

USA SOFTBALL BYLAWS

2024



INTRODUCTION

USA Softball is the National Governing Body for the sport of softball in the United States. These Bylaws shall govern USA Softball, its members and the members of its Local Associations. These Bylaws were last updated on November 22, 2024 for immediate release.

USA Softball also has a Procedural Code and Official Playing Rules. If any provision of those documents is in conflict with or inconsistent with the Bylaws, the Bylaws supersede and take precedence over those documents.

**USA SOFTBALL BYLAWS
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

SECTION 1. NAME, STATUS AND SEAL AND PRECEDENCE OF BYLAWS..... 8

 Section 1.1. Name..... 8

 Section 1.2. Non-profit Status. 8

 Section 1.3. Seal..... 8

 Section 1.4. Precedence of Bylaws..... 8

SECTION 2. OFFICES 9

 Section 2.1. Business Offices. 9

 Section 2.2. Registered Office. 9

SECTION 3. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES 10

 Section 3.1. Mission..... 10

 Section 3.2 Objectives. 10

SECTION 4. RECOGNITION AS NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY 11

 Section 4.1. Recognition as a National Governing Body..... 11

 Section 4.2. Anti-Doping and SafeSport Requirements 12

SECTION 5. MEMBERS 13

 Section 5.1. Categories of Membership. 13

 Section 5.2. Application Process..... 16

 Section 5.3. Voting Members..... 18

 Section 5.4. Membership Requirements and Dues..... 18

 Section 5.5. Duty of Members to Comply with Anti-Doping and SafeSport Requirements... 19

 Section 5.6. Termination of Membership..... 20

 Section 5.7. Transfer of Membership/Ownership Rights..... 20

 Section 5.8. Publication of Organizational Members..... 20

SECTION 6. LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS, COMMISSIONERS, REGIONS, TERRITORIES AND SECTIONS 21

 Section 6.1. Local Associations. 21

 Section 6.2. Commissioner Members. 22

 Section 6.3. Regions, Territories and Sections. 23

 Section 6.4. Publication of Local Associations, Regions, Territories, and Sections 23

 Section 6.5. Complaint Procedures..... 23

 Section 6.6. Compliance with Act and Bylaws. 24

SECTION 7. BOARD..... 25

Section 7.1. General Powers.	25
Section 7.2. Function of the Board.	25
Section 7.3. Diversity of Discussion.	26
Section 7.4. Qualifications.	26
Section 7.5. Number.	26
Section 7.6. Election/Selection.	26
Section 7.7. Independence.	28
Section 7.8. Board Term and Term Limits.	29
Section 7.9. Director Attendance.	30
Section 7.10. Resignation, Removal and Vacancies.	30
Section 7.11. Regular and Special Meetings.	31
Section 7.12. Notice of Meetings.	31
Section 7.13. Quorum.	31
Section 7.14. Action of the Board/Consent.	31
Section 7.15. Attendance and Voting by Proxy.	32
Section 7.16. Presumption of Assent.	32
Section 7.17. Action Without a Meeting.	32
Section 7.18. Transacting Business by Mail, Electronic Mail, Telephone or Facsimile.	32
Section 7.19. Agenda.	32
Section 7.20. Questions of Order and Board Meeting Leadership.	32
Section 7.21. Effectiveness of Actions.	33
Section 7.22. Open and Executive Meeting Sessions.	33
Section 7.23. Minutes of Meetings.	33
Section 7.24. Compensation.	33
SECTION 8. OFFICERS.	34
Section 8.1. Designation.	34
Section 8.2. Election/Selection.	34
Section 8.3. Term.	34
Section 8.4. Term Limits.	35
Section 8.5. Authority and Duties of Officers.	35
Section 8.6. Restrictions.	36
Section 8.7. Resignation, Removal and Vacancies.	36
Section 8.8. Compensation.	37
Section 8.9. International Matters/Secretary General.	37

SECTION 9. NATIONAL COUNCIL	38
Section 9.1. Purpose.....	38
Section 9.2. Duties.....	38
Section 9.3. National Council Members.....	38
Section 9.4. Membership Meetings.....	39
Section 9.5. Voting.....	39
Section 9.6. Quorum.....	40
Section 9.7. Date/Time and Place.....	40
Section 9.8. Notice.....	40
Section 9.9. National Council Meeting Fiscal Policies.....	40
SECTION 10. COMMITTEES	42
Section 10.1. Designation.....	42
Section 10.2. Appointments.....	42
Section 10.3. Number.....	42
Section 10.4. Athlete Representation.....	42
Section 10.5. Term.....	43
Section 10.6. Term Limits.....	43
Section 10.7. Committee Member Attendance.....	43
Section 10.8. Resignation, Removal and Vacancies.....	44
Section 10.9. Procedures.....	44
Section 10.10. Open and Executive Meeting Sessions.....	44
Section 10.11. Minutes of Meetings.....	45
Section 10.12. Compensation.....	45
Section 10.13. Audit Committee.....	45
Section 10.14. Ethics Committee.....	45
Section 10.15. Finance Committee.....	46
Section 10.16. Judicial Committee.....	46
Section 10.17. Nominating and Governance Committee.....	46
Section 10.18. Selection Committees.....	47
Section 10.19. Working Committees.....	48
SECTION 11. USAS ATHLETES' ADVISORY COUNCIL	51
Section 11.1. Designation.....	51
Section 11.2. Qualifications.....	51
Section 11.3. Election.....	51

Section 11.4. Term.....	51
Section 11.5. Term Limits.	51
Section 11.6. Chair.....	51
Section 11.7. Procedures.....	52
Section 11.8. Open and Executive Meeting Sessions.....	52
Section 11.9. Compensation.....	52
SECTION 12. USOPC TEAM USA ATHLETES' COMMISSION.....	53
Section 12.1. Designation.....	53
Section 12.2. Qualifications.....	53
Section 12.3. Election.....	53
Section 12.4. Term.....	53
Section 12.5. Term Limits.....	53
SECTION 13. USOPC NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES' COUNCIL.....	54
Section 13.1. Designation.....	54
Section 13.2. Election/Selection.....	54
SECTION 14. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.....	55
Section 14.1. Designation.....	55
Section 14.2. Tenure.....	55
Section 14.3. Secretary General.....	55
Section 14.4. Responsibilities.....	55
SECTION 15. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES – Complaints UNDER THE JURISDICITON OF LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS AND TOURNAMENT PROTEST COMMITTEES.....	57
Section 15.1. Authority and Jurisdiction.....	57
Section 15.2. Agreement to be Bound.....	57
Section 15.3. Resolution Prior to Bringing Complaint.....	58
Section 15.4. Manner of Filing.....	58
Section 15.5. Filing Fee.....	58
Section 15.6. Statute of Limitations.....	58
Section 15.7. Doping Decisions.....	58
Section 15.8. SafeSport Decisions.....	59
Section 15.9. Field of Play Decisions.....	59
Section 15.10. Administration.....	59
Section 15.11. Hearing Panel.....	59
Section 15.12. Conduct of the Proceeding.....	60
Section 15.13. Expedited Procedures.....	60

Section 15.14. Complaints Involving Selection to Participate in a Competition.....	60
Section 15.15. Interim Measures.	61
Section 15.16. Decision and Minimum Penalties.	61
Section 15.17. Appeal of a Ruling by a Local Association Hearing Panel.....	62
Section 15.18. Appeal of a Ruling by a Tournament Protest Committee.	62
Section 15.19. Arbitration.....	62
SECTION 16. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES - NATIONAL OFFICE COMPLAINTS.....	64
Section 16.1. Designation of Complaints.	64
Section 16.2. Agreement to Be Bound.....	64
Section 16.3. Resolution Prior to Bringing Complaint.	65
Section 16.4. Manner of Filing.	65
Section 16.5 No Retaliation.....	65
Section 16.6. Filing Fee.	66
Section 16.7. Statute of Limitations.....	66
Section 16.8. Doping Decisions.	66
Section 16.9. U.S. Center for SafeSport Decisions.....	66
Section 16.10. Field of Play Decisions.....	66
Section 16.11. Administration.	67
Section 16.12 Informal Resolution	68
Section 16.13. Hearing Panel.	68
Section 16.14. Conduct of the Proceeding.....	69
Section 16.15. Expedited Procedures.....	70
Section 16.16. Complaints Involving Selection to Participate in a Competition.....	70
Section 16.17. Interim Measures.	70
Section 16.18. Decision.	71
Section 16.19. Arbitration.....	71
Section 16.20 Athlete Ombudsman	71
SECTION 17. SANCTIONING EVENTS	72
Section 17.1. Prompt Review of Request.	72
Section 17.2. Standard for Review.....	72
Section 17.3. Requirements for Holding an International or National Amateur Athletic Competition in the United States.....	72
Section 17.4. Requirements for Sponsoring United States Softball Athletes to Compete in An International Athletic Competition Held Outside the United States.	73
SECTION 18. RECORDS OF THE CORPORATION.....	74

Section 18.1. Minutes.....	74
Section 18.2. Accounting Records.....	74
Section 18.3. Membership.....	74
Section 18.4. Records in Written Form.....	74
Section 18.5. Website.....	74
Section 18.6. Records Maintained at Principal Office.....	74
Section 18.7. Inspection of Records by Members.....	75
SECTION 19. CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY	77
Section 19.1. Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy.....	77
SECTION 20. FIDUCIARY MATTERS	78
Section 20.1. Indemnification.....	78
Section 20.2. Discharge of Duties.....	78
Section 20.3. Conflicts of Interest.....	78
Section 20.4. Prohibited Loans.....	78
SECTION 21. FINANCIAL MATTERS	79
Section 21.1. Fiscal Year.....	79
Section 21.2. Budget.....	79
Section 21.3. Audit.....	79
Section 21.4. Individual Liability.....	79
Section 21.5. Irrevocable Dedication and Dissolution.....	79
SECTION 22. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS	80
Section 22.1. Severability and Headings.....	80
Section 22.2. Saving Clause.....	80
SECTION 23. AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS.....	81
Section 23.1. Amendments.....	81
ADOPTION OF REVISED BYLAWS.....	82

SECTION 1. NAME, STATUS AND SEAL AND PRECEDENCE OF BYLAWS

Section 1.1. Name.

The name of the corporation shall be USA Softball, Inc. (referred to in these Bylaws as “USAS”). USAS may also do business as the “The Amateur Softball Association of America” and “American Softball Association”. USAS may establish such acronyms or abbreviations as may be appropriate for business use, and may establish logos, service marks or trademarks as may be appropriate to further its purposes, mission recognition and goals.

Section 1.2. Non-profit Status.

USAS shall be a non-profit corporation incorporated and licensed pursuant to the laws of the State of Oklahoma. USAS shall be operated for charitable and educational purposes, and it shall also have as its purpose to foster national and international amateur sports competition in the sport of softball. USAS shall operate consistently with and shall maintain a tax-exempt status in accordance with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 1.3. Seal.

USAS may have a corporate seal inscribed thereon with the name of USA Softball and the words “Corporate Seal” and “Oklahoma” or abbreviation thereof. The seal may be used by causing it or a facsimile thereof to be impressed, affixed, reproduced or otherwise.

Section 1.4. Precedence of Bylaws.

The Bylaws supersede and take precedence over USAS’s Procedural Code and Playing Rules and over any other policy or procedures adopted by USAS. If the Procedural Code, Playing Rules or any other policy or procedure adopted by USAS is in conflict with or inconsistent with USAS’s Bylaws, the Bylaws govern and control.

The USAS Board of Directors by a 75% majority vote of eligible members may modify or nullify any portion of USAS’s Procedural Code and or Playing Rules during a National crisis, emergency, or pandemic if strict adherence to the Procedural Code and or Playing Rules would impose undue hardship on USAS, its members and staff.

SECTION 2. OFFICES

Section 2.1. Business Offices.

The principal office of USAS shall be in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. USAS may at any time and from time to time change the location of its principal office. USAS may have such other offices, either within or outside Oklahoma, as the Board may designate or as the affairs of USAS may require from time to time.

Section 2.2. Registered Office.

The registered office of USAS required by the General Corporation Act of the State of Oklahoma (the "General Corporation Act") shall be maintained in Oklahoma. The registered office may be changed from time to time by the Board or by the officers of USAS, or to the extent permitted by the General Corporation Act by the registered agent of USAS. The registered office may be, but need not be, the same as the principal office.

SECTION 3. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Section 3.1. Mission.

The Mission of USAS is to provide opportunities for participation through competition, education, and leadership with a commitment to promote the growth and development of the sport.

Section 3.2 Objectives.

The objectives of USA Softball shall be:

- A. To promote softball for all persons regardless of race, color, creed, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, national origin or ancestry.
- B. To establish uniform softball rules and regulations.
- C. To encourage softball to be conducted in accordance with the spirit of true sportsmanship free from bullying, hazing, harassment (including sexual harassment), emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, and sexual misconduct (including child sexual abuse) and establish principles for ethical behavior and matters relating to conflict of interest as provided by USAS's Board and National Council.
- D. To encourage the union of all eligible teams, organizations or groups into such separate associations with active membership in USAS as may from time to time be deemed best adapted to advance the cause of softball.
- E. To establish and maintain by allied membership, alliances with non-profit associations or organizations devoted wholly or partially to the promotion and development of the game of softball on a state, regional or national level.
- F. To promote and conduct annual softball championships.
- G. To educate and train in the proper skills of softball play and rules of the game through promoting, organizing, and conducting clinics, seminars and training courses.

SECTION 4. RECOGNITION AS NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY

Section 4.1. Recognition as a National Governing Body.

USAS shall seek and attempt to maintain recognition by the United States Olympic Paralympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport of softball in the United States. In furtherance of that purpose, USAS shall comply with the requirements for recognition as a National Governing Body (NGB) as set forth in the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (36 U.S.C. §§ 220501 – 220529) and as mandated by the United States Olympic Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”) as such requirements are promulgated or revised from time to time. In fulfilling those requirements USAS shall:

- A. be a member of only one (1) international sports federation, which is recognized by the International Olympic Committee as the worldwide governing body for the sport of softball, currently the World Baseball Softball Confederation;
- B. be autonomous in the governance of the sport of softball by independently determining and controlling all matters central to such governance, by not delegating any of that determination or control, and by being free from outside restraint;
- C. maintain the managerial and financial competence and capability to establish national goals for softball relating to the development and well-being of the sport, to implement and administer a plan for the attainment of those goals, and to execute its obligations as the National Governing Body for the sport of softball;
- D. provide for individual and/or organizational membership;
- E. ensure that its Board, and any other governance body, has established criteria and election procedures that are administered fairly, consistently, and appropriately;
- F. ensure that its Board, and any other governance body, has established criteria and election procedures for, and maintains among its voting members, individuals who are actively engaged in amateur athletic competition in USAS or who have represented the United States in an international amateur athletic competition in USAS within the preceding ten (10) years, and ensures that the voting power held by those individuals is not less than thirty-three (33) percent of the voting power held in its Board or other governance body;
- G. provide for reasonable direct representation on its Board for any amateur sports organization that: (i) conducts a national program or regular national amateur competition in the sport USAS on a level of proficiency appropriate for selection of amateur athletes to represent the United States in international amateur athletic competition, and (ii) ensures that representation reflects the nature, scope, quality, and strength of the programs and competitions of that amateur sports organization in relation to all other of those programs and competitions in the sport of softball in the United States;
- H. be governed by a Board whose members are selected without regard to race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, or national origin, with reasonable representation on the Board of both males and females;
- I. provide an equal opportunity to amateur athletes to participate in softball competitions without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin, provided however, that national origin shall be used as a criteria to determine eligibility for any person to participate on a national team

representing the United States of America; and except that age and gender shall be used as an eligibility criteria for certain softball divisions, activities and events.

- J. provide an equal opportunity to coaches, trainers, managers, administrators, and officials to participate in softball competitions without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, or national origin;
- K. not have an officer who is also an officer of another amateur sports organization that is recognized by the USOPC as a National Governing Body;
- L. provide procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of grievances of its members;
- M. provide fair notice and an opportunity for a hearing to any amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official before declaring such individual ineligible to participate;
- N. agree to submit to binding arbitration in any controversy involving: (i) its recognition as a National Governing Body, or (ii) the opportunity of any amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator or official to participate in amateur athletic competition in USAS, upon demand of the USOPC or any aggrieved amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator or official, conducted in accordance with the Commercial Rules of the American Arbitration Association or as modified pursuant to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act;
- O. not have eligibility criteria relating to amateur status or to participation in the Olympic or Pan American Games that are more restrictive than those of the international sports federation for the sport of USAS recognized by the International Olympic Committee;
- P. perform all other obligations and duties imposed by the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act and by the USOPC on a National Governing Body.

