



Hotlanta Softball League
Rules and Regulations
Open Divisions

Adopted by Hotlanta Softball League Board March 9, 2024

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SECTION 1: RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE HSL OPEN DIVISION

- 1.1 A League, to function properly and smoothly, must have a set of documents that govern organization and operations. The governing documents of the Hotlanta Softball League (HSL) are the Constitution and Open Division Rules and Regulations. League rules must be understood by members, managers, and players. An electronic copy of the Rules and Regulations adopted each year by the Winter Council (also known as HSL Board) will be provided to each team representative at the Spring Delegate meeting.
- 1.2 The Winter Council shall have the authority to suspend specific sections of the Rules and Regulations during times of emergency or when situations arise, and it is impossible or impractical to convene necessary Council(s) to formerly amend the Rules and Regulations. The Executive Council and/or the Softball Council must follow these guidelines:
 - A. Declare a State of Emergency and the rationale for declaration.
 - B. Identify which section(s) of the Rules and Regulations are being suspended.
 - C. Identify the duration of the suspension, not to exceed 12-months.
 - If the declaration is made by the Executive Council, the Softball Council may call a special meeting following the procedures laid out in Article 7.1 of the HSL Constitution and can overturn and/or amend the emergency declaration by not less than 75% of the delegates.
 - In addition to suspending parts of the Rules and Regulations, under an emergency declaration, the Executive Council and/or Softball Council may put temporary rules in place to ensure the safety of the league, players, coaches, umpires, fans, and guests. These temporary rules may not exceed 12 months unless added to the Rules and Regulations via the procedures as spelled out in Article 8.1 of the HSL Constitution.

* Amendments to the Rules and Regulations can be made pursuant to Article 8 of the HSL Constitution.

SECTION 2: DIVISIONS OF PLAY

- 2.1 The Open Division may/will be comprised of levels of competitive play consistent with the divisions established by IPS (i.e., A, B, C, D, E, and Legends Divisions). Additional divisions may be added to further the objectives of the Organization.
- 2.2 All team and player caps for GSWS qualifying divisions will not exceed those established by IPS.
- 2.3 In order to qualify for a GSWS qualifying division, teams must meet the team composite ratings as defined by IPS.
- 2.4 In order to foster new membership, additional Divisions may be established which may or may not be eligible for the GSWS. These Divisions may or may not comply with ratings of Divisions as established by IPS. Individual players may be eligible to be picked-up for GSWS play based upon their IPS ratings.

2.5 Divisional Games

A. Games played between teams where the Ratings Cap is different:

- i. Games will not count in the standings.
- ii. Game/Player Statistics – Statistics cannot be used by any coach for the purpose of a Game Protest, Ratings Review or Rating Reduction request.

B. Games played between teams where the Ratings Cap is the same:

- i. Games will count in the standings.
- iii. Game/Player Statistics - Statistics can be used by any coach for the purpose of a Game Protest, Ratings Review or Rating Reduction request.

SECTION 3: HSL MEMBERSHIP

3.1 “Team” Membership in the Organization shall require dues in an amount per team, per season, as set by the Executive Council (see HSL Policy Table A Fees & Fines). Divisional declaration must be made upon payment of team dues.

3.2 “Playing” Membership in the Organization shall require dues in an amount per person, per season as set by the Executive Council (see HSL Policy Table A Fees & Fines). “Playing” Membership shall be defined as:

- A. An eligible paid player excluding non-player.
- B. Permitted to participate fully in all activities of the Organization, including voting privileges.
- C. When representing, referring to or communicating with our league on social media or in a public, online space, members of Hotlanta Softball League are expected to maintain honesty, integrity and respect for others. Bullying and cruelty have no place within our league—online or in person. While HSL has no intention of ever monitoring or scrutinizing your online presence, if brought to our attention, behaviors that are not representative of our values will be addressed.

3.3 “Non-Playing” Members in the Organization shall require dues in an amount per person, per season, as set by the Executive Council (see HSL Policy Table A Fees & Fines). “Non-Playing” Membership shall be defined as:

- A. Any person other than an eligible player.
- B. Permitted to participate fully in all activities of the Organization, excluding voting privileges.

3.4 No refunds of team or membership dues will be made by HSL after the start of regular season play. A team or player may plead a hardship case to the Executive Council to waive this rule.

3.5 HSL members and non-players ONLY are allowed on the field and bench area.

3.6 HSL cannot be held responsible for the actions taken by any media or persons that publish names and/or photographs of any HSL Member.

3.7 Any person, team, or sponsor who presents a check to HSL that is not honored by the bank will be required to pay a fee as set by the Executive Council (see HSL Policy Table A Fees & Fines) and remit any dues via certified check or money order before that person or

team is allowed to participate in HSL. Any person, team or sponsor who presents more than one (1) check in a calendar year, which is not honored by the bank, may be required to pay any monies due to HSL via certified check or money order for the remainder of that year and the following year.

- 3.8 The Executive Council may declare any person or sponsor ineligible for membership in HSL if such person has any debt to HSL and has failed to make satisfactory arrangements for repayment of such debt.
- 3.9 Playing, non-playing, and members in possession of assets belonging to HSL shall return such assets to HSL on demand. Any problems regarding assets shall be resolved by the Executive Council.
- 3.10 Committee Members - Any person who is in "Good Standing" with HSL can be on a committee. The EC Liaison or Committee Chair can request a committee member to be removed from the committee. The majority of the EC must approve the removal of the committee member. A hearing must be held including all parties involved before the committee member can be removed from a committee.

