sports and to instill in them the principles of sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage and respect. With your help, we are able to provide the youth fastpitch softball players in our community with the best experience possible.

The bottom line is without your support LFSA would not, and will not, be able to continue. We NEED your support so that your Players and those that will follow can have an amazing Softball experience.

2018 New LFSA Board Members (nominee supported by 2017 LFSA Board included):

- Traveling Director – Bill Cook (moving from Player Dev Dir)
- Player Development Director – Cliff Yandle
- Coach Development Director – Niki Vang
- In-House Director – Andra Davis
- Tournament Director – Julie Rasmussen / Todd Rasmussen (Co-Position)
- Fundraising & Events Director – Trent Hochsprung
- Corporate Sponsor Director – Bob Curtis
- Volunteer Director or "Member Services Director" – Heidi Ulwelling

The LFSA Board may also recommend 1-2 “Member at Large” positions for 2018 (open discussion to follow).

Notes:

- All other positions are completing their second year of a two-year term.
- The Commissioner vote is not required given the 2017 vote was for Bill Hoffman to serve in 2017 and Heather Myhre to complete the second year serving in 2018 (Hoffman agreed to a third year as Commissioner extending his 2015-2016 term by one year). The Commissioner vote is up again at the 2019 Annual Meeting.

16U Team and Team Formation Process:

Proposal by Tori Holt to form new 16U LFSA team.

Here are the sections of the LFSA Operational Handbook updated December 2017 relevant to the discussion:

10U-16U teams are for players of the appropriate age level. LFSA will attempt to place all players based on the tryout process and field teams at all levels with the number of players needed to field a team. Players below 14U are not allowed to “play up” per MN Softball policy. 14U players are allowed to “play up” if there are insufficient numbers to form a 16U team(s) and by doing so the players “playing up” would not cause the 14U level not to have a team/teams. Any such movement requires the approval of the Board.

Team Formation Philosophy:

LFSA strives to place players on the appropriate team level based on skills. Every attempt will be made to ensure that a fair and impartial process is used with regular review of processes used by other surrounding Associations across a variety of Youth Sports.

The tryout process will be managed by the Traveling League Director.

- a. *Tryouts will be conducted in the spring.*
- b. *The Traveling League Director with input from the Board can recommend changes to the tryout dates for all ages.*
- c. *Tryouts will be conducted based on a comprehensive evaluation for each player.*
- d. *An alternate date will be offered for players unable to attend the scheduled tryout date due to injury, illness or a pre-communicated absence.*
- e. *External evaluators will be used for purposes of fairness in assessing each player at the various evaluation stations. Additional volunteers will be used in non-scoring roles*
- f. *A score sheet will be completed by an evaluator for each player assessed.*
- g. *g. The tryout process will focus on the following skills for each player:*
 - *Hitting*
 - *Bunting*
 - *Infield*
 - *Outfield*
 - *Throwing (power and accuracy)*
 - *Base running (optional at Traveling Director discretion)*

Number of Teams:

Traveling teams represent Lakeville in competition with other communities. LFSA will establish as many competitive teams as possible in each age category dependent on the number of tryout applicants, pitching talent available, and coach volunteers. The number of A teams, B teams and C teams will be determined based on available talent and tryout information and as determined by the Commissioner, Traveling Director and another named Director that has 3 plus years of experience or is appointed by the Commissioner.

LFSA is affiliated with the Tri-County and MMFL associations and adheres to the rules established by these organizations. LFSA is sanctioned with NAFA and ASA. If a team wishes to join other organizations, it is at the discretion and costs of the teams. Any such team must receive LFSA Board approval prior to doing so.

Player/Team Selection:

Traveling teams shall be determined by a number of factors including:

- *Try-out results. (Top 15 scorers are considered and top pitcher and catcher)-80%*
- *Coaches input-including written evaluations, quantitative summer league review and verbal input- 20%*

Player(s) of a selected head coach will automatically make the team coached by her parent, if requested. This does not apply to assistant coaches. The head coach's player must be at the appropriate age level with the exception of 14U+ players in cases where having a player "play up" increases the overall number of available LFSA at 14-16-18U.

The Team Selection Committee will determine final team selection, made up of: LFSA Commissioner, Travel Director & one additional named Director that has 3 years of Board experience or as appointed by the Commissioner. Members with players on the specific team will be excluded from the process until their player is placed on a team. A simple majority is required for approval. If approval cannot be achieved, a special Board session will be called to mediate.

A coach not willing to cooperate with the team selection process may be required to step aside from the volunteer coaching assignment. A simple majority vote of the LFSA Board is sufficient to approve a team roster or remove a coach for non-cooperation.

Team size will be limited by the constraints of ASA, MMFL, USSSA rules and regulations. It is suggested that traveling team size range from 11 to 13 players.