Section 4.2. Anti-Doping and SafeSport Requirements

As an NGB, USAS is required to adhere to the anti-doping rules and regulations of the USOPC. Additionally, USOPC Bylaw Section 8.7(k) provides that, as a condition of membership in the USOPC, each NGB shall comply with the policies and procedures of the independent anti-doping organization designated by the USOPC to investigate and resolve anti-doping rule violations. The USOPC has designated the United States Anti-Doping Organization (USADA) as that organization. The current anti-doping rules, policies and procedures are available at the offices of USAS or on-line at the following website: www.usada.org.

As an NGB, USAS is required to adhere to the SafeSport rules and regulations of the USOPC. Additionally, USOPC Bylaw Section 8.7(l) provides that, as a condition of membership in the USOPC, each NGB shall comply with the policies and procedures of the independent safe sport organization designated by the USOPC to investigate and resolve safe sport violations. The USOPC has designated the U.S. Center for SafeSport as that organization. The current safe sport rules, policies and procedures are available at the offices of USAS or on-line at the following website: www.safesport.org

SECTION 5. MEMBERS

Section 5.1. Categories of Membership.

The individual, team and organization membership categories shall be as set forth in this Section 5.1. As set forth below, membership shall be placed with either USAS or an applicable Local Association.

A. Individual Membership Categories

01. **Athlete members.** Athlete members are those individuals who are eligible for competition in the sport of softball, who are competitive athletes and who register with and pay the applicable registration fee to their Local Association. Athlete members shall include those persons who individually register as Athlete members with an applicable Local Association, and also those persons listed on a team roster that registers its team with an applicable Local Association. Athlete members place their membership with an applicable Local Association. Athlete members shall pay an annual membership fee to the applicable Local Association.
02. **Elite Athlete members.** Athletes who qualify as a 10 Year Athlete, which includes athletes who compete in any WBSC-sanctioned event for a USAS National Team. Elite Athlete members place their membership with USAS and there is no annual membership fee for Elite Athlete members.
03. **Actively Engaged Athlete members.** Athletes who participate in a National Team event and/or competed in a USAS-sanctioned National Championship in the previous 24 months.
04. **Coach members.** Coach members are those individuals who are active coaches and who register with and pay the applicable registration fee to their Local Association. Coach members place their membership with an applicable Local Association.
05. **Scorekeeper members.** Scorekeeper members are those individuals who are active scorekeepers and who register with and pay the applicable registration fee to their Local Association. Scorekeeper members place their membership with an applicable Local Association.
06. **Umpire members.** Umpire members are those individuals who are active umpires and who register with and pay the applicable registration fee to their Local Association. Umpire members place their membership with an applicable Local Association.
07. **Commissioner members.** Commissioner members are those individuals, as designated by the applicable Local Association, and as approved by the USAS Board, to act as a liaison to USAS on behalf of a Local Association. Commissioner members place their membership with the applicable Local Association and there is no annual membership fee for Commissioner members. Commissioner members shall also include those Commissioner members who have been approved by a 2/3 vote of the USAS Board to be Commissioner Emeritus members, who are defined as those members having fifteen (15) years of service, or ten (10) years of service if the Commissioner is over 70 years of age.

08. **Commissioner Emeritus members.** Commissioner members shall also include those Commissioner members who have been approved by a 2/3 vote of the USAS Board to be Commissioner Emeritus members. To be eligible, applicants must have fifteen (15) years of service, or ten (10) years of service if the Commissioner is over 70 years of age and be in compliance with the requirements set forth in Bylaws 5.4 and 5.5. The aforementioned years of previous service as a Commissioner do not need to be consecutive. Commissioner Emeritus members shall place their membership with an applicable Local Association and there is no annual membership fee for Commissioner Emeritus members.
09. **Junior Olympic (JO) Commissioner members.** JO Commissioner members are those individuals, as designated by each Commissioner member and as accepted by the applicable Local Association Member, to promote the USAS JO Program within the geographic boundaries of a Local Association. Junior Olympic (JO) Commissioner members place their membership with the applicable Local Association and there is no annual membership fee for Junior Olympic (JO) Commissioner members.
10. **National Council members.** National Council members are those persons, as defined in Section 9.3, and who have voting rights on the National Council. National Council members who are existing members by virtue of other membership within USAS place their membership with their applicable Local Association, and there shall be no need for further membership specifically as a National Council member. To the extent there is no applicable Local Association or other applicable membership category, then such National Council member shall place his or her membership with USAS pursuant to any eligibility requirements for National Council membership as determined by the USAS Board.
11. **Council Emeritus members.** National Council members shall also include those National Council members who have been approved by a 2/3 vote of the USAS Board to be National Council Emeritus members. To be eligible, applicants must have fifteen (15) years of service as a National Council member, National Staff member, National Staff Umpire or any combination that totals fifteen years; and be in compliance with the requirements set forth in Bylaws 5.4 and 5.5. The aforementioned years of previous service on the National Council do not need to be consecutive.
12. **Life members.** Life members are those individuals who desire to aid in the promotion of the game of Softball, and who previously have been members of USAS or served as members of the National Council. Life members shall register with and pay a lifetime membership fee to USAS as determined by the USAS Board.
13. **Supporter Members.** Supporter members are those individuals who register with and are recognized by USAS as supporters of USAS and its programs. Supporter members place their membership with USAS and meet any eligibility requirements for Supporter membership as determined by the USAS Board. Supporter members shall pay an annual membership fee to USAS as determined by the USAS Board.

B. Team Membership Categories

01. **Team members.** Team members are those teams who register with and pay the applicable registration fee to their local association. Team members place their membership with an applicable Local Association. However, if a local association does not offer a softball program, and the team is associated with an Allied Association, then the team may register directly with and pay the applicable registration fee to USAS.

C. Organizational Membership Categories

01. **Local Association members.** Local Association Members are those entities recognized by the USAS Board. See Section 6.1. Recognition authorizes the Local Association to accept membership registrations and promote the sport of amateur softball within their applicable designated geographic boundaries.

02. **Affiliated members.**

- a. **Armed Forces members.** Armed Forces members are the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Navy and Marines, provided they register with and pay an annual membership fee to USAS as determined by the USA Board.
- b. **Disabled Sports Organization members.** Disabled Sports Organization members are those non-profit organizations that conduct national softball competitions designated exclusively for individuals who are physically or mentally disabled. Disabled Sports Organization members shall pay an annual membership fee to USAS as determined by the USAS Board.
- c. **Educational Based members.** Educational Based members are those non-profit organizations comprised of member educational institutions. Educational Based members shall pay an annual membership fee to USAS as determined by the USAS Board.
- d. **Promotional Organization members.** Promotional Organization members are those non-profit organizations which conduct player or coach clinics or camps, conduct softball competitions or are engaged in other activities that promote the sport of softball on a national level in accordance with the objectives of USAS. Promotional Organization members shall pay an annual membership fee to USAS as determined by the USAS Board.
- e. **State Games Organization member.** The State Games Organization member is the National Congress of State Games, provided it registers with and pays an annual membership fee to USAS as determined by the USAS Board.
- f. **State Park and Recreation Organization/Association members.** State Park and Recreation/Association members are those non-profit organizations whose primary purpose is to promote parks and recreation activities, which include softball, in their respective jurisdictions. State Park and Recreation Organization/Association members shall pay an annual membership fee to USAS as determined by the USAS Board.
- g. **Philanthropic and Instructional Organization members.** Philanthropic and Instructional Organization members are those non-profit

organizations that are philanthropic in nature or that primarily promote the instruction of the game of softball in a clinical or other setting and do not conduct any national softball competition. Philanthropic and Instructional Organization members shall pay an annual membership fee to USAS as determined by the USAS Board.

03. Allied Organization members. Allied Organization members are those non-profit sports organizations that conduct a national program or regular national athletic competition in the sport of softball on a level of proficiency appropriate for the selection of amateur athletes to represent the United States in international amateur athlete competitions in the Sport of softball. They ensure that the representation reflects the nature, scope, quality, and strength of the programs and competitions of the applicable organization in relation to all other programs and competitions in the sport in the United States. In addition to any other organization who would meet this criterion, an organization accepted as an Affiliated member, who also meets the criteria, may apply for and be accepted as an Allied Organization member. Allied Organization members shall pay an annual membership fee to USAS as determined by the USAS Board.

- a. **Regional or Nationally Based Softball Organizations.** Organizations which have member affiliates in a minimum of 30 states and which conduct national softball competition on a level of proficiency appropriate for the selection of softball players to represent the United States in international play shall be eligible for membership under this classification.
- b. **Nationally Based Softball Promotional Organizations.** Organizations which are national in scope, and which conduct player or coach clinics or camps, softball competition or which are engaged in any other activities that promote the sport of amateur softball on a national level in accordance with the objectives of USA Softball shall be eligible for membership under this classification.
- c. **Other Organizations.** Organizations which are not members of a national organization eligible for membership as an Allied Member and which conduct softball competition, clinics, player camps, or which are engaged in any other activities that promote the sport of amateur softball on a city, county, state or regional level in accordance with the objectives of USA Softball shall be eligible for membership under this classification.

Section 5.2. Application Process.

The following application process shall be utilized for individuals, teams and organizations applying for membership:

A. Individual members.

01. An individual applying for Athlete, Commissioner, JO Commissioner, Coach, Scorekeeper and Umpire membership shall apply and place his/her membership with their applicable Local Association. However, USAS at its discretion may consider any membership application made to any local organization and shall have complete and final authority to reject such individual for membership. Such

- matters shall be handled by the USAS Board, which shall decide whether any such membership is rejected. National Council membership need not be applied for as it is determined by virtue of election or selection within another membership category, provided however, that the USAS Board shall have the right to reject any such person for membership as a National Council member.
02. An individual applying for Elite Athlete, Supporter and Life membership shall apply and place his/her membership with USAS. All such membership applications shall be referred to the USAS Board and accept or reject such an individual for membership.
03. It is the duty of individual members of USAS to comply with all anti-doping rules of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the WBSC, the USOPC including the USOPC National Anti-Doping Policy, and of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), including the USADA Protocol for Olympic and Paralympic Movement Testing (USADA Protocol) and all other policies and rules adopted by WADA, the WBSC, the USOPC and USADA. Athlete members agree to submit to drug testing by the WBSC and/or USADA or their designees at any time and understand that the use of methods or substances prohibited by the applicable anti-doping rules make them subject to penalties including, but not limited to, disqualification and suspension. If it is determined that an individual member may have committed a doping violation, the member agrees to submit to the results management authority and processes of USADA, including arbitration under the USADA Protocol, or to the results management authority of the WBSC, if applicable or referred by USADA.
- B. **Team members.** A team applying for membership shall apply and place its membership with their applicable Local Association. However, if a local association does not offer a softball program, and the team is associated with an Allied Association, then the team may apply directly with USAS. All such membership applications shall be referred to the USAS Board, and accept or reject such a team for membership.
- C. **Organizational members.** An organization applying for Affiliated or Allied membership shall apply and place its membership with USAS. All such membership applications shall be referred to and considered by the USAS Membership Committee. The Membership Committee shall make a recommendation to accept or reject the application to the National Council. The National Council shall then vote on whether or not it supports the application. The National Council's vote of 60% approval shall then be considered by the USAS Board, which shall have final authority to accept or reject the organization for membership. Affiliated and Allied Members may vote with either the Local Association, Region, Territory, and Section in which they live or with the Local Association, Region, Territory, and Section in which the organization's National Office is located. An organization applying for Local Association membership shall be referred to, considered, and decided by the USAS Board.

It is the duty of all Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel and other Persons (as those terms are defined in the World-Anti Doping Code), by virtue of their participation in the Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American, Parapan American or Youth Olympic Games, participation in an Event or Competition organized or sanctioned by USA Softball, participation on a national team, utilization of a USOPC Training Center, receipt of

benefits from the USOPC or USA Softball, inclusion in the Registered Testing Pool, or otherwise subject to the World Anti-Doping Code to comply with all anti-doping rules of WADA, the WBSC, the USOPC, and of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), including the USADA Protocol for Olympic and Paralympic Movement Testing (USADA Protocol) and all other policies and rules adopted by WADA, WBSC and USADA. If it is determined that an Athlete, Athlete Support Personnel, or other Person may have committed a doping violation, the individual agrees to submit to the results management authority and processes of USADA, including arbitration under the USADA Protocol, or to the results management authority of the WBSC, if applicable or referred by USADA. In addition, Athletes agree to submit to drug testing by the WBSC and/or USADA or their designees at any time and understand that the use of methods or substances prohibited by the applicable anti-doping rules make them subject to penalties including, but not limited to, disqualification and suspension.

Section 5.3. Voting Members.

National Council members (as defined in Section 9) have voting privileges at the annual National Council meetings.

Athletes who meet the requirements, as set forth in the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act and USOPC Bylaws, shall elect athlete directors to the USAS Board. See Section 7.

Also, as provided in the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act and USOPC Bylaws, an organization (or organizations) that conduct a national program (or programs) or regular national amateur competition (or competitions) in the sport of softball on a level of proficiency appropriate for selection of athletes to represent the United States in international athletic competition, referred to in these Bylaws as Affiliated organizations, are entitled to elect a representative director to the USAS Board. See Section 7.

Except as set forth above, no other members have voting privileges by virtue of their membership in USAS.

Section 5.4. Membership Requirements and Dues.

Membership in USAS or one of the applicable Local Associations is a privilege and creates with its certain obligations and duties.

It shall be the responsibility of each member of USAS or one of its applicable Local Associations to strive to fulfill the goals of USAS and to promote the sport of softball. At a minimum, each such member shall:

- A. follow the rules and regulations of USAS;
- B. support USAS's programs that promote the sport of softball and that educate athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and the public about the game;

- C. if an individual, act with the utmost civility and sportsmanlike conduct, and if a team or organization promote wholesome, safe competition;
- D. if an organization provide programs that encompass fairness to the participants and promote fair play and sportsmanship and if an individual or team support and abide by such programs;
- E. if an individual, take seriously the member's responsibility as a role model and if an organization or team encourage competitiveness in a positive manner; and,
- F. fulfill any other obligation or requirement the Board considers appropriate and necessary for the furtherance and well-being of the sport of softball, the reputation of USAS and the protection and safety of athletes and other members.

The Board may establish such membership requirements and fees as the Board shall deem necessary or appropriate, provided however, that membership fees for Athlete Members, Scorekeeper Members, Umpire Members, and Team Members shall not take effect until they are ratified by a majority vote of the Commissioners. Further, the Board may establish such rules and procedures for when membership fees are due and payable, the manner and method of payment of fees, the collection of delinquent fees and the proration or refund of fees, as the Board shall deem necessary or appropriate.

Any local association without a permanent commissioner in place must send all registrations and fees directly to the National Office. Once the local association's financial obligations are met, the surplus will be divided evenly between the local association and its contingency fund. This protocol will reduce the burden of the local association as it pertains to its up front financial contribution to USA Softball

No privilege of membership shall be available until all membership requirements are satisfied and all fees are paid in full.

Section 5.5. Duty of Members to Comply with Anti-Doping and SafeSport Requirements.

It is the duty of individual members of USAS to comply with all anti-doping rules of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the International Sports Federation for softball, currently the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC), the USOPC including the USOPC National Anti-Doping Policy, and of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), including the USADA Protocol for Olympic and Paralympic Movement Testing (USADA Protocol) and all other policies and rules adopted by WADA, the WBSC, the USOPC and USADA. Athlete members agree to submit to drug testing by the WBSC and/or USADA or their designees at any time and understand that the use of methods or substances prohibited by the applicable anti-doping rules make them subject to penalties including, but not limited to, disqualification and suspension. If it is determined that a member may have committed a doping violation, the member agrees to submit to the results management authority and processes of USADA, including arbitration under the USADA Protocol, or to the results management authority of the WBSC and/or USA Softball, if applicable or referred by USADA.