SECTION 4: TEAM MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Team membership shall be limited to twenty (20) players per roster. Team membership shall include unlimited "non-playing" members.
 - A. Team registration will run for 30 days. Start date to be determined each year by the Executive Council. Team fees are due no later than 45 days from the start of Team registration. Cases of hardship may be appealed to the Executive Council.
 - i. Exception – Any team that is formed because of the New Player Clinic will be exempt from the above timeframe for payment.
 - A. A team roster with player ratings must be presented to the Assistant Commissioner before the HSL regular season begins on a date set by the Executive Council (see Policy on Annual Adjustments). A finalized team roster and player ratings, for submission to IPS, must be presented to the Assistant Commissioner by a date set by the Executive Council (see Policy on Annual Adjustments).
 - B. Any revisions to the team roster or player ratings must be submitted to the Assistant Commissioner before noon on the Thursday before the next scheduled game for the revision(s) to take effect. It is the responsibility of the coach or manager to submit appropriate registration forms and/or dues to the HSL Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, or Officer of the Day before that member participates.
 - C. A team must satisfy other requirements for participation as may be established by IPS or ASANA.
- 4.2 A player may not change teams without being released by their current coach, who then has 48 hours to confirm via any communication. A player may not change teams after the

start of the third week of play of the regular season. To change teams, a player must inform both involved coaches and the Assistant Commissioner in writing of their intent prior to the team change deadline, to be eligible to play on their new team. If the team change is not completed and the roster listing the new player is not submitted by the roster submission deadline, then the player will be ineligible to play that week. A player may plead hardship case to the Executive Council to waive this rule.

- 4.3 New players may not be added to a team roster after that team has played more than 50% of its scheduled games. Cases of hardship may be appealed to the Executive Council.

SECTION 5: INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION

- 5.1 Every member must complete a HSL registration form, pay membership dues (see HSL Policy Table A Fees & Fines), and submit any other document deemed necessary by the Executive Council before they are eligible to participate. A member must submit their own form.
- 5.2 In any case where this procedure is not followed properly, the associated coach and/or manager will share responsibility with the member for any consequences that may result in terms of liability. The member and the coach and/or manager in question may all face possible disciplinary action.
- 5.3 A playing member must have an approved IPS or ASANA rating on file with HSL before they are eligible to play.
- 5.4 A player must declare which IPS member association will be their IPS Gay Softball World Series qualifying city upon registration. According to the IPS Governing Rules Manual Section 1 20.10, When a player registers in any association, they MUST declare whether the IPS member association is that player's qualifying association. Additionally, the player must also declare any other association the player has, will, or may play in for all or part of the qualifying season in that calendar year. A player who registers and declares only one (1) association shall consider that association that player's qualifying association. Once a player has declared an association, the player may not declare another association as their qualifying association.
- 5.5 Playing in 2 Divisions:
- A. WNT (Women's, Non Binary, Transgender) Division – Players interested in playing in both the Open Division and the WNT division will need to pay the primary player fee during Player Registration. A secondary team player fee will need to be paid during the Secondary Player Registration.

SECTION 6: PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

HSL Open Rules and Regulations will govern player eligibility. Violation of these Guidelines will make the player in question ineligible for participation in that division of play. Any Fall season sanctioned by HSL will abide by regular season guidelines.

6.1 Regular Season Guidelines

- A. A player must be duly registered to only one open division team. Eligible players may also register for WNT.
- B. A player may only play on the team to which they are registered.
- C. A player must be at least eighteen (18) years of age on or before the date they first play a league game.
- D. A player is not eligible to play while on suspension.
- E. Players under the age of twenty-one (21) years of age are not allowed to participate in functions that are hosted at establishments that require a minimum age of twenty-one (21) to enter.
- F. A player must satisfy all other requirements for participation as may be established by IPS, ASANA, and/or HSL.

6.2 HSL Commissioners Cup Guidelines

- A. A player must satisfy all Regular Season Guidelines as described in Section 6.1.
- B. A player must have been present and listed for participation in a minimum of 50% of their respective HSL Division team's regular season games as determined by the official line-up cards. Only regular season line-up cards including the first and last name of the player in question will be considered for determining that player's eligibility in the Tournament. Cases of hardship may be appealed to the Executive Council.

6.3 GSWS Tournament Guidelines

- A. A player must satisfy all Regular Season Guidelines as described in Section 6.1.
- B. A player must have been present and listed for participation in a minimum of 50% of their respective HSL Division team's regular season games as determined by the official lineup cards. Only regular season lineup cards including the first and last name of the player in question will be considered for determining that player's eligibility in the tournament. Cases of hardship may be appealed to the Executive Council.
- C. A player must have declared Atlanta as their IPS GSWS qualifying city upon registration for the regular season.

6.4 ADA Rule

- A. HSL will adopt USA Softball Rule 4 Section 2 regarding ADA rule for regular season, Commissioners Cup, and any HSL associated tournaments.

SECTION 7: SCHEDULES AND STANDINGS

- 7.1 The HSL season schedule will be prepared by the Executive Council after the team registration deadline. HSL Team Representatives will be issued a season schedule as soon as it becomes final.
- 7.2 Team Representatives will be issued HSL line-up cards before the season starts. Home team will be designated on the schedule.
- 7.3 It is the responsibility of the Assistant Commissioner or their designee to inform the team representatives as to whether or not the field is playable. It is the team representative's responsibility to inform the players.
- 7.4 Cancelled games will be rescheduled at the discretion of the Executive Council. The Secretary will notify the team representative of each team involved in the revised schedule.
- 7.5 In the event of change in weather conditions after a game has started, the umpire can suspend a game until weather conditions improve or cancel a game. USA Softball (USA) Rules apply for all suspended and/or cancelled games.
- 7.6 Request for schedule changes will be decided by the Executive Council. Teams must give a written notice via email to the HSL Assistant Commissioner for a possible schedule change by the date that team fees are due.. The Executive Council has the right to refuse a schedule change request.
- 7.7 If a team disbands or withdraws from the league during the season for any reason, all scheduled opponents of that team shall receive a win for next scheduled game for the remainder of the season. All previously played game standings will remain.
- 7.8 Standings will be kept by HSL and will be published regularly.