As a condition of membership in USAS and/or one of its applicable Local Associations and a condition for participation in any competition or event sanctioned by USAS or its member

organizations, each such member and each athlete, coach, trainer, agent, athlete support personnel, medical or para-medical personnel, team staff, official and other person who participates in USAS or USAS events (whether or not an USAS member), agrees to comply with and be bound by the SafeSport rules, policies and procedures of the U.S. Center for SafeSport (USCSS) and to submit, without reservation or condition, to the jurisdiction of the USCSS for the resolution of any alleged violations of those rules, policies and procedures, as may be amended from time to time. To the extent any USAS rule is inconsistent with the rules of the USCSS, such rule is hereby superseded.

As a condition of Organizational Membership, each Organization Member agrees to comply with and self-regulate adherence to the following: Anti-Doping regulations as established in Section 5.3; Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies as adopted by The USAS Board; all standards, policies and procedures of the U.S. Center for SafeSport (“the Center”); and if a member organization conducts an event sanctioned by USAS, such organization agrees to comply with and be bound by the standards, policies and procedures of the Center and to submit, without reservation or condition, to the jurisdiction of the Center for the resolution of any alleged violations of those rules, policies and procedures, as may be amended from time to time.

Section 5.6. Termination of Membership.

Subject to the requirements of the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, the membership of any member may be terminated at any time by the USAS Board or, as applicable, by the Local Association. A member shall have the right to fair notice and a hearing prior to termination. USAS and/or any applicable Local Association may retain jurisdiction over any member who has a pending financial obligation or pending grievance, regardless of the status of membership.

Section 5.7. Transfer of Membership/Ownership Rights.

Members may not transfer their membership in USAS, or any applicable Local Association Members, shall have no ownership rights or beneficial interests of any kind in the property of USAS.

Section 5.8. Publication of Organizational Members.

USAS shall publish on its website a list of its Organizational members, including the class of membership for each Organizational member.

SECTION 6. LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS, COMMISSIONERS, REGIONS, TERRITORIES AND SECTIONS

Section 6.1. Local Associations.

Local Associations shall comprise and be a part of USAS's organizational structure. Local Associations may also be referred to in these Bylaws and known to the softball community as Local Associations, State Associations or Metro Associations. The Board may recognize a Local Association as a Local Association member as it determines will best serve the mission of USAS and the interests of the sport of softball at the local level. Recognition shall bestow upon the Local Association the benefits and obligations of Local Association membership in USAS. See Section 5.1. The USAS Board shall determine the geographic boundary of each Local Association. From time to time, as determined by the USAS Board to be in the best interests of USAS, the USAS Board may reduce, enlarge, eliminate, consolidate, merge or otherwise alter the geographic boundaries designated to a particular Local Association.

Each Local Association shall be incorporated as a non-profit corporation and be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization. Each Local Association shall have a Board that governs its affairs and an office that manages its operations. Each Local Association shall maintain a Commissioner who is approved by USAS, who shall be the principal liaison between the Local Association and USAS. Each Local Association shall have a budget and the financial capability to ensure its operational well-being and to execute its service to USAS and the softball community. Each Local Association shall pay yearly association, membership and other fees to USAS, as determined from time to time by the USAS Board. Local Associations shall be responsible for the registration of Athlete members, Coach members, Umpire members, Scorekeeper members, Junior Olympic (JO) Commissioner members, and Team members. Local Associations are required to meet registration requirements to remain in good standing, as determined by the USAS Board. Local Associations shall collect the applicable membership fee for each registered member and remit an amount to USAS as determined by the USAS Board. USAS may set forth other requirements and obligations for, and regulations pertaining to, Local Associations as it determines to be in the best interests for the governance and management of the sport of softball. USAS may require that Local Associations fulfill certain requirements and enter into certain agreements and licenses as a condition of continued recognition as a Local Association, as determined from time to time by the USAS Board. Other requirements, obligations and regulations shall be set forth in USAS's Procedural Code. If a Local Association does not fulfill its responsibilities and obligations, or if the Local Association declines in efficiency and/or registrations during its membership, or if a Local Association has acted illegally, incompetently, or unprofessionally in its dealings, whether in connection with USA Softball programs or otherwise, or, if, for any reason, a Local Association's geographic boundaries are being considered to be or have been reduced, eliminated, consolidated, altered, or merged out of existence for that particular Local Association, then, the USAS Board may take action to revoke the Local Associations recognition. Such revocation shall also terminate the Local Association's membership in USAS. A Local Association shall have the right to fair notice and a hearing prior to such revocation.

Section 6.2. Commissioner Members.

The Board may recognize a Commissioner as it determines will best serve the mission of USAS and the interests of the sport of softball at the local level. Commissioner members shall place their membership with his/her applicable Local Association member. Commissioner members shall at all times be subject to the approval and good standing of the Local Association member applicable to each Commissioner, and to the USAS Board of Directors. Commissioners shall assist the Local Association with sanctioning of events, disciplinary matters and the collection of the applicable membership fee for each registered member and assist in the remittance of amounts to USAS, as determined by the USAS Board. USAS may set forth other requirements and obligations for, and regulations pertaining to Commissioners as it determines to be in the best interests for the governance and management of the sport of softball. USAS may require that Commissioners fulfill certain requirements and enter into certain agreements and licenses as a condition of continued membership as a Commissioner member, as determined from time to time by the USAS Board. Other requirements, obligations and regulations shall be set forth in USAS's Procedural Code. If a person seeking to become a Commissioner member does not meet the expectations, needs, or requirements of the USAS Board, the USAS Board may reject and withhold its approval for such person to be accepted as a Commissioner member. If an existing Commissioner member does not fulfill his/her responsibilities and obligations; has allowed the Local Association to decline without reason in efficiency and or registrations during his/her tenure; or has acted illegally or unprofessionally either personally or in connection with USA Softball to the extent that such actions have adversely affected the operations and or reputation of USA Softball or the Local Association, the USAS Board may take action to revoke the membership of the Commissioner. A Commissioner shall have the right to fair notice and a hearing prior to any such revocation.

If a local association's commissioner is vacated, in lieu of appointing a new commissioner, the USA Softball Board of Directors may appoint Working Directors to conduct business and programs for that local association.

The USAS President will appoint Board or Council Members to serve as stewards for the local association and mentors for the working directors. These stewards will elect an acting commissioner for the association among themselves to ensure the local association continues to function and conducts all business in accordance with USAS Bylaws, Procedural Code, and policies.

Working directors could perform the following functions:

- All American Games Tryouts
- High Performance Program Identifiers
- Leagues
- Registrations and other softball related activities
- Tournaments, including Qualifiers & Nationals
- Serve as proxies for the Local Association's council member positions
- Complete other assignments as directed by the USAS Board

All individual and team registrations and fees must be sent directly to National Office. Once the local association's financial obligations are met, the surplus will be divided evenly between the local association and its contingency fund. This protocol will reduce the burden of the local association as it pertains to up front financial contribution to USA Softball.

Working Directors would provide an operational level of service and visibility for USA Softball to the customers of the local association without a permanent commissioner.

Should one of the directors demonstrate competency and aspires to be the local association commissioner, an interview can be granted or solicited.

Directors may be removed by the USAS Board or eliminated if a new Commissioner is appointed for the Local Association. Directors would be eligible to become the new commissioner and serve their Local Association as Deputy Commissioners, JO Commissioners, Player Representatives, or staff members.

Section 6.3. Regions, Territories and Sections.

The Board shall divide the United States into geographic Regions and assign each Local Association to a Region as the Board determines will best serve the interests of the sport of softball. The Board shall further divide the Regions into Territories and the Territories into Sections as the Board determines will best serve the interests of the sport of softball.

The National Council (See Section 9) members from each Region shall elect a Regional Vice President to represent the Region on the Board. The Regional Vice President shall chair Regional meetings and communicate with Commissioners in their Regions on a regular basis.

USAS may set forth requirements and obligations for, and regulations pertaining to, Regions, Territories and Sections as it determines to be in the best interests for the governance and management of the sport of softball. Such other requirements, obligations and regulations shall be set forth in USAS's Procedural Code.

Section 6.4. Publication of Local Associations, Regions, Territories, and Sections

USAS shall publish on its website a list of all Local Associations, a list of Regions and each Local Association that is within the jurisdiction of the Region, a list of all Territories and each Region that is within the jurisdiction of the Territory and a list of all Sections and a list of each Region that is within the jurisdiction of each Section.

Section 6.5. Complaint Procedures.

Local Associations and Regions, Territories and Sections shall administer complaints as provided for in Section 15.

Section 6.6. Compliance with Act and Bylaws.

Local Associations, Regions, Territories and Sections shall comply with all obligations and requirements that an NGB must follow under the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act and USOPC Bylaws.

SECTION 7. BOARD

Section 7.1. General Powers.

Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the authority of, and the business and affairs of USAS shall be managed by, its Board.

Section 7.2. Function of the Board.

The USAS Board shall represent the interests of the softball community for USAS in the United States and of its athletes by providing USAS with policy, guidance and strategic direction. The Board shall oversee the management of USAS and its affairs, but it does not manage USAS. The Board shall select a well-qualified Chief Executive Officer and diligently oversee the Chief Executive Officer in the operation of USAS. The Board shall focus on long-term objectives and impacts rather than on day-to-day management, empowering the Chief Executive Officer to manage a staff-driven organization with effective Board oversight. In addition, the Board performs the following specific functions, among others:

- A. adopts and amends Bylaws;
- B. must, at the next board meeting, consider any proposed amendments to the Bylaws that a council member submits;
- C. make the final decision on any interpretation of Bylaw section 14 by a majority vote;
- D. implements procedures to orient new Board directors, to educate all directors on the business and governance affairs of USAS, and to evaluate Board performance;
- E. selects, compensates, evaluates and may terminate the Chief Executive Officer and plans for management succession;
- F. reviews and approves USAS's strategic plan and the annual operating plans, budget, business plans, and corporate performance;
- G. sets policy and provides guidance and strategic direction to management on significant issues facing USAS;
- H. sets goals and determines the future direction of USAS;
- I. reviews and approves significant corporate actions;
- J. oversees the financial reporting process, communications with stakeholders, and USAS's legal and regulatory compliance program;
- K. oversees effective corporate governance;
- L. approves capital structure, financial strategies, borrowing commitments, and long-range financial planning;
- M. shall establish membership requirements and fees in accordance with section 5.4 of the USAS Bylaws;
- N. reviews and approves financial statements, annual reports, financial and control policies, and, upon the recommendation of the Audit Committee, selects independent auditors;
- O. monitors to determine whether USAS's assets are being properly protected;
- P. ensures that USAS has proper and adequate insurance to protect from risk;
- Q. reviews and takes actions concerning membership, the recognition of Local Associations, and the designation of Regions, Territories and Sections.

- R. Ensure that athlete safety rules, policies, and procedures comply with the requirements of the USOPC and U.S. Center for SafeSport; and
- S. ensures that the Board and management are properly structured and prepared to act in case of an unforeseen corporate crisis.

Section 7.3. Diversity of Discussion.

USAS's Board shall be sensitive to the desirability of diversity at all levels of USAS, including among its athletes. USAS's Board shall develop and implement a policy of diversity at all levels of USAS, supported by meaningful efforts to accomplish that diversity. USAS's Board shall develop norms that favor open discussion and favor the presentation of different views.

Section 7.4. Qualifications.

Each director of the Board must be a permanent legal resident and/or a citizen of the United States and eighteen (18) years of age or older. A director need not be a resident of Oklahoma. In addition to the applicable eligibility requirements, the conflict of interest policies, and codes of conduct of all relevant stakeholders (i.e. USAS, USOPC, Team USA AC) apply in determining the eligibility of a candidate.

A director shall (i) have the highest personal and professional integrity, (ii) have demonstrated exceptional ability and judgment, and (iii) be effective, in conjunction with the other directors, in collectively serving the long-term interests of USAS. Directors shall possess the highest personal values, judgment and integrity, understanding of athletic competition and the Olympic ideals, and have diverse experience in the key business, financial, and other challenges that face USAS. Directors shall have a high level of experience and capability in Board oversight responsibilities, including in the areas of finance, marketing, fundraising, audit, management, communications, and sport.

Section 7.5. Number.

The Board shall consist of no more than twenty-four (24) directors, comprised as follows:

- A. the President of USAS;
- B. the President Elect of USAS;
- C. the Immediate Past President of USAS;
- D. ten (10) Regional Vice Presidents;
- E. eight (8) athlete directors (at least one of whom shall be male and at least one of whom shall be female);
- F. one (1) at large director;
- G. one (1) independent director; and,
- H. one (1) Affiliated Organization director (provided USAS has an affiliated organization member or members).

Section 7.6. Election/Selection.

All elections shall be administered in a fair, consistent and appropriate manner, free of any conflicts of interest. Eligibility to vote in the elections for board members shall be reviewed and validated by the USA Softball staff, with oversight by the President. Any potential conflicts of interest shall be reported to the chair of the Ethics Committee for review and handling pursuant to the Conflicts of Interest Policy. The USAS's Board shall be elected/selected as follows:

- A. **The President, President Elect and Immediate Past President.** The President, President Elect and Immediate Past President shall each have their seat on the Board as a result of their officer positions. The President Elect shall be elected at the National Council meeting by a majority vote of the National Council. A candidate for President Elect must submit his/her name to the National Office no later than thirty (30) days prior to the National Council meeting. The President Elect shall be elected at the National Council meeting, by a majority vote of the Council members.
- B. **Regional Vice Presidents.** Each Region shall elect a Regional Vice President who must (a) reside within his/her respective Region and (b) maintain status as a National Council member. Regional Vice Presidents shall be elected by a majority vote of the Council members from each respective Region. The vote shall be conducted either in person at the National Council meeting, or by an electronic vote prior to National Council meeting. Any National Council member from the Region may notify and direct the current Regional Vice President to call for a vote to use the electronic vote option. The electronic option and its date must be approved by a majority vote of the Council members from the Region. Candidates must submit their name to the National Office no later than thirty (30) days before the scheduled election. The duties of a Regional Vice President are as follows:
01. File a quarterly report addressing any registration concerns, compliance and/or ethical issues, or any other issues within the local associations of their region. This report shall be sent to USAS's Chief Operating Officer and copied to the USAS President.
 02. Verify that all National Championships and National Qualifiers held in their region are listed on the TournamentUSASoftball.com site.
 03. Communicate with the commissioners in their region on a regular basis. This duty can be done by e-mail, newsletter, phone, or any other method of communication.
 04. Serve as the liaison among commissioners and council members in their region and the USAS staff and President to ensure that critical communications and necessary information is flowing in all directions.
 05. Assume the duties of The Regional Director (Article 401 E of The USAS Procedural Code) if their region does not elect a separate Regional Director.
- C. **Athlete directors.** The eight (8) Elite Athlete directors shall be directly elected by athletes eligible to run. Two (2) of the Elite Athlete directors shall be elected by virtue of achieving the highest vote totals in the election for the USAS' AAC representative and alternate on the Team USA Athletes' Commission, meeting the qualifications set forth in Section 12.2. All athlete representatives (10-Year and 10-Year+) to the USAS board must be directly elected by the pool of athletes who meet the requirements as 10-Year Athlete representatives for USAS. The other six (6) Elite Athlete directors shall be elected in a separate election and shall meet the following qualifications:

01. within the ten (10) years preceding election, represented the United States in the Olympic, Pan American, or Paralympic Games, or World Championships, or event designated as an Operation Gold event, or, in a team sport, an international championship recognized by the IF of the NGB; or
02. Athletes who meet the qualifications in item C 01 that are beyond the ten (10) years may run for positions on the Board but can only make up two (2) Elite Athlete Directors on the Board.

Subject to meeting the eligibility requirements, eligible athletes may run and vote in both elections. The vote tallies for the AAC member/alternate positions shall be counted and tallied prior to the vote count for the separate election, and any person elected to the AAC member and alternate positions shall already be elected to the USAS Board for a four (4) year term and shall no longer be eligible for election to the USAS Board pursuant to the separate election. The other six (6) athlete directors shall be elected pursuant to the separate election. Elections for the four (4) year term athletes shall take place after the Summer Olympic Games but prior to January 1 of the year following the Summer Olympic Games, with the commencement of the term beginning on January 1. At least thirty-three percent (33%) of the total number of directors shall be athlete directors. USAS shall pay for the reasonable expenses of the athlete Board directors to attend USAS Board meetings.