SECTION 8: LENGTH OF GAME

- 8.1 A game will have a time limit, with no new innings starting after the time limit expires. The time limit for all games will be determined prior to the start of the regular season by the Winter Council and announced at the HSL Spring Delegate Meeting (see HSL Policy Table A Fees & Fines).
- 8.2 All tie games will continue, using the USA Softball (USA) tie-breaker rule, after the time limit expires or after seven (7) innings have been completed, until a team wins.
- 8.3 A team shall be declared winners if after five (5) completed innings, they have outscored their opponents by ten (10) runs, or fifteen (15) runs after four (4) innings, or twenty (20) runs after three (3) innings. Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the run ahead limit while at bat.
- 8.4 All Commissioners Cup Tournament Championship games will be played for a full seven (7) innings (six and one-half (6 & ½) if the home team is ahead) with no time limit and/or run rule. This will apply to the championship and if games.
- 8.5 Rule changes related to time limits and scheduling may be implemented by the Executive Council as deemed necessary before and during the season and/or post-season.
- 8.6 If a member of the Executive Council is involved in any of the games in question, they will not be involved in any of the decisions be made regarding status of the games in question.
- 8.7 If an in-progress game is cancelled due to weather, the team who is ahead at end of the last completed inning, with a minimum of 3 innings completed, will be declared the winner. If 3 innings have not been completed, the game will not count.

SECTION 9: PLAYING RULES

HSL will abide by the official softball rules adopted by USA Softball (USA) with the following exceptions:

- 9.1 HSL Rules and Regulations and an official USA Softball (USA) Rulebook will be at the field during all games to assist in resolving any potential conflicts. It is each Coach's responsibility to carry copies of these documents.
- 9.2 All HSL games shall be officiated by an USA Softball (USA) accredited umpire. If such an umpire is not available, any knowledgeable member of the HSL mutually agreed to by both managers, having both signed the official scorecard prior to the game, with Officer of the Day present, will be allowed to officiate.
- 9.3 The Home Plate Umpire will be the official scorekeeper. Prior to the start of each game, the coaches, using the HSL Line-up Card, must provide the Home Plate Umpire and the opposing coach with the official line-up including substitutes and players present but unable to play due to injury. The home team's scorebook will be the official scorebook. If the home team does not have a scorekeeper, then the visitor's scorebook will become the official scorebook at which time the umpire will note this on the official scorecard. The official HSL Line-up Card must be filled out per USA Softball (USA) rules and will determine HSL standings and player participation.
- 9.4 Official Line-up – A team shall consist of no fewer than nine (9) players. A team shall not be allowed to start or continue a game with fewer than nine (9) players. A team that begins with nine (9) players may add a tenth (10) player during the game. Such tenth (10) player must bat in the tenth (10) position in the line-up. A team that begins play with nine (9) players will be penalized with an automatic out in the tenth (10) spot in the line-up. A team that begins play with ten (10) players may end the game with nine (9) players, but the missing player becomes an automatic out in the line-up. (USA Softball (USA) Rules apply to starting line-ups with eleven (11) players.) However, HSL allows a 12th batter.
- 9.5 There will be a ten-minute (10) grace period for the first game of the day only. A team must have enough players to field a team at the designated starting time of their game or the umpire will call an official forfeit. The ten-minute (10) grace period will count as part of the official game time.
- 9.6 A team that cannot field the minimum number of players may pick-up up to 4 HSL registered players within their own division or lower. The game will be played as normal; however, the official score shall be recorded as 7-0 loss for the team picking up one or more players and 7-0 win for the opposing team. If the team is unable or unwilling to add players, it will be counted as a forfeit. Teams may only utilize this option for one scheduled day within the season. These games, while official, will not fall under the purview of the JRC. Teams must notify the umpire and the opposing coach prior to the start of the game.
- 9.7 Uniforms must consist of matching team shirts with numbers of either the front, back, and/or sleeves. If a team has more than one uniform or shirt, a player may be allowed to wear either team shirt if approved by the Officer of the Day. However, players on the same team may not wear identical numbers. The USA Softball (USA) Uniform Rule will be superseded by USA Softball

(USA) Rules related to blood-stained uniforms and open wounds (replacement uniforms will not have to match).

- 9.8 HSL will provide all bats to be used during its season for all divisions. The same bats will be provided to both teams to use during competition and must meet current USA Softball (USA) bat rules. No team member may use any other bat than those provided by HSL anywhere on the playing field, inclusive of the dugout. A team member shall be ejected from the current game if a violation of this rule occurs during game play, or for the next game for that team if the violation happens outside the game if the following is true:
- i. That team member uses a non-Pick-A-Stick approved bat on the playing field, inclusive of the dugouts, at any time the approved bats are on the field.
 - . There is no appeal to this rule as per IPS Governing Manual Chapter 10.04.
 - ii. WNT division does not use Pick-A-Stick bats.
- 9.9 A team may utilize up to one (1) courtesy runner per inning. The courtesy running may be any player listed on the line-up card submitted for that game. If the courtesy runner remains on base when their turn at bat occurs, an out will be recorded if no substitution may be inserted for the player in which the courtesy runner was used.

SECTION 10: FORFEITS

- 10.1 A team will forfeit a game for any of the following:
- A. Failure to have and maintain a minimum of nine (9) players on the field.
 - B. Quitting in defiance of an umpire's decision.
 - C. Fielding a player who is ineligible on game day.
- 10.2 In an instance where both teams forfeit a coin flip by the HSL officer of the day will determine win/lose. Both teams will be assessed fines.
- 10.3 A fine will be assessed for each forfeit. Amount will be set by Executive Council (see HSL Policy Table A Fees & Fines).
- 10.4 Teams are ineligible to play if fines are not paid by the start of their games the next scheduled week of play. After payment, a team may appeal their fine, in writing, to the Executive Council to have their money refunded.
- 10.5 A team may not be considered for the GSWS if fines are not paid.
- 10.6 A team with three (3) forfeits can play for the remainder of the season. However, any wins during that period will be losses. Appeals for reinstatement may be made, in writing, to the Executive Council.
- 10.7 A team with more than two (2) forfeits will be declared ineligible for the GSWS participation.
- 10.8 Any forfeit due to ratings protest for a player which results in a divisional change for that player or team will not be assessed a fine but will still result in a loss for that game. Such forfeits will also not count towards the Rule 10.7 forfeit limit.
- 10.9 A team may plea hardship case, in writing, to the Executive Council to waive any of these sanctions.

SECTION 11: PLAYER RATINGS

11.1 Coaches/Manager are responsible for creating and maintaining a rating for each player on their team roster as set forth by the IPS Player and Team Rating Guidelines.