- D. **At Large Director.** The Nominating and Governance Committee shall recommend and nominate a candidate for the position of at large Director, using whatever process the Nominating and Governance Committee determines to be appropriate. The Board shall elect one (1) at large director.
- E. **Independent Director.** The Nominating and Governance Committee shall nominate, using whatever process the Nominating and Governance Committee determines to be appropriate, at least one (1) director from among individuals considered to be independent, as that term is defined in Section 7.7. The Board shall elect one (1) independent director.
- F. **Affiliated Organization Director.** If there is no Affiliated Organization member, then the Affiliated Organization director seat shall be vacant. If there is one (1) Affiliated Organization member, then that organization shall select a qualified individual to serve as the Affiliated Organization director. If there is more than one (1) Affiliated Organization member, then the Affiliated Organizations as a group shall select a qualified individual to serve as the Affiliated Organization director.

Section 7.7. Independence.

The Board, through its Nominating and Governance Committee, shall affirmatively make a determination as to the independence of each independent director, and disclose those determinations. Under the definition of “independence” adopted by the Board, an “independent director” shall be determined to have no material relationship with USAS, either directly or through an organization that has a material relationship with USAS. A relationship is “material” if, in the judgment of the Nominating and Governance Committee, it would interfere with the

director's independent judgment. To assist it in determining whether a director is independent, the Board shall adopt the guidelines set forth below, which shall be applied on a case-by-case basis by the Nominating Committee.

A director shall not be considered independent if, within the preceding two (2) years:

- A. the director was employed by or held any governance position (whether a paid or volunteer position) with USAS, the international federation of softball, the international regional sport entity of softball, or any sport family entity of softball;
- B. an immediate family member of the director was employed by or held any governance position (whether a paid or volunteer position) with softball, the international federation of softball, the international regional sport entity of softball, or any sport family entity of softball;
- C. the director was affiliated with or employed by USAS's outside auditor or outside counsel;
- D. an immediate family member of the director was affiliated with or employed by USAS's outside auditor or outside counsel as a partner, principal or manager;
- E. the director was a member of USAS's Athletes' Advisory Council;
- F. the director was a member of any constituent group with representation on the Board;
- G. the director receives any compensation from USAS, directly or indirectly;
- H. the director is an executive officer, controlling shareholder, or partner of a corporation or partnership or other business entity that does business with USAS;
- I. the individual is/was the parent or close family member or coach of an athlete that has competed in a Protected Competition; or
- J. the individual is/was a member of the NGB in a membership category that participates in Protected Competitions.

The member must maintain an independent perspective by maintaining the requirements above for their entire term and any successive term, with exceptions related to their service on the board.

Where the guidelines above do not address a particular relationship, the determination of whether the relationship is material, and whether a director is independent, shall be made by the Nominating and Governance Committee.

Section 7.8. Board Term and Term Limits.

The term of office for a director of the Board shall be two (2) years, unless specified otherwise in either Bylaw 7.5 or 7.6. A director's term shall commence at the conclusion of the National Council meeting and shall end at the conclusion of the National Council meeting two years later. However, a director shall hold office until the director's successor is elected/selected and qualified, or until the director's earlier resignation, removal, incapacity, disability or death.

The term limit for a director shall be ten (10) years. Once a director serves for ten consecutive years, that director must take at least a two (2) year hiatus before being eligible to serve on the Board again. However, if a current Board Member with more than four (4) years of

consecutive service is elected President, that President Elect shall be entitled to serve the complete six (6) year cycle as President Elect, President, and Past President.

Section 7.9. Director Attendance.

Directors of the Board shall be expected to attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings. Directors' attendance will be reviewed at every Board meeting. Directors may be removed in accordance with Bylaw 7.10 if they are repeatedly absent. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a USAS director shall not be deemed absent from any USAS Board meeting if the absence was the result, in whole or in part, of the director's participation in USAS's National Team activities.

Section 7.10. Resignation, Removal and Vacancies.

A director's position on the Board shall be declared vacant upon the director's resignation, removal, incapacity, disability, or death. Any director shall resign at any time by giving written notice to the President, except the President's resignation shall be given to the Chief Executive Officer. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified in the written notice, and unless otherwise specified in the written notice, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Directors may be removed by the Board if they fail to meet the attendance requirement in Bylaw 7.9, unless they are able to demonstrate to the other directors of the Board that the presence of exigent circumstances caused and excused the absences. In such circumstances, the absent directors shall be removed by the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting power of the Board (not including the voting power of the absent director). A director, other than a Regional Vice President, shall also be removed for cause at any duly noticed meeting of the Board, and after being provided an opportunity for the director to be heard by the Board, upon the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the total voting power of the Board (excluding the voting power of the director in question). A Regional Vice President director shall also be removed for cause (i) at any duly noticed meeting of the Board, and after being provided an opportunity for the director to be heard by the Board, upon the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the total voting power of the Board (excluding the voting power of the director in question) or (ii) after being provided an opportunity to provide a statement to the Region's National Council members, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Region's National Council members.

No director shall be subject to removal or to not being re-nominated based on how they vote as a director, unless such voting is part of a violation of USAS's Code of Ethics.

Any vacancy occurring in the Board shall be filled as set forth for the election of that director. A director elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected for the unexpired term of such director's predecessor in office.

If, in a Presidential Election Year, no candidate applies, the Board shall appoint a qualified person to temporarily fill the vacancy on the Board. The appointee shall serve until a Presidential Election is held at the next National Council Meeting.

Section 7.11. Regular and Special Meetings.

USAS's Board shall meet at regularly scheduled meetings, or with such other frequency as is appropriate for the Board to meet given the circumstances. The Board shall meet during the National Council meeting. Otherwise, the President shall determine, after conferring with the Board, the date and location of Board meetings. Special meetings of the Board shall be held upon the call of the President or upon the written request of not less than fifty (50) percent of the Board.

Section 7.12. Notice of Meetings.

The Chief Executive Officer shall send to each member of the Board written notice of each meeting of the Board at least three (3) days prior to such meeting. The notice shall specify the date and time of the meeting and shall also include either a place where the meeting will be held or a telephone number which a director may use to participate in the meeting telephonically, by facsimile or by e-mail. Notice shall be deemed given to a director when deposited in the United States mail or with a reputable delivery service addressed to the mailing address for such director as shown in the official directory of USAS or such other mailing address as such director may specify to the Chief Executive Officer in writing from time to time, or when transmitted to the facsimile number or e-mail address of such director as shown in the official directory of USAS or such other facsimile number or e-mail address as such director may specify to the Chief Executive Officer in writing from time to time. The notice need not specify the purpose of the meeting. Any business that may be transacted by the Board at a regular meeting may also be transacted at a special meeting of the Board.

A director may waive notice of any meeting before, at, or after such meeting. The attendance of a director at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.

Section 7.13. Quorum.

A simple majority of the directors of the Board in office immediately before the meeting begins shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board. If less than a quorum is present at a meeting, a majority of directors present at the meeting may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice other than an announcement at the meeting, until a quorum shall be present.

Section 7.14 Action of the Board/Consent.

Unless otherwise provided for herein, the act of at least a majority of the total number of directors on the Board shall constitute an act of the Board.

As further provided in Section 7.17, the written consent of at least a majority of the total number of directors on the Board shall also constitute an act of the Board.

Section 7.15. Attendance and Voting by Proxy.

Proxies shall be allowed, provided the proxy request is submitted to USAS at least three (3) business days prior to the commencement of the meeting and such proxy request is approved by the Board.

Section 7.16. Presumption of Assent.

A director who is present at a meeting of the Board at which action on any corporate matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to the action taken unless such director's dissent shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting or unless the director shall file a written dissent to such action with the individual acting as the Secretary of the Board before the adjournment of the meeting. Such a right to dissent shall not apply to a director who voted in favor of such action.

Section 7.17. Action Without a Meeting.

Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Board may be taken without a meeting if at least a majority of the total number of directors on the Board via electronic means or in writing: (i) consent to such action; and (ii) such writing is promptly circulated to the entire Board.

Section 7.18. Transacting Business by Mail, Electronic Mail, Telephone or Facsimile.

The Board shall have the power to transact its business by mail, electronic-mail, telephone, or facsimile, if in the judgment of the President case requires such action.

Section 7.19. Agenda.

The agenda for a meeting of the Board shall be set by the President after consultation with the Chief Executive Officer. A director may request that items be placed on the Board agenda. A Board agenda shall be placed on USAS's website and available to USAS' members and members of USAS' Local Associations no later than seven (7) days prior to the meeting date.

Section 7.20. Questions of Order and Board Meeting Leadership.

Questions of order shall be decided by the President unless otherwise provided in advance by the Board. The President shall lead meetings of the Board. If the President is absent from any

meeting of the Board, then the Immediate Past President shall preside. If the Immediate Past President is unable to preside, then the President Elect shall preside.

Section 7.21. Effectiveness of Actions.

Actions taken at a meeting of the Board shall become effective immediately following the adjournment of the meeting, except as otherwise provided in the Bylaws or when a definite effective date is recited in the record of the action taken.

Section 7.22. Open and Executive Meeting Sessions.

Ordinarily, all meetings of the Board shall be open to USAS members and members of USAS' Local Associations. In the event the President, with the consent of a majority of the directors of the Board in attendance, deems it appropriate: (i) to exclude members at an open meeting for any reason, then the President may declare that the meeting is closed, or (ii) to convene an executive session to consider and discuss matters relating to personnel, nominations, discipline, budget, salary, litigation or other sensitive matter, then the President may specifically designate and call an executive session. Further, the President may open a meeting of the Board to non-members, with the consent of a majority of the directors of the Board in attendance.

Section 7.23. Minutes of Meetings.

The minutes of all meetings of the Board shall be published on USAS's website for review by USAS' members and members of USAS' Local Associations. Every reasonable effort will be made to post the minutes within thirty (30) days after completion of the meeting. Meeting archived minutes shall also be posted and available to USAS' members and members of USAS' Local Associations on USAS's website.

Section 7.24. Compensation.

Directors of the Board shall not receive compensation for their services as directors, although the reasonable expenses of directors may be paid or reimbursed in accordance with USAS's policies. Directors are disqualified from receiving compensation for services rendered to or for the benefit of USAS in any other capacity.

SECTION 8. OFFICERS

Section 8.1. Designation.

The officers of USAS shall be a President, President Elect, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, Chief Executive Officer and Secretary.

Section 8.2. Election/Selection.

- A. **President.** An individual after serving his/her term as President Elect, shall assume the office of President. The President shall take office immediately following conclusion of the National Council meeting.
- B. **President Elect.** Candidates seeking the position of President Elect shall submit their names to the National Office no later than thirty (30) days prior to the National Council meeting. The President Elect shall be elected by a majority vote of the National Council. The President Elect shall take office immediately following conclusion of the National Council meeting.
- C. **Immediate Past President.** An individual after serving his/her term as President, or who is appointed to this position by the Board pursuant to Section 8.7, shall assume the office of Immediate Past President. The Immediate Past President shall take office immediately following conclusion of the National Council meeting.
- D. **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be elected by the USAS Board and may be a staff employee of USAS or may be a director of the Board. Recognizing the significance of the Treasurer in financial matters, the Treasurer shall have a financial background enabling him/her to fulfill the duties of Treasurer. The Treasurer shall take office upon election. In the event the Treasurer is a staff employee of USAS, then his/her position as Treasurer shall automatically cease upon the termination, for any reason, of his/her employment as a staff employee.
- E. **Chief Executive Officer.** The Chief Executive Officer shall serve by reason of his/her employment with USAS, as set out in Section 14.
- F. **Secretary.** The Chief Executive Officer shall designate one member of the staff, with approval of the Board, to serve as the corporate Secretary to handle the ministerial functions usually required by that position under corporate law and take minutes at Board meetings. However, in any circumstance in which the Chief Executive Officer has not designated a staff person to serve as Secretary, the Board may select a director of the Board or another individual employed by USAS to serve as Secretary.

Section 8.3. Term.

The term of office of the President, President Elect and Immediate Past President shall be two (2) years. The President shall hold office until replaced by the current President Elect. The President Elect shall hold office until replaced by a newly elected President Elect. The Past President shall hold office until replaced by the current President. The President, President

Elect and Immediate Past President shall hold office as stated above or until their earlier resignation, removal, incapacity, disability or death.

The term of the office of Treasurer shall be unlimited. The Treasurer shall hold office until the Treasurer's successor is elected and seated or until the Treasurer's earlier resignation, removal, incapacity, disability or death.

The term of office of the Chief Executive Officer is unlimited. The Chief Executive Officer shall hold office until his/her employment with USAS ends or until the Chief Executive Officer's earlier resignation, incapacity, disability or death.

The term of office of the Secretary is unlimited. The Secretary shall hold office until his/her employment with USAS ends, when removed by the Chief Executive Officer, when the Chief Executive Officer designates a different individual to serve as Secretary, with approval of the Board, or until the Secretary's earlier resignation, incapacity, disability or death.

Section 8.4. Term Limits.

The offices of President, President Elect and Immediate Past President shall not be limited to one term; however, no individual may simultaneously hold positions as President, President Elect and Immediate Past President.

There are no term limits for service as Chief Executive Officer, Treasurer, or Secretary, except that the Chief Executive Officer and Secretary must be employed by USAS, and if not so employed then his/her position as an officer will also terminate.

Section 8.5. Authority and Duties of Officers.

The officers of USAS shall have the authority and shall exercise the powers and perform the duties specified below and as may be additionally specified by these Bylaws, except that in any event each officer shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as may be required by law:

- A. **President.** The President shall: (i) determine the date and location of Board meetings, after conferring with the Board, (ii) set meeting agendas of the Board, (iii) preside at all meetings of the Board and of the National Council, (iv) see that all Board commitments, resolutions and oversight are carried into effect and (v) exercise such powers and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Board.
- B. **President Elect.** The President Elect shall: (i) preside at all meetings of the Board and National Council if the President and Immediate Past President are unable to fulfill that function and (ii) perform those duties as prescribed by the President with the approval of the Board and (iii) exercise such powers and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Board.
- C. **Immediate Past President.** The Immediate Past President shall (i) preside at all meetings of the Board and National Council if the President is unable to fulfill that

function and (ii) perform those duties as prescribed by the President with the approval of the Board and (iii) exercise such powers and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Board.

- D. **Chief Executive Officer.** The Chief Executive Officer shall (i) perform those duties as set forth in Section 14 and (ii) exercise such powers and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Board.
- E. **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall (i) have general oversight of the financial affairs of USAS, including preparation of the annual budget, (ii) present financial reports to the Board and National Council as the Board may request; (iii) ensure that an annual audit is conducted of USAS, (iv) in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer and (v) exercise such powers and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Board.
- F. **Secretary.** The Secretary shall: (i) keep the minutes of the proceedings of the Board; (ii) see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or as required by law; (iii) be custodian of the corporate records; (iv) perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary; and (v) perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to the Secretary by the Chief Executive Officer or by the Board.

The positions of Treasurer and Secretary may be simultaneously held by the same individual, but none such positions shall be simultaneously held with the position of President or Chief Executive Officer.

Section 8.6. Restrictions.

Officers of USAS shall perform their functions with due care. No individual may serve simultaneously as an officer of USAS and as an officer of another amateur sports organization that is recognized by the USOPC as a National Governing Body.

Section 8.7. Resignation, Removal and Vacancies.

An officer's position with USAS may be declared vacant upon the officer's resignation, removal, incapacity, disability or death. The President, President Elect, Immediate Past President, Treasurer and Chief Executive Officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board. The Secretary may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chief Executive Officer. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified in the notice, and unless otherwise specified in the notice, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

The President, President Elect and Immediate Past President and Treasurer may be removed for cause at any duly noticed meeting of the Board, and after being provided an opportunity to be heard by the Board, upon the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the total voting power of the Board (excluding the voting power of the director in question). The Chief Executive Officer may be removed by the Board as is set out in Section 14. The Secretary may be removed by the Chief Executive Officer, with or without cause.