11.2 A player's coach/manager may change a rating question for a player with an existing rating from a "No" to a "Yes" in conjunction with notifying in writing by submitting a revised player rating form to the Assistant Commissioner. A player is deemed to have an existing rating if a rating from the current year or prior two years is on file with HSL or IPS.

- 11.3 A coach/manger seeking to change a rating question for a player with an existing rating from a “Yes” to a “No” must obtain approval from the Judicial Review Committee (JRC).
- 11.4 Any player who currently or has previously played with HSL, moved, or played with another IPS league or team, and had their player rating reduced, will be re-reviewed during a regular or special called JRC meeting to determine if the lower rating given by another IPS league or team is justified or if the player should be re-rated.
- 11.5 Requests for rating reductions (i.e., “yes” to “no”) that involve serious private health issues may be heard by the Executive Council instead of the JRC. The Chairman of the JRC or Assistant Commissioner will decide which situations qualify as serious private health issues. The Chairman will then forward the rating reduction request to the Executive Council for a hearing to decide the request.
- 11.6 The Assistant Commissioner may elect to change a rating question from a “No” to a “Yes” after reviewing any evidence which substantiates the change. The Assistant Commissioner must present in writing the change and substantiating evidence to be approved by the Judicial Review Committee (JRC). This information must also be provided to the impacted player’s coach/manager. An appeal may be made, in writing, to the JRC within 5 days of notification of the decision. If an appeal to the JRC is successful, the Assistant Commissioner cannot alter the appealed rating until the following summer season. If the rating change is not successfully appealed, it may be changed according to the provisions of Section 11.
- 11.7 Individual players will verify their ratings by signing their initial team roster at the beginning of the season. Further, individual players will verify and sign any subsequently submitted rosters on which changes are made to such players rating, including rosters submitted because of changes made during the mid-season review.

SECTION 12: JUDICIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (JRC)

12.1 The primary purpose of the Judicial Review Committee is to ensure each player is rated appropriately according to their current skill level. The JRC will also hear protests and other grievance requests as instructed by the Executive Council.

A. Definitions:

- i. Affiliated Team: An affiliated team shall be defined as having an: A) Common General Manager/Coach/Coordinator and/or B) Common bank account and/or; C) two (2) or more shared players/coaches who are present with the team for two or more games throughout the season.
- ii. Expectations: JRC members should follow these expectations:
 - a. Make themselves aware of the HSL Rules and Regulations and Constitution
 - b. Work to understand the IPS Player Rating Guidelines
 - c. Maintain professional conduct.
 - d. Keep deliberations confidential.

12.2 Both the JRC Chair and the Assistant Commissioner shall honor all player rating changes decided by the JRC, unless overturned on appeal to the Executive Council.

12.3 JRC Chair

- A. The JRC Chair shall be appointed by the Executive Council prior to the Spring Delegate Meeting on odd years.
- B. The JRC Chair will serve a term of two full years beginning immediately after their appointment and ending when a new Chair is appointed.
- C. The JRC Chair is a member of the JRC.
- D. The Chair of the JRC shall work in conjunction with the Assistant Commissioner.
- E. The duties of the JRC Chair are as follows:
 - i. To schedule the three (3) regular JRC meetings and have this schedule distributed to all JRC representatives and HSL Coaches by the first regular season game.
 - ii. To preside over all JRC meetings.
 - iii. To provide voting sheets for each representative to allow for voting. The JRC chair will keep records of how each JRC representative votes, but those individual results will not be made public. Only the overall results will be part of the meeting minutes.
 - iv. To offer guidance and counsel to the JRC prior to and during each meeting.
 - v. To vote only if a JRC decision ends in a tie.
 - vi. To represent the JRC in any appeals to the Executive Council, they will not vote on appeal related Executive Council decisions.
 - vii. To schedule “non-regular” meetings as necessary to address player ratings requests, protests, or other hearings directed by the Executive Council. The JRC Chair shall notify JRC representatives and all HSL coaches of these “non-regular” meetings, including the time, location, and player/topic(s) to be discussed, at least five (5) days in advance.
 - viii. To report all JRC Decisions, within five (5) days to the Executive Council and to the affected coaches and specific players involved in the JRC decisions. A summary of all JRC meetings will be posted, within 14 days, on the HSL website which will serve as a communication to the Summer Council and all HSL Members.
 - ix. To screen all rating reduction and player review requests for completeness and appropriateness, and, when necessary, to decide which requests shall be deliberated at a given meeting. Every effort shall be made to hear all ratings and player review requests, and additional “non-regular” meetings shall be convened to accommodate as needed.
 - x. To oversee player attestations to their ratings prior to opening games of season.
- F. If the JRC Chair cannot be present at a JRC meeting or needs to recuse themselves, then they shall name an interim Chair from among the elected JRC members. In such cases, the interim Chair will assume all duties of the JRC Chair for that meeting or portion of the meeting.
- G. If a protest, grievance, or Rating Reduction Request being heard by the JRC involves a current HSL teammate or coach, affiliate teammate or coach, current or recent partner of the JRC Chair, or other associate for which the Chair may not be able to render an unbiased opinion, then the JRC Chair will recuse themselves from the vote only, and the JRC Chair shall name an interim Chairperson from among the JRC members assume duties for that portion of the meeting.
- H. The removal of the JRC Chair shall be determined by a majority vote of the Executive Council at a meeting with the affected members present.

12.4 JRC Representatives

A. JRC representatives shall be appointed through a nomination process. Any HSL member who would like to serve on the JRC can be nominated by themselves or by another HSL member. A 3-member Selection committee (Commissioner, Asst Commissioner and JRC Chair) will evaluate each nomination based on its own criteria and appoint applicants to the JRC. Nominees must be a paid member in good standing by the Spring Delegate Meeting.

B. Representatives serve a one (1) year term of office commencing at the Spring Delegates meeting.

C. A minimum of 1, no more than 3 representatives per division will be appointed to the JRC when applicable and at the discretion of the Selection committee. JRC members can be from the same team. Recusal process applies.

D.

E. There may be an even or odd number of JRC representatives.

F. The Executive Council, in consultation with the JRC Chair, will appoint a replacement representative from the same division to serve out the remainder of the term under the following circumstances-

- i. A representative resigns or is otherwise unable to complete their term.
- ii. A representative has two (2) unexcused absences for regular JRC meetings, or three (3) total unexcused absences in one (1) calendar year.
- iii. A representative knowingly maintains inaccurate rating of themselves, or, if they are a coach/manager, that of a member of their team.
- iv. A representative fails to follow JRC meeting rules, is disruptive to JRC meetings, or is otherwise failing to meet the expectation of an HSL representative.
- v. A JRC representative fails to complete their assigned Rating Review assignments in a timely matter.

G. Attendance at all JRC meetings is strongly encouraged. The representative may attend either in-person or via video conference format if available. Video conference is highly recommended, but not required.

H

I. All JRC representatives shall regularly watch players from all divisions, as able, to assist in future Player Review meetings.

J. If a protest, grievance, or Player Rating Review being heard by the JRC involves a current HSL teammate or coach, affiliate teammate or coach, current partner of the JRC representative, or other association for which the representative may not be able to render an unbiased opinion, then that representative will recuse themselves from the vote only. If the recusal of the representative(s) makes quorum unattainable, then the JRC Chair shall name auxiliary JRC representative(s) to serve as a voting representative for that meeting.

12.5 Auxiliary JRC Representatives

A. All HSL Head Coaches, except current HSL Executive Council members, are automatically considered auxiliary JRC representatives.

- B. Former JRC/JRC representatives or JRC/JRC Chairs, including non-coaches and retired players, may be invited by the JRC/JRC Chair to be auxiliary JRC representatives.
- C. In the event that there are insufficient JRC representatives to fulfill the quorum, then the JRC Chair may call upon an auxiliary representative to fill in as a voting representative for that meeting or a portion of that meeting.

12.6 JRC Meeting Format

- A. A quorum of 50% (rounded up) of the total number of JRC Representatives is required to convene a JRC meeting. If a quorum is unattainable with JRC representatives, then the JRC Chair may select (an) auxiliary JRC representative(s) to fill in for that meeting.
 - i. No more than 3 auxiliary JRC members may be appointed to fill in for any given JRC meeting.
- B. There shall be at 3 regular JRC meetings to be held during the season, plus the GSWS review.
 - i. After week #1
 - ii. Midseason Review, after week #5
 - iii. After week #8
- C. Additional “non-regular” meetings may be called by the JRC Chair as needed to address ratings reduction requests, player review requests, or as directed by the Executive Council.
- D. Once the JRC meeting is called to order by the JRC Chair, they will briefly go over the meeting format with the JRC and presenters. The JRC Chair will present the evidence gathered from the online form and from the JRC Representatives who observed the player in question. The presenters will then be invited to make their case. After making their case, presenters and any non JRC representatives will be asked to leave while the JRC deliberates, and then invited back to hear the JRC decision. No new evidence will be allowed during the deliberations. All evidence, for and against, must be presented in the public aspect of the meeting.
- E. JRC representatives must decide whether to vote “YES”, “NO”, or “ABSTAIN”.
- F. Following deliberation, the JRC Chair will have a vote and each JRC representative will answer yes, no, or abstain. The JRC Chair will tally the votes and advise if the vote passes or fails.
- G. A majority of “NO” votes is required to remove a question, a majority of “YES” votes is required to add a question. For all JRC meetings a “Majority” will be defined as greater than 50% of the JRC representatives who are eligible to vote on a question.
- H. The JRC Chair will inform the presenter of the JRC decision(s) immediately.

12.7 JRC Meeting Types

- A. Player Rating Reduction Requests
 - i. The JRC shall hear all requests for player rating reductions.
 - ii. A coach, manager, or player may request a ratings reduction by completing an online form as set forth by the JRC and reviewed by the Assistant Commissioner. The form MUST include evidence (see item iv. below) to support their request. Player Reduction Requests must be submitted a minimum of 72 hours before scheduled JRC meeting. Forms without documentation or submitted less than 72 hours prior to the JRC meeting will be rejected by the JRC Chair.

- iii. A clear photo of the player in question MUST be included with the online request. Forms submitted without the players photo will be rejected by the JRC Chair. This is for the benefit for the player so that all JRC representatives are familiar with them.
- iv. Scorebook data, video, testaments from other coaches, and other applicable evidence presented to the JRC, should be from HSL games and/or IPS affiliate tournaments within the last 12-months.
- v. JRC representatives will vote as they would answer the ratings question presented (i.e.: If the representative believes that the player should have that question, the representative should vote "YES".)
- vi. A simple majority of the JRC is required to remove a ratings question (i.e.: a majority of all votes cast must be "NO" to the question).
- vii. A player or coach in disagreement with the outcome of the vote may appeal the decision within 24 hours to the Executive Council as provided under Section 15 of the Rules and Regulations. Only the evidence presented to the JRC may be presented to the Executive Council. New or additional evidence may not be presented in an appeal.

B. Player Ratings Review Requests

- i. A Coach, JRC representative, or Executive Council Member may request a player review on a player from another team if they feel that player is improperly rated.
- ii. Player review requests should be submitted by completing an online form, as set forth by the JRC and reviewed by the Assistant Commissioner and MUST include evidence (see item iv. below) to support their request.
- iii. Player review requests may not be submitted after the 5th week of play.
- iv. Coaches making a player review request can include testaments from other coaches and must include scorebook evidence, video, and/or other evidence to assist the JRC during their deliberation. Evidence presented should be from HSL games and/or IPS affiliate tournaments and within the last 12-months. Player review requests that do not include any evidence will be rejected by the JRC Chair.
- v. If both the JRC Chair and the Assistant Commissioner determine the player review request submitted is unwarranted, the individual submitting the form will be notified that no further action will be taken.
- vi. If both the JRC Chair and the Assistant Commissioner determine the Ratings Review Request is warranted, the submitted form, including the evidence presented and the name of the person submitting the request, will be included as part of the JRC review of that player.
- vii. Upon receipt and determining the validity of the ratings review form, the JRC Chair will have at last three JRC representatives observe the player during the player's games. If two of the JRC representatives feel the player possesses the skill(s) in question, the player will be placed on the discussion list for the next regular or non-regular meeting. If the majority of JRC representatives reviewing the player do not agree, the JRC chair will notify the individual who initially submitted the review request that no further action will be taken.