Any vacancy occurring in office of the President shall be filled by the President Elect. A vacancy in the office of the President Elect shall be filled at the next meeting of the National Council. An individual filling a vacancy in the office of President or President Elect shall fill the unexpired term of the individual's predecessor in office. A vacancy in the office of the Immediate Past President may be filled by the Board, by majority vote, with a person who, at any prior time, served as a President of USAS. A vacancy in the office of the Treasurer shall be filled by the Board, by majority vote. A vacancy in the office of Chief Executive Officer shall be filled by the Board as set forth in Section 14. A vacancy in the office of Secretary shall be filled by the Chief Executive Officer, with approval of the Board, or if the Chief Executive Officer has not designated a staff person, by the Board.

Section 8.8. Compensation.

The President, President Elect, Immediate Past President and Treasurer shall not receive compensation for their service to USAS, although their reasonable expenses may be paid or reimbursed in accordance with USAS's policies. The President, President Elect, Immediate Past President and Treasurer are disqualified from receiving compensation for services rendered to or for the benefit of USAS in any other capacity.

Section 8.9. International Matters/Secretary General.

Recognizing the significance of the President in international matters, the President, or the President's designee, shall exercise ceremonial and representational functions in USAS's international affairs. The Chief Executive Officer, serving as Secretary General, shall remain responsible for all operational aspects of relations with international and other organizations, including, but not limited to the international federation of softball/baseball, the international regional federation of softball/baseball, and the USOPC. The Secretary General is not an officer's position.

SECTION 9. NATIONAL COUNCIL

Section 9.1. Purpose.

There shall be a National Council meeting of USAS, which shall be held annually. The National Council shall convene to conduct business of the organization as authorized in these Bylaws. It shall also serve as an opportunity for all National Council members, USAS members, members of USAS' Local Associations, and other USAS constituencies to gather and discuss important issues affecting the sport of softball and USAS.

Section 9.2. Duties.

The National Council shall have the following duties:

- A. recommend to the Board amendments to the Bylaws;
- B. vote on, adopt and amend the Softball Rule Book (playing rules), provided the Rule Book does not conflict with the Bylaws;
- C. vote on, adopt and amend the Softball Procedural Code, provided the Procedural Code does not conflict with the Bylaws;
- D. approve eligibility requirements;
- E. award tournament events;
- F. exercise such powers and perform such other duties as may be requested by the Board.

Section 9.3. National Council Members.

The National Council shall consist of the following representatives:

- A. Commissioners from each Local Association;
- B. regional player representatives;
- C. one additional player representative for each 2,000 teams registered from a Local Association in the preceding year;
- D. Local Association Junior Olympic Commissioners for each association with a minimum of 100 registered Junior Olympic teams in the preceding year;
- E. one Local Association Athlete Representative for each association. Athlete Representatives must be at least 18 years old and meet the criteria of an Actively Engaged Athlete, which is one of the following criteria:
 - 01. participate in a National Team event in the previous 24 months.
 - 02. competed in a USAS-sanctioned National Championship in the previous 24 months.
- F. Regional umpires-in-chief;
- G. Past Presidents;
- H. Chief Executive Officer(s) Emeritus;
- I. Commissioner Emeritus (see Section 5);
- J. National Council Member Emeritus (See Section 5);
- K. a representative from each allied and affiliated member;

L. Elite Athlete members.

Except for Board Members, who are elected/selected pursuant to the Bylaws, representatives to the National Council shall be elected/selected as is set forth in USAS's Procedural Code.

Section 9.4. Membership Meetings.

The National Council Meeting must include Meetings for the Membership Groups listed below. The President will appoint Chairpersons and Co-Chairpersons to set the agendas and conduct the meetings. Each membership group is to review all USAS issues and Code and Playing Rule amendments that affect their group. Recommendations from these meetings will be forwarded to committees, forums, panels, the Board of Directors, National Staff Members, or The National Council as deemed appropriate by each Membership Group. These groups may also schedule virtual meetings throughout the year as they deem necessary to conduct USAS business.

Affiliated & Allied: This membership group includes all Council Members who represent an Affiliated or Allied Organization. The USAS AAC will appoint a designated liaison member to this group.

Athletes/Player Representatives: This membership group includes all Council Members who are At-Large Player Reps, Elite Athletes, Local Association Athlete Reps, Regional Player Reps, and Council Members Emeriti who served as Player Reps.

Commissioners: This membership group includes all Council Members who are Commissioners, Commissioners Emeriti, and Council Members Emeriti who served as Commissioners. The USAS AAC will appoint a designated liaison member to this group.

Junior Olympic Commissioners: This membership group includes all Council Members who are Local or Regional JO Commissioners, and Council Members Emeriti who served as JO Commissioners. The USAS AAC will appoint a designated liaison member to this group.

Umpires: This membership group includes all Council Members who are Regional Umpires-In-Chief, and Council Members Emeriti who served as Umpires, and all National Umpire Staff Members. The USAS AAC will appoint a designated liaison member to this group.

Section 9.5. Voting.

Each National Council member shall be entitled to one (1) vote. However, in order to achieve thirty-three percent (33%) elite athlete representation, a proportional or weighted voting system shall be utilized that provide elite athlete representatives thirty-three percent (33%) voting power of the National Council. Athletes selected to serve on the National Council shall meet the requirements established by the USOPC as set forth in Section 8.5 of the USOPC Bylaws, as amended or revised.

Proxies shall be allowed, provided the proxy request is submitted to USAS three (3) business days prior to the commencement of the National Council meeting and such proxy request is approved by the Board.

Section 9.6. Quorum.

A simple majority of the representatives of the National Council plus (i) one or more of the President, Immediate Past President or President Elect; plus (ii) one or more Regional members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the National Council.

Section 9.7. Date/Time and Place.

The National Council meeting will be held annually in Oklahoma City; the Board shall approve the place and dates. The Board reserves the right to vote to hold the meeting in another city if the CEO cannot secure a fair and reasonable hotel rate in Oklahoma City.

Section 9.8. Notice.

Notice of the National Council meeting stating the place, date and time of the meeting shall be sent to all Council members and posted on the website of USAS no fewer than thirty (30) days before the date of the meeting.

Section 9.9. National Council Meeting Fiscal Policies.

Travel. Each year the Board of Directors shall determine whether USA Softball will be responsible, in whole or in part, for expense of transporting members of the Board of Directors, Local Commissioners, Regional Player Representatives, At-Large Player Representatives, Regional Umpires-in-Chief, Past Presidents who are no longer an active commissioner and Commissioner Emeritus to and from the annual Council Meeting to be held the following year. On or before January 15 of each year, the Chief Executive Officer shall send written notice to each person identified in this paragraph Article 501 informing them of whether USA Softball will be responsible in whole or in part for such expenses. If such expenses are paid in whole or in part by USA Softball, all airline reservations must be made through the USA Softball Travel Service at least forty-five (45) days before the beginning of the annual Council Meeting. If air travel is not elected, then mileage shall be reimbursed at the rate then allowed as depreciation under the IRS Code and related regulations; provided, however, in no event shall such reimbursement exceed the cost of the lowest airfare which could have been obtained for such Council Member had air travel been elected.

Other Expenses. Each year, before the close of the annual Council Meeting for that year, the Board of Directors shall determine whether and to what extent other expenses incurred by members of the Board of Directors, Local Commissioners, Regional Player Representatives,

At-Large Player Representatives, Regional Umpires-in-Chief, Past Presidents who are no longer an active commissioner and each Commissioner Emeritus who has served as an active commissioner for twenty-five (25) or more years, including but not limited to lodging expenses (room and tax only) incurred at the host hotel or approved hotel for such annual Council Meeting, shall be reimbursed by USA Softball, provided that such persons attended all sessions and assigned committee meetings as verified by roll call. If reimbursement of any such expenses is approved by the Board of Directors, eligible Council Members shall file a claim for reimbursement with USA Softball no later than sixty (60) days after the close of such annual Council Meeting on a form approved and in accordance with procedures established by USA Softball.

Registration Fee. Each year the Board of Directors shall determine an amount to be collected from each Council Member as a registration fee for the annual meeting to be held the following year. On or before January 15 of each year, the Chief Executive Officer shall send written notice to each Council Member informing them of the registration fee to be charged for the Council Meeting to be held that year. The registration fee shall be set at an amount necessary to cover all costs associated with the annual meeting or such lesser amount as the Board of Directors may determine in its sole discretion. The Board of Directors shall have the authority, but not the obligation, in its sole discretion to waive the registration fee of any Council Member. The Board of Directors shall have the authority, but not the obligation, in its sole discretion to charge Council Members who are not eligible for reimbursement, a registration fee which is less than the amount charged to Council Members who are eligible for reimbursement.

SECTION 10. COMMITTEES

Section 10.1. Designation.

USAS shall have the following standing committees: Audit Committee, Ethics Committee, Finance Committee, Judicial Committee, Nominating and Governance Committee, and Selection Committees.

Additionally, USAS may have other working committees as set forth in Section 10.19.

Standing and Working committees shall meet in person at the USAS Annual Meeting. All committees are strongly encouraged to hold additional meetings throughout the year as needed to conduct USAS business efficiently and thoroughly. The frequency and mode of these meetings will be determined by the committee chairpersons, USAS Staff, the USAS President, and the USAS Board of Directors.

There shall be no Executive Committee or other committee(s) with management authority delegated by the Board.

Section 10.2. Appointments.

Standing and working committee appointments, including the designation of committee Chairs, shall be made annually by the President, unless otherwise set forth in these Bylaws. Appointments shall be made based on a combination of factors including each individual member's expertise and the needs of USAS, and these Bylaws. Committee agendas shall be developed by the Committee Chair in consultation with the appropriate members of management and with the input of the President. Committee members shall be expected to attend in person all regularly scheduled committee meetings. Participation by telephone shall be permitted as necessary. Committee Chairs shall report on committee matters to the Board when requested.

Section 10.3. Number.

Membership on standing committees shall not exceed six (6) individuals. Working committees shall be of the minimum number and size possible to permit both conduct of the sport and appropriate Board governance.

Section 10.4. Athlete Representation.

A. Composition and Eligibility

01. Elite athlete representatives shall equal at least thirty-three percent (33%) on all designated committees. At least half of those athlete representatives will be

NGB 10 Year Athlete representatives; the remaining will be either NGB 10 Year or NGB 10 Year+ Athlete representatives.

02. USAS Actively Engaged Athlete representatives will equal at least 33% of all working committees, panels, and forums.

B. Selection

01. All athlete representatives on committees, panels, and forums will be selected by the USAS AAC.

02. The USAS AAC and USAS Nominating and Governance Committee will develop a process to identify and vet candidates to serve as the 10 Year+ Athlete representatives.

C. Higher Standards, Additions, Restrictions, or Exceptions

01. Any higher standard, addition, restriction, or exception to the requirements of this section (including the addition of a committee to the list of Designated Committees) will first be approved by the USAS AAC and then submitted to the NGB Athlete Representation Review Working Group for review and approval.

Section 10.5. Term.

The term for all standing and working committee members shall be two (2) years. A committee member shall remain on the committee until the committee member's successor is appointed, or until the committee member's earlier resignation, removal, incapacity, disability or death.

Section 10.6. Term Limits.

Members of the Nominating and Governance, and the Hall of Fame committees shall serve terms of four (4) years. An individual shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms on these committees.

On all other standing and working committees, the term limit shall be ten (10) consecutive years of service.

Once a committee member becomes term limited, that member must take at least a one (1) year hiatus before being eligible for reappointment to that committee.

Section 10.7. Committee Member Attendance.

Committee members are expected to attend in person all regularly scheduled committee meetings of which they are a member. Each committee member must attend a minimum of at least one half (1/2) of the committee meetings of which they are a member during any twelve-month period, or otherwise demonstrate that exigent circumstances caused and excused the absences. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a USAS committee member shall not be deemed absent from any such meeting for purposes of this Section 10.7 if the absence was the result, in whole or in part, of the member's participation in USAS' National Team activities.

Section 10.8. Resignation, Removal and Vacancies.

A committee member's position on a committee may be declared vacant upon the committee member's resignation, removal, incapacity, disability or death. A committee member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President, if appointed by the President, or to the Chief Executive Officer, if appointed by the Chief Executive Officer. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, and unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Committee members may be removed by the President if they fail to attend in person more than one half (1/2) of the regular committee meetings during any twelve-month period, unless they are able to demonstrate to the President, or to the Chief Executive Officer, if appointed by the Chief Executive Officer, that the presence of exigent circumstances caused and excused the absences. In such circumstances, the absent committee member shall be removed upon determination of the President, or upon the determination of the Chief Executive Officer, if appointed by the Chief Executive Officer. Committee members may also be removed for cause upon the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the total voting power of the Board (excluding the voting power of the committee member in question, if also a director), or upon the determination of the President or of the Chief Executive Officer, if appointed by the Chief Executive Officer. Committee members may also be removed not for cause upon the affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the total voting power of the Board (excluding the voting power of the director in question, if also a director), or upon the determination of the President or of the Chief Executive Officer, if appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.

Any vacancy occurring in a committee shall be filled as set forth for the appointment of that committee member. A committee member appointed to fill a vacancy shall be appointed for the unexpired term of such committee member's predecessor in office.

Section 10.9. Procedures.

Each committee shall establish procedures for conducting its business and affairs. Such procedures shall be published and made available on USAS's website.

Section 10.10. Open and Executive Meeting Sessions.

Ordinarily, all committee meetings shall be open to USAS members. In the event the committee chair, with the consent of a majority of the committee members in attendance, deems it appropriate to exclude members at an open meeting for any reason, then the chair may (i) declare that the meeting is closed, or (ii) to convene an executive session to consider and discuss matters relating to personnel, nominations, discipline, budget, salary, litigation or other sensitive matter, then the chair may specifically designate and call an executive session. Further, the chair may open a meeting of the committee to non-members, with the consent of a majority of the members of the committee in attendance.

Section 10.11. Minutes of Meetings.

Each committee shall take minutes of its meetings and make them promptly available for review by the USAS' Board.

Section 10.12. Compensation.

Committee members shall not receive compensation for their services as committee members, although the reasonable expenses of committee members may be paid or reimbursed in accordance with USAS's policies. Committee members who are not directors of the Board may receive compensation for services rendered to or for the benefit of USAS in any other capacity, provided the Board gives explicit approval.

Section 10.13. Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee shall be appointed and have the responsibilities as follows:

- A. The President shall appoint the members of the Audit Committee and its chair. A director on the Board with financial experience shall be on the Audit Committee. Athlete representatives shall be elected by the USAS AAC.
- B. The Audit Committee shall periodically meet separately in executive session individually with management, USAS's financial staff, and USAS's outside auditor. In addition, the Audit Committee, or a designated representative of the Committee, shall meet with the outside auditor prior to the release of USAS's annual audited financial statements and tax filings, to review such materials.
- C. The Audit Committee shall:
 01. recommend the independent auditors of USAS, review the report of the independent auditors and management letter, and recommend action as needed;
 02. investigate matters of financial controls and disclosure and such other matter as directed by the Board; and,
 03. perform such other duties as assigned by the Board.

Section 10.14. Ethics Committee.

The Ethics Committee shall be appointed and have the responsibilities as follows:

- A. The President shall appoint the members of the Ethics Committee and its chair. Members of the Ethics Committee shall satisfy the standards of independence for "independent directors" as set forth in these Bylaws. No director of the Board shall be appointed to the Ethics Committee. Athlete representatives shall be elected by the USAS AAC.
- B. The Ethics Committee shall:
 01. oversee implementation of, and compliance with, USAS's Code of Ethics;
 02. report to the Board on all ethical issues;

03. develop, and review on an annual basis, a Code of Ethics for the Board, officers, staff members, committee members, volunteers, and member organizations for adoption by the Board;
04. review and investigate matters of ethical impropriety and make recommendations on such matters to the Board;
05. review and provide guidance on ethical questions presented to it by the Board, officers, committee members, volunteers, staff, USAS members and members of USAS' Local Associations; and
06. perform such other duties as assigned by the Board.

Section 10.15. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall be appointed and have the responsibilities as follows:

- A. The President shall appoint the members of the Finance Committee and its chair. A director on the Board with financial experience shall be on the Finance Committee. Athlete representatives shall be elected by the USAS AAC.
- B. The Finance Committee shall periodically meet in executive session with management and USAS's financial staff.
- C. The Finance Committee shall:
 01. Periodically review financials.
 02. Develop sound business policies.
 03. Review finance related issues for recommendations to Board.
 04. Advise and assist financial staff.
 05. Work with staff to develop annual budget.
 06. Oversight of all financial aspects.
 07. Perform such other duties as assigned by the Board.

Section 10.16. Judicial Committee

The Judicial Committee shall be appointed and have the responsibilities as follows.

- A. The President shall appoint the members of the Judicial Committee and its chair. No director of the Board shall be appointed to the Judicial Committee. Athlete representatives shall be elected by the USAS AAC.
- B. The Judicial Committee shall:
 01. generally, administer and oversee all administrative, disciplinary, non-compliance, non-performance and right to compete matters filed with USAS;
 02. identify individuals who would be fair and impartial and who would have the qualifications and ability to serve on hearing panels;
 03. hear and render a decision, or appoint a sub-committee to hear and render a decision on all administrative, disciplinary, non-compliance, non-performance and right to compete matters; and
 04. perform such other duties as assigned by the Board.

Section 10.17. Nominating and Governance Committee.

The Nominating and Governance Committee shall be elected/selected and have the responsibilities as follows:

- A. The Nominating and Governance Committees shall be selected as follows:
 - 01. one (1) individual elected by the previous Nominating and Governance Committee from that Committee, who shall be the Chair;
 - 02. one (1) individual who is independent as that term is defined in these Bylaws and who is selected by the previous Nominating and Governance Committee;
 - 03. two (2) athletes selected and approved according to Section 10.4; and,
 - 04. two (2) individuals who shall be selected by the President.
- B. The members of the Nominating and Governance Committee shall serve for terms of four (4) years. An individual shall not serve on the Nominating and Governance Committee for more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- C. No individual shall be eligible to be a member of the Nominating and Governance Committee if that individual is a current director. No individual who serves on the Nominating and Governance Committee may serve or be eligible to serve on the Board. Members of the Nominating and Governance Committee shall be precluded from serving as a Board director or in any other USAS capacity, whether governance or on staff, for a period of one (1) year after their service on the Nominating and Governance Committee ends.
- D. The Nominating and Governance Committee shall:
 - 01. recommend to the Board individuals to fill the independent Board seat and at large Board seat;
 - 02. recommend as requested by the President individuals to serve on various committees;
 - 03. develop and recommend to the Board for its consideration an annual self-evaluation process of the Board and its committees; and
 - 04. jointly develop a process to identify and vet candidates to serve as the 10-Year and 10-Year+ athlete representatives with the USAS AAC and Actively Engaged Athletes representatives; and
 - 05. perform such other duties as assigned by the Board.
- E. In considering a candidate for nomination to the Board, the Nominating and Governance Committee takes into consideration:
 - 01. the candidate's contribution to the effective functioning of USAS;
 - 02. any potential or impending change in the candidate's principal area of responsibility with his/her company or in his/her employment;
 - 03. whether the candidate continues to bring relevant experience to the Board;
 - 04. whether the candidate has the ability to attend meetings and fully participate in the activities of the Board;
 - 05. the candidate's reputation for personal integrity and commitment to ethical conduct; and,
 - 06. whether the candidate has developed any relationships with another organization, or other circumstances have arisen, that might make it inappropriate for the director to continue serving on the Board.

Section 10.18. Selection Committees

There shall be a Junior and Adult Selection committee for both the Men's and Women's Programs. The Junior committees shall be responsible for any teams that represent the age groups U18 or younger. The Adult committees will be responsible for any teams that represent age groups U19 and older as well as the Adult National Teams. Committee members and selection procedures are determined by the International Play board-approved policy.

Section 10.19. Working Committees.

Any committee which receives donations or hosts fundraising events must produce yearly balance sheets for the proceeds, which will be reviewed by the Board of Directors. These monies must be received by a 501 (c) entity. USAS shall have the following working committees:

- A. **Ad Hoc Committees.** Those committees created by the President for special purposes. These committees shall be effective January 1 of the current year through December 31 and must be reappointed by the President.
- B. **Boys and Men's Fast Pitch Committee.** This committee shall promote the game of boys and men's fast pitch and set tournament dates and select tournament sites.
- C. **Communications Committee.** This committee shall consist of eighteen members of whom at least two members are also members of the Marketing Committee. Its duties shall include the following:
 01. Develop strategies to promote USAS and increase engagement across all mediums via print and digital publications.
 02. Make necessary recommendations to the Board regarding all methods of USAS communications including but not limited to written and digital publications, current trends, websites and social media platforms.
 03. Propose legislation to amend USAS Bylaws and Procedural Code to improve all methods of communication.
 04. Visit and evaluate local association websites and social media platforms to propose upgraded changes for those platforms needing improvement.
- D. **Equipment Testing and Certification Committee.** This committee shall make recommendations to the National Council as to establishing standards for equipment and shall make recommendations to the Board for enforcement of the standards.
- E. **Governance Review Committee.** USAS shall have a Governance Review Committee consisting of six (6) members. It shall be appointed by the President and have the responsibilities as follows:
 01. Conduct a review and evaluation of USA Softball's governing documents, including but not limited to bylaws, committee charters, minutes, policies, procedures and strategic planning.
 02. Fully authorized by USAS's President and CEO to work with and seek advice from USAS's legal counsel and interview staff and former staff and request documents from staff about governance issues. The Committee shall have full access to USAS's IT resources, including email server communications.
 03. The Committee shall conduct evaluations as promptly and diligently as possible and shall report back to the Board on its findings of its reviews, as well as any recommendations, plan of action, or recommended procedures for USAS to

address as a result of its review. The recommendations, plan of action or recommended procedures (if any) should attempt to address any observed shortcomings (if any) in USAS maintain its autonomous governance free from outside restraint.

04. The Committee shall meet and consider such issues at least twice annually.

F. **Hall of Fame Committee.** This committee shall consist of sixteen (16) National Council members or (14-15) National Council members and (1-2) qualified At-large members appointed by the president for a term of four years. The President may appoint proxies for members unable to attend the current year's meeting. This committee must have at least twelve (12) members present to proceed. This committee shall provide and publicize the USA Softball Hall of Fame. Its duties shall include but not be limited to the following:

01. reviewing the requirements for the USA Softball Hall of Fame;
02. publicizing the requirements for the USA Softball Hall of Fame; nominations from Commissioners and Council Members for Hall of Fame consideration.
03. Calling attention each spring through Balls and Strikes to members of the Hall of Fame Committee that any future nominations to be considered for the election at the National Council meeting must be prepared early, with the required information and materials thoroughly enumerated;
04. reviewing all WBSC Hall of Fame nominations of USAS candidates for consideration.

G. **Marketing Committee.** This committee shall consist of nine members of whom at least two members are also members of the Communications Forum. Its duties shall include the following:

01. Develop strategies to promote USAS and increase our brand awareness to generate increased traffic, registrations, and participation.
02. Analyze and research methods to increase revenue through maximizing existing sponsorships and obtaining new ones.
03. Research strategies to leverage existing or new partners for the betterment of USAS.
04. Make recommendations to the Board for implementing improved marketing campaigns, methods, and strategies from discussions of items 01-03 above.

H. **Modified Pitch Committee.** This committee shall consist of 12 members, with at least four athlete representatives. Each USAS territory must have at least one representative on the committee. Its duties shall include but not be limited to the following:

01. review all aspects of USAS Modified pitch program to improve it, and to promote and increase participation in all Divisions and Classes;
02. review proposed amendments to USAS Bylaws, Playing Rules, and Procedural Code that affect the Modified Pitch Program;
03. write amendments to USAS Bylaws, Playing Rules, and Procedural Code as needed to improve, promote, and increase participation in the Modified Pitch Program;
04. make recommendations to USAS Board, Committees, Forums, Panels, and Council as to improve, promote, and increase participation in the Modified Pitch Program.

- I. **Slow Pitch Committee.** This committee shall consist of 12 members, with at least four athlete representatives. Each USAS territory must have at least one representative on the committee. Its duties shall include but not be limited to the following:
 01. review all aspects of USAS slow pitch program to improve it, and to promote and increase participation in all Divisions and Classes;
 02. review proposed amendments to USAS Bylaws, Playing Rules, and Procedural Code that affect the Slow Pitch Program;
 03. write amendments to USAS Bylaws, Playing Rules, and Procedural Code as needed to improve, promote, and increase participation in the Slow Pitch Program;
 04. make recommendations to USAS Board, Committees, Forums, Panels, and Council as deemed necessary to improve, promote, and increase participation in the Slow Pitch Program.

SECTION 11. USAS ATHLETES' ADVISORY COUNCIL

Section 11.1. Designation.

USAS shall have an Athletes' Advisory Council consisting of eleven (11) individuals.

Section 11.2. Qualifications.

Individuals serving on USAS's Athletes' Advisory Council shall be representative of USAS's programs. Each gender shall have at least two representatives on the Athletes' Advisory Council.

Two of the individuals on USAS's Athlete Advisory Council must, within the ten (10) years preceding election, represented the United States in the Olympic, Pan American, or Paralympic Games, or World Championships, or event designated as an Operation Gold event, or, in a team sport, an international championship recognized by the IF of the NGB.

Other representatives must demonstrate that they are actively engaged in amateur athletic competition, as determined by USAS.

Section 11.3. Election.

Athlete representatives on USAS's Athletes' Advisory Council shall be directly elected by athletes who are eligible to run.

The election shall take place prior to the National Council meeting.

Section 11.4. Term.

Excluding USOPC Team USA Athlete Commission and Selection Committee elite athlete members, the term for a representative to USAS's Athletes Advisory Council shall be two (2) years. A representative's term shall commence at the conclusion of the National Council meeting and shall end at the conclusion of the National Council meeting two years later.

Section 11.5. Term Limits.

No USAS Athletes' Advisory Council member shall serve for more than four (4) consecutive terms.

Section 11.6. Chair.

USAS's Athletes' Advisory Council shall elect from among its members, by majority vote, a chair. The term of office of the chair shall be two years. The newly elected chair shall take office immediately. The chair shall hold office until the chair's successor is elected and qualified, or until the chair's earlier resignation, removal, incapacity, disability or death.

Section 11.7. Procedures.

USAS's Athletes' Advisory Council shall establish procedures for conducting its business and affairs. Such procedures shall be published and available on USAS's website.

Section 11.8. Open and Executive Meeting Sessions.

Ordinarily, all USAS Athletes' Advisory Council meetings shall be open to athlete members, and where appropriate to USAS members and members of USAS' Local Associations. In the event the Athletes' Advisory Council chair, with the consent of a majority of the Athletes' Advisory Council members in attendance, deems it appropriate: (i) to exclude athlete members, USAS members, and/or members of USAS' Local Associations at an open meeting for any reason, then the chair may declare that the meeting is closed, or (ii) to convene an executive session to consider and discuss matters relating to personnel, nominations, discipline, budget, salary, litigation or other sensitive matter, then the chair may specifically designate and call an executive session. Further, the chair may open a meeting of the Athletes' Advisory Council to non-members, with the consent of a majority of the members of the Council in attendance.

Section 11.9. Compensation.

USAS Athletes' Advisory Council members shall not receive compensation for their services as Athletes' Advisory Council members. USAS shall pay for the reasonable expenses of all members of the Athletes' Advisory Council to attend Athletes' Advisory Council meetings.

SECTION 12. USOPC TEAM USA ATHLETES' COMMISSION

Section 12.1. Designation.

USAS shall have a representative and an alternate representative to the USOPC Team USA Athletes' Commission.

Section 12.2. Qualifications.

To be eligible to serve on the Team USA Athletes' Commission, athlete representatives must have, within the ten (10) years preceding election, represented the United States in the Olympic, Pan American, or Paralympic Games, or World Championships, or event designated as an Operation Gold event, or, in a team sport, an international championship recognized by the IF of the NGB.

Section 12.3. Election.

Athlete representatives on the Team USA Athletes' Commission shall be directly elected by athletes who are eligible to run.

USAS shall adopt and submit to the AAC, consistent with policies established by the AAC, a procedure whereby eligible athletes shall elect a representative and an alternate representative to the Team USA Athletes' Commission.

The election shall take place after conclusion of the Summer Olympic Games, but prior to January 1 of the year following the Summer Olympic Games.

The individual with the highest vote total will be elected as the representative to the Team USA Athletes' Commission. The individual with the second highest vote total is elected as the alternate representative to the Team USA Athletes' Commission.

Section 12.4. Term.

The term for all representatives to the Team USA Athletes' Commission shall be for four (4) years, to start on January 1 of the year following the year in which the Summer Olympic Games is scheduled to be held, and end on December 31 of the year in which the next edition of summer Olympic Games is scheduled to be held.

Section 12.5. Term Limits.

No representative to the Team USA Athletes' Commission shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms. There is no term limit restriction for the position of alternate representative.

SECTION 13. USOPC NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES' COUNCIL

Section 13.1. Designation.

USAS shall have a representative and an alternate representative to the USOPC National Governing Bodies' Council.

Section 13.2. Election/Selection.

The Chief Executive Officer shall be USAS's representative to the USOPC National Governing Bodies' Council. The President shall be USAS's alternate representative to the USOPC National Governing Bodies' Council.

SECTION 14. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Section 14.1. Designation.

USAS shall have a Chief Executive Officer, who shall be the leader of management and vested with the authority to make decisions on behalf of management. The Board shall hire and oversee the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer shall not be a voting director of the Board.

Section 14.2. Tenure.

The Chief Executive Officer shall be employed by the Board for whatever term the Board deems appropriate. The Chief Executive Officer may be removed by the Board at any time, with or without cause, but removal shall not affect the contract rights, if any, of the Chief Executive Officer. If the Chief Executive Officer has an employment contract with USAS, the contract shall provide that the Chief Executive Officer's employment may be terminated by the Board with or without cause.

Section 14.3. Secretary General.

The Chief Executive Officer shall serve as Secretary General of USAS and in that capacity shall represent USAS in relations with the International Sports Federation for softball and at international softball functions and events.

Section 14.4. Responsibilities.

The Chief Executive Officer, in addition to performing all functions as usually pertain to the office of Chief Executive Officer, shall:

- A. develop a strategy for achieving USAS's mission, goals and objectives and present the strategy to the Board for approval;
- B. determine the size and compensation of, hire and terminate the professional staff in accordance with USAS compensation policies and guidelines (established by the Board) to effectively carry out USAS's mission, goals and objectives;
- C. prepare and submit quadrennial and annual budgets to the Board for approval;
- D. either directly or by delegation manage all staff functions;
- E. be responsible for resource generation and allocation of resources;
- F. negotiate and execute all contracts and agreements on behalf of USAS, and notify the Board of all contracts executed by the Chief Executive Officer, provided however:
 01. that for any expenditure contract in which USAS is anticipated to incur expenditures in excess of \$50,000, then such contract shall be approved by the Board;

- 02. that for any expenditure contract in which USAS is anticipated to incur expenditures for a duration of more than one year, regardless of amount, then such contract shall be approved by the Board;
 - 03. that for any non-expenditure contract in which USAS is anticipated to receive sums from third parties in excess of \$200,000, then such contract shall be approved by the Board; and
 - 04. that for any non-expenditure contract in which USAS is anticipated to receive sums from third parties for a duration of more than two years, regardless of amount, then such contract shall be approved by the Board.
- G. make the final decision on any interpretation of the Bylaws and Procedural Code or appoint a qualified interpreter to act in the CEO's absence, with the exception of any interpretation involving Section 14;
 - H. coordinate USAS's international activities;
 - I. with the President, act as USAS's spokesperson; and,
 - J. perform such other duties as assigned by the Board.

SECTION 15. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES – COMPLAINTS UNDER THE JURISDICITON OF LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS AND TOURNAMENT PROTEST COMMITTEES

Section 15.1. Authority and Jurisdiction.

All matters within the jurisdiction of Local Associations and Tournament Protest Committees shall be handled, in the first instance, by those entities.