- viii. JRC representatives who review the player in question will be required to submit an online form, as set forth by the JRC, attesting to the date, time, and specific game(s) that were observed. The form should include notations on that player's performance specific to the question(s) being reviewed and whether or not the player should be reviewed by the full JRC. This document, including the JRC representative's name, will be included as part of the JRC review process if it moves forward.
- ix. If the process moves to the full JRC, the JRC Chair will notify both the player and the coach of that player that a ratings review request was submitted, and the player will be reviewed at an upcoming JRC meeting. This notification will occur after the player has been observed and determined further review is warranted. The player and the coach of that player will be informed at least 7 days prior of the date, time, and location of the meeting. The JRC Chair will disclose the identity of the individual submitting the Ratings Request Form to the JRC, the player in question, the player's coach or any other person. The Commissioner and/or Assistant Commissioner will be informed of the request submitted and the identity of the coach submitting the form.
- x. The coach and/or player may attend the JRC meeting and submit documentation for defense at this review.
- xi. JRC voting follows the same format as for Rating Reduction Requests.
- xii. A player or coach in disagreement with the results of the vote may appeal the decision within 24 hours to the Executive Council as provided under Section 15 of the Rules and Regulations. Only the evidence presented to the JRC may be presented to the Executive Council. New or additional evidence may not be presented in an appeal.

C. Mid-Season IPS GSWS Review

- i. The JRC shall convene in the middle of each season to conduct a mid-season review of certain player ratings. This is one of the three (3) mandatory JRC meetings to be scheduled by the JRC Chair at the start of the season.
- ii. Player ratings to be reviewed may be submitted to the JRC Chair by Coaches, Executive Council members, or JRC representatives.
- iii. To promote efficiency, the JRC Chair shall decide from among the requests which player ratings will be reviewed during this meeting. Any player rating not reviewed during this meeting may be reviewed at a subsequent regular or "non-regular" meeting through the normal Player Rating Reduction or Player Review requests.
- iv. If there are any player reviews submitted that will result in a vote by the JRC representatives at this meeting, the JRC Chair will notify the player and the coach of that player. The player and/or coach may attend the meeting and submit documentation in defense of this review.
- v. JRC voting will follow the same format as ratings reduction requests.
- vi. The JRC may also review ratings of all HSL players and determine if there are any other players that should be monitored or re-evaluated. The JRC may not vote on the identified players until the next regular or non-regular meeting to allow the player and the coach of the player to be notified and provide documentations for defense of the review.

D. World Series Reviews

- i. All players included on a GSWS roster shall be reviewed.
- ii. IPSCoaches of World Series teams are responsible for providing a complete roster with accurate player ratings to the JRC Chair and Assistant Commissioner.
- iii. World Series Roster Reviews will be handled by a one-off meeting between the Coach, Asst Commissioner and JRC Chair, to be completed 2 weeks prior to the IPS roster deadline.

E. Special Reviews

- i. Any player who is disqualified from an IPS or IPS member city tournament for improper rating MUST be reviewed by the JRC prior to that player being eligible to participate in any future HSL game.
- ii. The Executive Council may request that the JRC review the ratings of new or transferring players.
- iii. The Executive Council, JRC representative, or JRC Chair may request that a particular player be reviewed by the JRC if they feel that player's rating is inaccurate and causing an unfair advantage to their team, or could place the league at risk for fine or other repercussion if that player were to be disqualified from a future tournament due to an improper rating.
- iv. A ratings question may be added to a player under review if a simple majority of the JRC concurs.
- v. Any player returning to the league with a reduced rating based upon rule 11.4 will automatically be placed under review.

F. Protests

- i. The JRC shall hear all game protests, as directed by the Executive Council.
- ii. No more than 2 representatives from each team involved in the protest may present evidence at a protest hearing.
- iii. Following presentation of the evidence, team representatives and any non JRC representatives will be asked to leave while the JRC deliberates.
- iv. At least 66% of the JRC attendees must concur for a protest to be upheld.
- v. Penalties for upheld protests, based upon player ratings, will follow the IPS Governing Manual sections 50.33 and 50.34. The player and/or team may appeal the penalty to the Executive Council.
- vi. If an upheld game protest involves improper player ratings, the player in question will automatically receive the question(s) that were upheld as part of the protest.
- vii. JRC decisions may be appealed within 24 hours to the full Executive Council, which can overturn the JRC decision with a 66% Board majority.
- viii. Only the evidence presented to the JRC may be presented to the Executive Council. New or additional evidence may not be presented in an appeal.
- ix. Any player who becomes ineligible for divisional or league play as a result of a JRC decision shall remain ineligible to play in their current division, unless their appeal to the Executive Council is successful.

- x. A player who is ruled ineligible for their current division due to an increase in their rating may be permitted to play in the division in which they qualify for with their new rating with the approval of the Assistant Commissioner. If approved:
 - a. The requirements under Section 4.2 will be waived.
 - b. The total games of the player's participation in both divisions will be combined to determine eligibility for the HSL Commissioners Cup and the GSWS Tournament under Section 6.2 & 6.3.
 - c. The Assistant Commissioner and Competition Coordinator will help, to the best of their ability, to find a new team for any players that must change divisions.

G. Special Grievances

- i. The JRC may be asked by the Executive Council to hear special grievances that fall outside the purview of the Executive Council and not involve player ratings.
- ii. Unless otherwise directed by the Executive Council, a simple majority of the JRC is sufficient to render a decision on the question.

SECTION 13: RULE VIOLATIONS

13. 1. Violations will result in a reprimand or suspension for a period to be determined. Game suspensions may continue into the next season. The severity of the consequences will be determined by the Executive Council.

A Rules Violation/Grievance can be submitted in writing to the EC. An email (suggested Title of email: "Official Grievance or Complaint") would need to be sent to the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner outlining the Rules Violation/Grievance. The Commissioner/Assistant Commissioner must respond within 72 hours back to the submitter that the Rules Violation/Grievance has been received and the EC is further researching and will communicate next steps. B. Note: Before the Executive Council renders a decision and a Rules Violation/Grievance, all parties involved will have an opportunity to present their side of the situation before the Executive Council. The Executive Council will notify the parties involved as to when their request will be heard. The parties involved will have 48 hours to respond if they choose to go before the Executive Council.

SECTION 14: PROTESTS

14.1 All USA Softball protest rules will apply, unless otherwise stated in HSL's Constitution or Open Rules and Regulations.

14.2 The official HSL protest must be filed in writing with the Assistant Commissioner or Officer of the Day within twenty-four (24) hours after the game in question. It must be accompanied by a protest fee (certified checks, money orders, or electronic bank transfer only) as set forth by Rule 14.3. If the protest or appeal is granted, the fee will be retained by HSL.

14.3 The protest fees are as follows:

- A. Non-rating protests (see Policy on Annual Adjustments).
- B. Rating protests (see Policy on Annual Adjustments).
- C. If a protest is upheld, the protest fees are returned.
- D. If only a portion of the protest is upheld, monies shall be returned based on sliding scale for the protest filing fee and challenged question fee, pursuant to the guidelines set forth by IPS Governing Manual Chapter 50.15
- E. If the protest is denied, all fees are nonrefundable.

14.4 The Judicial Rating Committee, according to the process in Section 12.7 F, will hear protests. No ratings related protests are permitted during the Commissioners Cup tournament.

14.5 A protest of a player and/or team's IPS rating will be considered as an USA eligibility protest and the protest fee applies.

14.6 Any Ratings Protest that results in a ratings increase shall not result in a forfeit unless it moves the Player or Team to a higher division.

14.7 Any team participating in a IPS rated tournament that is successfully protested may be subject to further sanctions by HSL Executive Council.

SECTION 15: SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES GRIEVANCE/APPEAL PROCESS

15.1 The person or team in question must be challenged in writing by a current member of HSL to the HSL Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner.

15.2 Special Circumstances Grievance is defined as but not limited to: A.

Any rule violations whether intentional or not

B. Any flagrant unsportsmanlike behavior

C. Any verbal or physical abuse directed at an HSL Officer, HSL Member, Spectator, Umpire, or facility personnel.

15.3 Rating issues are not considered a Special Circumstance or Grievance and should be brought before the JRC.

15.4 The written challenge must state the name of the person or team in question, the reason for the challenge, and a specific list of charges that prompted the challenge.

15.5 The challenge must be presented to the HSL Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner for a challenge of any Executive Council member(s), for presentation to the Executive Council. (All subsequent references to the Commissioner in the Article shall be interpreted as the HSL Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner as appropriate to the challenge, except that the HSL Commissioner shall not preside over any meeting in which the HSL Commissioner is the person being challenged, in which case the Assistant Commissioner shall preside.) The executive council will have a hearing to determine if the Special Circumstance or Grievance is valid, before calling a meeting of the Summer Council. If a member of the Executive Council is part of the Special Circumstance or Grievance that member or their teammate, Coach, roommate, current or former partner cannot attend the Hearing.

15.6 If the Special Circumstance or Grievance is valid. The HSL Commissioner will call a meeting of the Softball Council and notify the Executive Council, the person or team representative of the team in question, and the person issuing the challenge at least five (5) days before the meeting as to the date, time, place, and reason for the meeting.

15.7 The HSL Commissioner will preside over the meeting. The person issuing the challenge will read his or her challenge. The person or team representative of the team being challenged will respond to the challenge after such reading is finished. There will be a maximum of thirty (30) minutes allowed for questions and comments from the Softball Council. The person issuing the challenge and the person or team representative for the team being challenged will both leave the room for a maximum of thirty (30) minutes to allow for discussion by the Softball Council. At the end of the discussion by the Softball Council, the Softball Council will vote by secret ballot to determine whether the person or team is in violation of HSL Guidelines.

15.8 A person or team will be considered in violation if 75% of the Softball Council in attendance votes in favor of the challenge. The specific penalty assessed for the violation will be determined by the nature of the infraction, based on the HSL Constitution and HSL Rules and Regulations. Possible penalties include, but are not limited to, reprimand, probation, suspension for a period not to exceed five (5) games, severe suspension lasting no fewer than six (6) games and a year on probation, loss of voting privileges, expulsion, removal from office, ineligibility for membership or ineligibility to compete in a particular subdivision. The period of time associated with the penalty, if applicable, will be determined at the time the penalty is assessed. Suspension may extend into next season.

15.9 At the end of the vote tabulation by the HSL Commissioner, the HSL Commissioner will assemble all persons involved and the decision of the Softball Council will be presented.

15.10 Any person or team declared ineligible for membership will remain so until they petition the Executive Council for reinstatement.

15.11 Any person or team declared ineligible for membership may petition the Executive Council for reinstatement by filing such a petition with the HSL Commissioner before said person or team begins HSL play. Any reinstatement will follow the grievance/appeal process guidelines above, except the person issuing the challenge need not appear.

15.12 If a person or team being challenged does not cooperate with the guidelines stated above, that person or team shall be considered ineligible for membership for the rest of the season.

15.13 If the person issuing the challenge does not cooperate with the guidelines stated above, the challenge will be dropped and that person issuing the challenge will be suspended for a period to be determined by the Executive Council.

SECTION 16: HSL CHAMPIONS AND GSWs REPRESENTATIVES

16.1 Each division of HSL will recognize Open Division League Champions. All teams must play in their respective division per IPS Ratings.

16.2 The winner of the most regular season games in each division will be declared the HSL League Champion for that division. In the event of inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances and the games cannot be made up as determined by the Executive Council then the winning percentage will determine the final divisional standings.

16.3 In case of a tie the final divisional standings will be settled by the following tie-breaking system.

- A. Head-to-head win-loss record. If more than two (2) teams are tied, the tiebreaker will be the overall win-loss record versus the teams that are tied for the position in the standings. If still tied.
- B. Head-to-head run differential. If more than two (2) teams are tied, the tiebreaker will be the overall run differential versus the teams that are tied for that position in the standings. If still tied.
- C. Total runs against
- D. Total runs scored.
- E. Win-loss record versus best common opponent.
- F. Run differential versus best common opponent.

Note: The above order(A-F) are progressive and are will not be repeated. Thus, once option A is completed, the order will continue sequentially until all tie-breakers have been decided.