Local Associations shall have jurisdiction over and shall hear and decide matters that occur within the Local Association's geographic boundary, that occur at a competition/tournament sponsored by the Local Association, or which pertain to the Local Association's members or participants. Those matters may include:

- A. commission of acts that are contrary to the objectives and purposes of the Local Association or of USA Softball;
- B. violation of state or local laws;
- C. failure to pay fees or indebtedness due to the Local Association;
- D. destruction of property;
- E. unsportsmanlike conduct;
- F. engaging in physical violence, such as an attack on an umpire, competition/tournament official or participant immediately preceding, during or immediately following a game or arising out of USAS activities;
- G. commission of fraud, such as playing under an assumed name, falsifying an affidavit or roster or giving false information to competition/tournament officials;
- H. participation in a competition/tournament when not meeting eligibility requirements;
- I. knowingly competing with or against individuals or teams which are suspended from USAS activities;
- J. forfeiture of a game in championship play;
- K. violation of USA Softball substance abuse policies and procedures;
- L. bullying, hazing, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, harassment;
- M. interference with any hearing process of USAS or any Local Association; and,
- N. misconduct that reasonably calls into question the member or participant's suitability to participate in the applicable activity.

Tournament Protest Committees shall hear and decide matters that arise during the course of a tournament. Those matters may include:

- A. issues pertaining to the running of the tournament;
- B. eligibility determinations for participation in the tournament;
- C. official protests as allowed under USA Softball rules;
- D. field-of-play procedural or rule interpretations.

Discipline imposed by a Tournament Protest Committee shall not limit or bar any further discipline under these Bylaws or any other applicable rules.

Section 15.2. Agreement to be Bound.

Any member of USAS and/or any member of an applicable USAS Local Association, by reason of such membership, agrees to be subject to these complaint procedures and agrees to be bound by any decision rendered pursuant to these complaint procedures, including its mandatory arbitration provisions.

Section 15.3. Resolution Prior to Bringing Complaint.

Prior to the filing of a complaint, the Local Association or the Tournament Protest Committee may, as appropriate, offer the respondent a proposal to resolve the matter. The respondent may accept or reject such proposal. If rejected, the respondent shall be entitled to a hearing on the merits.

Section 15.4. Manner of Filing.

The complainant shall file the complaint with the Commissioner of the Local Association or the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable. The complaint shall be set forth in clear and concise language, preferably in numbered paragraphs: (i) the alleged violation, grievance, denial or threat to deny, and (ii) the remedy requested. The complainant shall sign the complaint, with the exception for reports of athlete safety violations, those can be filed anonymously.

Section 15.5. Filing Fee.

A complaint filed by an individual or an organization shall be accompanied by a filing fee as determined by the Local Association or the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable, and approved by USAS. Complaints involving reports of athlete safety violations do not require a filing fee. The complainant may request that the filing fee be reduced or waived for reasons of significant financial hardship. If such request is made, the Commissioner of the Local Association or the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable, shall determine whether or not to reduce or waive the filing fee. If a Local Association, Tournament Protest Committee or USAS brings a complaint, it is not required to pay a filing fee.

Section 15.6. Statute of Limitations.

A complaint filed under this Section shall be filed within one hundred and eighty (180) days (i) of the occurrence of the alleged violation, grievance, denial or threat to deny of opportunity to participate or (ii) of date the injured party first learns, or by which such person reasonably should have learned, of the facts and circumstances giving rise to the cause of action. There shall be no time bar for actions regarding athlete safety or SafeSport proceedings.

Section 15.7. Doping Decisions.

A decision concerning a doping violation adjudicated by the independent anti-doping organization designated by the USOPC to serve as the U.S. National Anti-Doping Organization (currently the United States Anti-Doping Agency) shall not be reviewable through, or the subject of, these complaint procedures.

Section 15.8. SafeSport Decisions.

A decision concerning a SafeSport violation adjudicated by the independent safe-sport organization designated by the USOPC (currently the United States Center for SafeSport) shall not be reviewable through, or the subject of, these complaint procedures.

Section 15.9. Field of Play Decisions.

The final decision of an umpire or referee during a competition regarding a field of play decision (a matter set forth in the rules of the competition to be within the discretion of the umpire or official) shall not be reviewable through, or the subject of these complaint procedures unless the decision is: (i) outside the authority of the umpire or official to make, or (ii) the product of fraud, corruption, partiality or other misconduct of the referee. For purposes of this Section, the terms “umpire and official” shall include any individual with discretion to make field of play decisions.

Section 15.10. Administration.

The Commissioner of the Local Association or the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable, shall generally administer and oversee all complaints filed under this Section. The Commissioner and the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable, shall be responsible for ensuring that all complaints are heard in a timely, fair and impartial manner. Respondents shall be afforded basic due process protections, which includes respondent(s) in a grievance proceeding are provided a notice of the charges and the requested remedy. The Commissioner and the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable, may promulgate procedures in addition to those set forth in these Bylaws for the effective administration of complaints filed with them. All complaint procedures shall comply with the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.

Section 15.11. Hearing Panel.

Upon the filing of a complaint, the Commissioner of the Local Association or the chair of the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable, shall appoint a hearing panel consisting of three (3) disinterested individuals to hear the complaint. The Commissioner or chair of the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable, shall also appoint a chair of the hearing panel from the three disinterested individuals selected. Tournament Protest Committee members may be appointed to serve on the hearing panel. Other disinterested individuals identified by the Commissioner or chair of the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable, may also be

appointed to and serve on the hearing panel. At least one (1) member of the hearing panel shall be an athlete. Members of the panel need not be members of USAS or involved in the sport of softball. If the Commissioner is not able to fulfill his or her responsibility, he or she shall appoint a designee. If the chair of the Tournament Protest Committee is not able to fulfill his or her responsibility, he or she shall appoint a member of the Tournament Protest Committee as designee.

Section 15.12. Conduct of the Proceeding.

The Hearing Panel shall rule on all motions and other matters raised in the proceedings. If the complaint is not dismissed, the hearing panel shall hold a hearing on the complaint. The hearing panel shall set such timelines and other rules regarding the proceeding and the conduct of the hearing as it deems necessary. The hearing shall be informal, except that testimony shall be taken under oath.

The hearing may be conducted by teleconference as determined by the hearing panel. The hearing panel shall take into consideration the convenience of the parties, timing considerations and how best to receive evidence. Each party shall have the right to appear personally or through a legal representative. All parties shall be given a reasonable opportunity to present and examine evidence, cross-examine witnesses and to present argument. Members of the hearing panel shall have the right to question witnesses or the parties at any time.

Any party may have a record made of the hearing. A court reporter may be present at the hearing at the request of a party. However, a hearing held on an expedited basis shall not be delayed on account of the unavailability of a court reporter. The court reporter shall be paid for by the party requesting the court reporter, or if mutually agreed, the cost may be equally divided. Any transcript shall be paid for by the party requesting the transcript. Transcripts shall be made available to the hearing panel at no cost to the hearing panel.

Section 15.13. Expedited Procedures.

Upon the request of a party, and provided that it is necessary to expedite the proceeding in order to resolve a matter relating to a competition that is so scheduled that compliance with regular procedures would not be likely to produce a sufficiently early decision to do justice to the affected parties, the Commissioner and the Tournament Protest Committee chair, or his/her designee, as applicable, is authorized to order that the complaint be heard and decided within forty-eight (48) hours of the filing of the complaint. In such a case, the hearing panel is authorized to hear and decide the complaint pursuant to such procedures as are necessary, but fair to the parties involved.

Section 15.14. Complaints Involving Selection to Participate in a Competition.

Where a complaint is filed involving selection of an individual or team to participate in a competition, or the participation of an individual or team in a competition, the complainant shall include with the complaint a list of all other individuals or teams, together with their contact information, that may be adversely affected by a decision rendered on the complaint. The adverse party to the complaint shall also submit a list of individuals or teams, together with their contact information, that may be adversely affected by a decision rendered on the complaint. The hearing panel shall determine those individuals or teams who must receive notice of the complaint. The Local Association or Tournament Protest Committee shall then be responsible for providing appropriate notice to these individuals or teams. Any individual or team so notified shall have the option to participate in the proceeding as a party. If an individual or team is notified of the complaint, then that individual or team shall be bound by the decision of the hearing panel even though the individual or team chose not to participate as a party.

Section 15.15. Interim Measures.

In disciplinary, athlete safety or SafeSport matters, prior to the matter being heard on the merits, it may be necessary to implement interim measures against the respondent in the following circumstances: (i) to ensure the safety or well-being of others, or (ii) where an allegation is sufficiently serious. Where either such circumstance exists, the Local Association Commissioner, the Tournament Protest Committee or the Chief Executive Officer of USAS, or his or her officer's designee, may immediately implement interim measures to protect others, provided the respondent is afforded an opportunity for a provisional hearing within three (3) business days of implementation of the interim measure except in right to participate matters in which expedited procedures pursuant to Section 16.13 are requested. The provisional hearing is not a full hearing on the merits. The sole issue before the hearing panel is whether there is probable cause to impose an interim measure. Interim measures may include, but are not limited to altering training schedules, providing chaperones, limiting contact, removal from the venue and suspensions.

Section 15.16. Decision and Minimum Penalties.

A decision shall be determined by a majority of the hearing panel. The hearing panel's decision shall be in writing and distributed to the parties.

If so, determined by a hearing panel, the following acts or offenses shall require a minimum of loss of eligibility, as follows:

- A. Commission of fraud – one (1) year minimum.
- B. Competing knowingly with or against suspended players – one (1) year minimum.
- C. Competing on a team that is discovered to have within its possession or control an altered bat – two (2) year minimum.
- D. Player found in possession of an altered bat - five (5) year minimum.
- E. Team discovered to have within its possession or control of an altered bat – two (2) year minimum.

- F. Bullying, hazing, harassment (including sexual harassment), emotional misconduct – two (2) year minimum
- G. Physical misconduct/Physical violence – five (5) year minimum
- H. Sexual misconduct (including child sexual abuse) – ten (10) year minimum

Section 15.17. Appeal of a Ruling by a Local Association Hearing Panel.

A party may appeal any ruling by a Local Association hearing panel to the USAS Judicial Committee. Any such appeal shall be filed within fourteen (14) days. The appeal shall be set forth in clear and concise language, preferably in numbered paragraphs: (i) the matter appealed, (ii) the nature of the complaint, (iii) the alleged error and (iv) the remedy requested. The appeal shall also include any other supporting documentation that the appealing party wants considered. The appealing party shall sign the appeal.

The chair of the USAS Judicial Committee shall appoint an appeal panel consisting of three (3) disinterested individuals to hear the appeal. The chair of the Judicial Committee shall also appoint a chair of the appeal panel from the three disinterested individuals selected. Judicial Committee members may be appointed to and serve on the appeal panel. Other disinterested individuals identified by the Judicial Committee may also be appointed to serve on the appeal panel. At least one (1) member of the appeal panel shall be an athlete. Members of the panel need not be members of USAS or involved in the sport of softball. The appeal panel shall have the authority to decide the appeal on the submitted paperwork, provided oral argument is allowed if requested, hear the matter anew or, if requested by the parties, to render a decision on a more limited review. If the chair of the USAS Judicial Committee is not able to fulfill his or her responsibility, he or she shall appoint a member of the Judicial Committee as designee.

An appeal filed by an individual shall be accompanied by a \$300.00 filing fee. An appeal filed by an organization shall be accompanied by a \$500.00 filing fee. The appealing party may request that the filing fee be reduced or waived for reasons of significant financial hardship. If such a request is made, the appeal panel shall determine whether or not to reduce or waive the filing fee. If the Local Association brings an appeal, it is not required to pay a filing fee.

The decision of the appeal panel of the USAS Judicial Committee shall be in writing and distributed to the parties.

Section 15.18. Appeal of a Ruling by a Tournament Protest Committee.

A party may appeal any ruling by a Tournament Protest Committee by directly filing a claim with the American Arbitration Association, as provided for in Section 15.19.

Section 15.19. Arbitration.

Subject to the requirements herein, any party may appeal to the American Arbitration Association (AAA) (i) a decision of an appeal panel of the USAS Judicial Committee or (ii) a

decision of a hearing panel of the Tournament Protest Committee. To initiate the appeal, the appealing party shall file a claim with the AAA with notice to the Local Association, the Tournament Protest Committee, as applicable, and to USAS. The arbitrator(s) appointed by the AAA shall have the authority to decide the matter in accordance with the Commercial Rules of the AAA, as provided for by the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, as amended from time to time (36 U.S.C. §§ 220501 et seq.). The person commencing the arbitration shall be responsible for any filing fees of the American Arbitration Association, but the fees may be apportioned by the arbitrator(s) pursuant to the Commercial Rules of the AAA. To the extent arbitration hearings or proceedings are conducted, all such arbitration hearings or proceedings shall be conducted in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. However, a party may petition the arbitrator(s) to conduct the hearing or proceedings in a different location, provided adequate reasons are given for doing so. The arbitrator(s) shall have authority to render a ruling on the location of the hearing or proceeding. Hearings and proceedings may also be conducted telephonically if permitted by the arbitrator(s). The award of the arbitrator(s) shall be final, binding and conclusive on all parties. The arbitrator(s) shall issue a reasoned decision explaining the award.

SECTION 16. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES - NATIONAL OFFICE COMPLAINTS

Preface to Section 16: *As set forth in the immediately preceding section of these Bylaws, all complaints within the jurisdiction of Local Association Judicial Committees or Tournament Protest Committees shall be handled, in first instance, by those entities. Therefore, the following compliant procedures should not be used to file complaints which should be brought, in the first instance, with a Local Association Judicial Committee or Tournament Protest Committee. A failure to adhere to these Bylaws and complaint procedures shall constitute independent grounds for denial of a complaint.*

Section 16.1. Designation of Complaints.

Subject to the Preface to Section 16 stated herein, the following kinds of complaints may be filed with USAS's National Office:

- A. **Administrative Grievance.** USAS, any member of USAS, or any member of any USAS Local Association may file a complaint pertaining to any matter within the jurisdiction of USAS, including but not limited to any alleged violation of or grievance concerning: (i) any USAS rule or regulation, (ii) any USAS program or service, (iii) any provision of USAS's Bylaws, (iv) any covered individuals defined in the Athlete Safety Policy, (v) any provision of the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act relating to USAS's recognition as a National Governing Body, or (vi) any provision of the USOPC Bylaws.
- B. **Disciplinary Proceeding.** USAS, any member of USAS, or any member of any USAS Local Association may file a complaint against another member of USAS, or former member of USAS if the action occurred while the individual was a member, regarding any alleged violation of USAS's Code of Conduct, USAS's SafeSport Policy, or any other rule or regulation relating to conduct.
- C. **Right to Participate.** Any athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator or official may file a complaint pertaining to any alleged denial, or alleged threat to deny, of that individual's opportunity to participate in a USAS competition or protected competition. Any such aggrieved athlete or coach may file a protest or complaint pertaining to any such denial of that individual's opportunity to participate in a USAS National Team program.
- D. **Membership.** USAS may file a complaint against any member seeking to revoke such member's membership in USAS or such member's membership in any USAS' Local Associations.
- E. **Appeals.** Any individual subject to a decision of a hearing panel of a Local Association or the Local Association may file an appeal to the USAS Judicial Committee subject to the requirements of Section 15.17.

Section 16.2. Agreement to Be Bound.

Any member of USAS and/or any member of an applicable USAS Local Association, by reason of such membership, agrees to be subject to these complaint procedures and agrees to

be bound by any decision rendered pursuant to these complaint procedures, including its mandatory arbitration provisions.

Section 16.3. Resolution Prior to Bringing Complaint.

Prior to the filing of a complaint, USAS may, as appropriate, offer the respondent a proposal to resolve the matter. The respondent may accept or reject such proposal. If rejected, the respondent shall be entitled to a hearing on the merits.

Section 16.4. Manner of Filing.

The complainant shall file the complaint with the Judicial Committee. by mail, email, or lodged through the online portal to the following individuals as set forth below:

If by mail:

USA Softball, Inc.

Attn: CEO and COO

2801 NE 50th St.

Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Or if by email: Grievances@usasoftball.com (received by Judicial Committee chair and staff delegate)

Or if lodged through the USAS online Reporting Form: [Report Online](#)

If the complainant is a minor, the complaint may be initiated by the minor's parent or legal guardian.