If there is only one (1) team within a division, that team shall be declared the HSL League Champion for that division upon the completion of their regular season scheduled games.

16.4 Participation of HSL in the GSWs will be determined by guidelines provided each year by HSL and IPS.

- A. The number of teams HSL can send to the GSWs is pursuant to the guidelines set forth by IPS Governing Manual Chapter 30.45.
 - i. The HSL division with the highest number of teams will get the max number of bids:

- a Even number of bids remaining – evenly distributed amongst the remaining 2 divisions.
- b Odd number of bids remaining – The even number of bids will be evenly distributed amongst the remaining two divisions with the remaining one bid being assigned to a division by the Executive Council prior to the Spring Delegates meeting.
 - i For example – with 3 bids remaining, one bid would go to each of the two divisions with the remaining one bid being assigned to a division by the Executive Council.
- ii. If only one berth is allocated to a division the Spring season HSL Division Champion will be declared the GSWS representatives.
- iii. If two berths are allocated to a division the Spring season HSL League Division Champion will be awarded the first berth The Second berth will be awarded to that Divisions Commissioners Cup winner.
- iv. If three berths are allocated to a division the HSL Spring season first and second place team will be declared the GSWS representatives. The third berth will be awarded to that division's Commissioner Cup winner.
- v. HSL may also send unlimited A and B Division teams to the GSWS as long as the team composition meets the minimum required for A and B Division as set forth by IPS. If HSL sends only one A Division team to the GSWS, it can be an open roster team as set forth by the IPS guidelines.
- vi. HSL may send Legends C and Legends D Division teams set forth by the IPS guideline but may sponsor a maximum of one team in each Division. The decision on whether HSL will sponsor any declared teams will be made before team registration starts. If there are no declared teams, HSL may choose to NOT sponsor any composite teams. That decision will be made during the season, but no later than the week prior to the Commissioner's Cup.
 - a. If only one team declares for either division, that declared team will be the only team eligible for HSL sponsorship from that division, even if there are composite teams that form.
 - b. If two or more teams declare for a division, and two or more teams wish to be considered for GSWS sponsorship, those teams will compete in the Commissioner's Cup to determine who will be awarded the sponsorship. If only one team from each division wants to play in the Commissioner's Cup, that team will be the only team eligible from that division to be awarded the sponsorship. Composite teams will not be eligible to compete in the Commissioner's Cup if there are declared teams in that division.
 - c. If no teams declare for a division and:
 - (i) No composite teams form, no GSWS sponsorship will be awarded for that division.

- (ii) Only one composite team form, that team MAY be eligible for GSWS sponsorship at the discretion of the Executive Council.
- d. If two or more composite teams form, and they wish to be eligible for GSWS sponsorship, those teams will compete in the Commissioner's Cup and the winner will be eligible for GSWS sponsorship if awarded.
- e. Legends Division Criteria
 - (i) Team composites as set by IPS.
 - (ii) All players must meet IPS GSWS Legends Division eligibility requirements.
 - (ii) Any HSL team(s) may declare themselves as a Legends (C) or (D) team before the spring season begins. Team(s) must have a minimum of 10 players turning 50 years old or older in the calendar year.
 - (iii) Declared Legends teams will not be eligible for C or D Division GSWS berths.
 - (iv) Legends team(s) may form even if there are one or more designated Legends teams within the division. To represent HSL at the GSWS they must have a minimum of 10 eligible players who have declared Atlanta as their IPS designated city.
- B. If an HSL Divisional Champion is ineligible by IPS Guidelines, the second-place team will represent HSL in the GSWS.
- C. The winner of the Commissioners Cup in the B, C, and D divisions will be the second or third representative for their division to the GSWS, (if the division is allocated a second or third GSWS bid). If this team is ineligible or otherwise unable to represent HSL at the GSWS, then the bid will be made available to the other teams in the division based on the final regular season division standings. Note that a team that has already earned a GSWS bid based on its place in the current season standings may not participate in the end of season tournament if the division's second or third GSWS bid is at stake.
- D. The Commissioners Cup will be open to all HSL teams and their players who qualify in accordance with section 6.2.
- E. If a Commissioners Cup cannot be held the additional berths will be awarded based on division standings.

16.5 Any team earning the right to represent HSL in the GSWS will be required to demonstrate "Financial Ability" and "Player Commitment" to participate by a deadline set by the Executive Council. Should a team be unable to demonstrate their ability to participate in the GSWS, the next highest team in the standings will have the opportunity to participate in the GSWS.

- A. "Financial Ability" requirements will be set each year by the Executive Council based on league funding and the GSWS Host City.
- B. "Player Commitment" requires a minimum of eight (8) players from the regular season roster attend the GSWS.
- C. Failure of any HSL team to participate in the GSWS after meeting the qualifications and stating their commitment to participate will result in a financial penalty and probation to be established by the Executive Council.

- D. Any IPS fines will be incurred by the teams in violation.
- 16.6 Any team earning the right to represent HSL in the GSWS must satisfy all other requirements for participation as may be established by IPS, included but not limited to:
- A. Teams may add up to four (4) eligible additional players, replacing active players on their roster or filling empty slots, as long as no more than twenty(20) players participate in the GSWS.
 - B. The team must meet current IPS player and team rating guidelines.
 - C. Teams will pay any additional GSWS fees required by IPS above HSL team fees.
- 16.7 Responsibility for fines assessed at the GSWS will be distributed as follows:
- A. Fines related to a player's rating.
 - i. HSL will pay 50% of the fine.
 - ii. The coach of the team drawing the fine will pay 50% of the fine. Fines related to HSL assessed for multiple player rating protests will be paid by HSL.
 - B. Fines related to player unsportsmanlike conduct or other player actions will be paid by the player(s) involved in the incident resulting in a fine.
 - C. In the event that an HSL Player joins another IPS League's team for the GSWS, , then the player will assume 100% responsibility for non-rating and 50/50 for rating fines.
- 16.8 Any player or coach refusing to pay the fine, as assessed in 16.7 above, will be prohibited from playing in HSL until such time as the fine is paid and may be recommended for placement on IPS's "Banned Player List."