- A. A complaint must be in writing, be dated and signed (ink or electronic signature) by the Complainant, and contain a statement by the Complainant attesting to the truth, completeness and accuracy of the statements made in the complaint to the best of their knowledge;
- B. Include the Complainant's full name and identifying membership information (such as Register USA number, if known, or Team Name, if applicable), unless submitted anonymously;
- C. Identify, to the extent known to the Complainant, all individuals who are allegedly responsible for the acts or omissions that are the subject of the complaint;
- D. Include a concise statement of the nature of, and facts underlying, the complaint, the individual and/or organization believed to be responsible for the acts or omissions described in the complaint, any supporting documentation and the relief requested;
- E. Attach copies of any supporting documentation; and,
- F. Demonstrate that the Complainant has exhausted any other available administrative remedies under USAS's policies and procedures.

Section 16.5 No Retaliation

Retaliation of any kind against a person or entity who files a complaint or otherwise participates in good faith in the process outlined in these Procedures is prohibited. Any such retaliation is a separate basis for a complaint and disciplinary action.

Section 16.6. Filing Fee.

A complaint filed by an individual shall be accompanied by a \$300.00 filing fee. A complaint filed by an organization shall be accompanied by a \$500.00 filing fee. Complaints involving reports of athlete safety violations do not require a filing fee. The complainant may request that the filing fee be reduced or waived for reasons of significant financial hardship. If such a request is made, the hearing panel appointed by the Chair of the Judicial Committee, or his/her designee, shall determine whether or not to reduce or waive the filing fee. If USAS brings a complaint, it is not required to pay a filing fee.

Section 16.7. Statute of Limitations.

A complaint filed under this Section shall be filed within one hundred and eighty (180) days (i) of the occurrence of the alleged violation, grievance, denial or threat to deny of opportunity to participate or (ii) of date the injured party first learns, or by which such person reasonably should have learned, of the facts and circumstances giving rise to the cause of action. There shall be no time bar for actions regarding athlete safety or SafeSport proceedings.

Section 16.8. Doping Decisions.

A decision concerning a doping violation adjudicated by the independent anti-doping organization designated by the USOPC to serve as the U.S. National Anti-Doping Organization (currently the United States Anti-Doping Agency) shall not be reviewable through, or the subject of, these complaint procedures.

Section 16.9. U.S. Center for SafeSport Decisions.

These Procedures do not apply to alleged violations of USAS's Safe Softball Handbook or to any matter within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the "Center"). If a complaint alleges both violations of USAS's Safe Softball Handbook and an administrative matter or Code of Conduct matter referenced above, then the allegations will be resolved through USAS's Safe Softball process. A complaint submitted under these Procedures arising out of conduct or a matter over which USAS has jurisdiction or the Center has exclusive jurisdiction, or over which the Center has exercised jurisdiction, may be stayed pending the outcome of the Center's or USAS's Safe Softball process.

Section 16.10. Field of Play Decisions.

The final decision of an umpire or referee during a competition regarding a field of play decision (a matter set forth in the rules of the competition to be within the discretion of the umpire or official) shall not be reviewable through, or the subject of these complaint procedures unless the decision is: (i) outside the authority of the umpire or official to make, or (ii) the product of fraud, corruption, partiality or other misconduct of the referee. For purposes of this Section, the terms "umpire and official" shall include any individual with discretion to make field of play decisions.

Section 16.11. Administration.

The Judicial Committee shall generally administer and oversee all administrative grievances and the right to participate in matters filed with USAS. The Judicial Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that all complaints are heard in a timely, fair and impartial manner. Respondents shall be afforded basic due process protections, which includes respondent(s) in a grievance proceeding are provided notice of proposed action, charges, or alleged violation in writing with the supporting documentation filed by the filing party, and the consequences or remedy requested if found to be violated. All complaint procedures shall comply with the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.

Within fourteen (14) days after receipt of a complaint, such time extended as needed for a possible informal resolution as set forth below, USAS will determine the following:

- A. Whether the complaint complies with these bylaws, including whether the complaint is time-barred or whether the Complainant has standing to file the complaint;
- B. Whether the underlying facts and circumstances referenced in the complaint give rise to an issue that is appropriate for resolution under these bylaws; and
- C. Whether the complaint involves matters over which USAS does not have the authority or ability to remedy.

If there is a deficiency or deficiencies in the submission that can be cured, USAS will provide the Complainant with notice of the defect(s) and a reasonable period of time to cure such defect(s). If the Complainant fails to cure within the time period provided, USAS may find a complaint is deficient under this section and dismiss complaint. There is no appeal from such dismissal. The Complainant and any other party who has been given notice of the complaint will be advised of such dismissal.

If USAS determines that the complaint does not satisfy the criteria specified herein, then the complaint will be dismissed. The Complainant will be advised of any such dismissal and the reason(s) for such dismissal. There is no appeal from this dismissal however, the Complainant may refile.

If USAS determines that the complaint does satisfy the criteria specified herein, then it will send by regular mail or transmit by email within fourteen (14) days (i) a copy of the complaint and any attachments to any individual and organization whose conduct is the subject of the complaint (an "Adverse Party") and (ii) a Notice to Adverse Party, which will advise the Adverse Party of its right to respond in writing to the complaint within fourteen (14) days of the date of the Notice to Adverse Party. This provision is satisfied by sending a copy of the

complaint and the Notice of Adverse Party to the e-mail and mailing address of each Adverse Party listed in the Adverse Party's membership records. This formal Notice to Adverse Party and right to respond in writing is waived in the event both parties have agreed to engage in informal resolution efforts. USAS shall provide to Complainant a copy of the Adverse Party's written response, if any.

Section 16.12 Informal Resolution

Upon the receipt of a complaint, USAS CEO or designee (e.g. COO or legal counsel) will review the complaint to determine whether the complaint meets the requirements of Section 16.1 and 16.4. If USAS determines that the complaint meets those threshold requirements and could be resolved informally, the parties will be afforded notice of this option by email, mail or by telephone. The parties also will be informed that each has the right to be represented by counsel. If the parties agree to proceed, they shall sign a statement to that effect. USAS shall seek the written response to the complaint from the Adverse Party, and allow the submission of any additional documents, testimony, and information from the parties as to the allegations contained in the complaint. The parties will cooperate with USAS in providing such documents, testimony, and information and in exploring resolution of the complaint.

If the dispute is not settled to the Complainant's satisfaction, the matter will proceed as set forth hereinbelow to the Hearing Panel for consideration by USAS's submission of a Notice of Complaint Following Terminated Informal Resolution. USAS shall offer the parties the opportunity to supplement the record with any additional statements, documents, or information to support their respective positions within a reasonable time period before forwarding the case record to the Hearing Panel.

Section 16.13. Hearing Panel.

Within fourteen (14) days after the receipt and service on Complainant of the Adverse Party's response to the complaint or Notice of Complaint Following Terminated Informal Resolution, the chair of the Judicial Committee, or his/her designee, shall appoint a hearing panel consisting of three (3) disinterested individuals to hear the complaint. The chair of the Judicial Committee, or his/her designee, shall also appoint a chair of the hearing panel from the three disinterested individuals selected. Judicial Committee members may be appointed to and serve on the hearing panel. Other disinterested individuals identified by the Judicial Committee may also be appointed to serve on the hearing panel. At least one (1) member of the hearing panel shall be an athlete. Members of the panel need not be members of USAS or involved in the sport of softball. If the chair of the Judicial Committee is not able to fulfill his or her responsibility, he or she shall appoint a member of the Judicial Committee as designee.

Each member shall read the USAS Conflicts of Interest Policy and complete the Disclosure Form. If there are no conflicts, the Judicial Committee chair will make the appointments then disclose the names of the hearing panelists to the Complainant, the Adverse Parties, and USAS. Any actual or potential conflicts of interest involving the members of the Hearing Panel will be addressed per USAS's Conflict of Interest Policy.

After the time for responding to the complaint has expired, or after receipt of responses from all Adverse Parties, whichever is sooner, the Hearing Panel may decide to dismiss the complaint on such grounds as it deems appropriate, including, but not limited to, the complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, the time limitation period has expired, the complaint is moot, the complaint fails to identify all necessary parties, the complaint does not comply with these procedures, the panel is without jurisdiction to hear the complaint, or the panel is without authority to grant the requested relief. There is no appeal from a dismissal by the Hearing Panel however, Complainant may refile.

If the Adverse Party fails to file a reply to the complaint within the time period set forth herein, the Hearing Panel may enter default against the Adverse Party. For good cause shown, a default may be set aside by the Chair of the Hearing Panel, and an Adverse Party may be permitted to file a reply prior to a decision being rendered by the Hearing Panel.

Section 16.14. Conduct of the Proceeding.

The hearing panel shall rule on all motions and other matters raised in the proceedings. If the complaint is not dismissed, the hearing panel shall hold a hearing within a time period not to exceed 90 days after the last filing. The hearing shall be informal, except that testimony shall be taken under oath.

The hearing may be conducted by teleconference as determined by the hearing panel. Each party shall have the right to appear personally or through a legal representative. All parties shall be given a reasonable opportunity to present and examine evidence, cross-examine witnesses and to present argument. Members of the hearing panel shall have the right to question witnesses or the parties at any time.

Any party may have a record made of the hearing. A court reporter may be present at the hearing at the request of a party. However, a hearing held on an expedited basis shall not be delayed on account of the unavailability of a court reporter. The court reporter shall be paid for by the party requesting the court reporter, or if mutually agreed, the cost may be equally divided. Any transcript shall be paid for by the party requesting the transcript. Transcripts shall be made available to the hearing panel at no cost to the hearing panel.

At least five (5) days before the hearing, each party must disclose to the Hearing Panel and all other parties the names of any witnesses who the party may call at the hearing and all evidence that the party may submit during the hearing. The rules of evidence generally do not apply to proceedings before the Hearing Panel. If a party believes that proffered evidence should not be admitted, then the Hearing Panel will decide that party's objection, taking into account all relevant information including the probative value of the proffered evidence. Hearsay is admissible, subject to the discretion of the Hearing Panel. Prior or subsequent conduct of a party may be considered in determining pattern, knowledge, intent, motive or absence of mistake. The Hearing Panel may consider whether one party intentionally concealed or destroyed evidence. If the Hearing Panel decides that a party did do so, then it may decide that the evidence would have been unfavorable to that party. Lack of awareness

or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not itself a defense to an allegation of unethical conduct.

Section 16.15. Expedited Procedures.

Upon the request of a party, and provided that it is necessary to expedite the proceeding in order to resolve a matter relating to a competition that is so scheduled that compliance with regular procedures would not be likely to produce a sufficiently early decision to do justice to the affected parties, the chair of the Judicial Committee, or his/her designee, is authorized to order that the complaint be heard and decided within forty-eight (48) hours of the filing of the complaint. In such a case, the hearing panel is authorized to hear and decide the complaint pursuant to such procedures as are necessary, but fair to the parties involved.

Section 16.16. Complaints Involving Selection to Participate in a Competition.

Where a complaint is filed involving selection of an individual or team to participate in a competition, or the participation of an individual or team in a competition, the complainant shall include with the complaint a list of all other individuals or teams, together with their contact information, that may be adversely affected by a decision rendered on the complaint. The adverse party to the complaint shall also submit a list of individuals or teams, together with their contact information, that may be adversely affected by a decision rendered on the complaint. The hearing panel shall determine those individuals or teams who must receive notice of the complaint. USAS shall then be responsible for providing appropriate notice to these individuals or teams. Any individual or team so notified shall have the option to participate in the proceeding as a party. If an individual or team is notified of the complaint, then that individual or team shall be bound by the decision of the hearing panel even though the individual or team chose not to participate as a party.

Section 16.17. Interim Measures.

In disciplinary, athlete safety or SafeSport matters, prior to the matter being heard on the merits, it may be necessary to implement interim measures against the respondent in the following circumstances: (i) to ensure the safety or well-being of others, or (ii) where an allegation is sufficiently serious. Where either such circumstance exists, the Chief Executive Officer of USAS, or his or her officer's designee, may immediately implement interim measures to protect others, provided the respondent is afforded an opportunity for a provisional hearing within three (3) business days of implementation of the interim measure except in right to participate matters in which expedited procedures pursuant to Section 16.13 are requested. The provisional hearing is not a full hearing on the merits. The sole issue before the hearing panel is whether there is probable cause to impose an interim measure. Interim measures may include, but are not limited to altering training schedules, providing chaperones, limiting contact, removal from the venue and suspensions.

Section 16.18. Decision.

A decision shall be determined by a majority of the hearing panel. The hearing panel's decision shall be in writing and distributed to the parties within fourteen (14) days after the conclusion of the hearing.

Section 16.19. Arbitration.

Subject to the requirements herein, any party may appeal to the decision of a hearing panel of the USAS Judicial Committee. USAS will submit to binding arbitration in any controversy involving its certification as a national governing body, upon demand of the USOPC; and the opportunity of any amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official to participate in amateur athletic competition, upon demand of the USOPC or any aggrieved amateur athlete, coach, training, administrator, or official. Such arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the standard commercial arbitration rules of an established major national provider of arbitration and mediation services based in the United States and designated by the USOPC with the concurrence of the USOPC Team USA AC and the National Governing Bodies Council.

Section 16.20 Athlete Ombudsman

Team USA athletes may contact the Athlete Ombuds for independent and confidential advice on a variety of sport related matters, including their rights, applicable rules, policies or processes, and questions related to resolving disputes and grievances. The Athlete Ombuds can also help Team USA athletes connect with legal counsel or mental health resources if needed. All other NGB athletes (i.e., athletes competing domestically at the masters or youth level, recreational athletes, foreign athletes), are welcome to visit the Athlete Ombuds website to review informational resources and should work directly with their NGB to understand additional resources and options available to them.

EMAIL: ombudsman@usathlete.org

WEBSITE: www.usathlete.org

Individuals who wish to report concerns related to this Code of Conduct as it relates to involvement in the Olympic and Paralympic Movement may also submit a report using the USOPC Integrity Portal. The Integrity Portal allows individuals to submit concerns to the USOPC confidentially and/or anonymously. Reports may be made online or by telephone.

Website: usopc.ethicspoint.com

Hotline: 877-404-9935

SECTION 17. SANCTIONING EVENTS

Section 17.1. Prompt Review of Request.

USAS shall promptly review every request submitted by an amateur sports organization or person for a sanction and make a determination on such request: (i) to hold an international or national amateur athletic competition in the United States, or (ii) to sponsor United States softball athletes to compete in an international athletic competition held outside the United States.

Section 17.2. Standard for Review.

If USAS, as a result of its review: (i) does not determine by clear and convincing evidence that holding or sponsoring an international or national amateur athletic competition would be detrimental to the best interest of softball and its athletes and (ii) confirms that the amateur sports organization or person meets the requirements for obtaining a sanction as set forth in these Bylaws, then USAS shall grant the sanction requested by the amateur sports organization or person.

Section 17.3. Requirements for Holding an International or National Amateur Athletic Competition in the United States.

An amateur sports organization or person requesting a sanction to hold an international or national amateur athletic competition in the United States shall comply with the following requirements:

- A. submits, in the form required by USAS, an application to hold such competition;
- B. pays to USAS the required sanctioning fee, provided that such fee shall be reasonable and nondiscriminatory;
- C. submits to USAS an audited or notarized financial report of similar events, if any, conducted by the organization or person; and
- D. demonstrates that –
 01. appropriate measures have been taken to protect the status of athletes who will take part in the competition and to protect their eligibility to compete in softball competition;
 02. appropriate provision has been made for validation of records which may be established during the competition;
 03. due regard has been given to any international athletic requirements specifically applicable to the competition;
 04. the competition will be conducted by qualified officials;
 05. proper medical supervision will be provided for athletes who will participate in the competition;
 06. proper safety precautions have been taken to protect the personal welfare of the athletes and spectators at the competition; and,

07. appropriate measures have been taken to prevent abuse of athletes, including emotional and physical. child and sexualized abuse.

Section 17.4. Requirements for Sponsoring United States Softball Athletes to Compete in An International Athletic Competition Held Outside the United States.

An amateur sports organization or person requesting a sanction to sponsor United States softball athletes to compete in an international athletic competition held outside the United States shall comply with the following requirements:

- A. submits, in the form required by USAS, an application to hold such competition;
- B. pays to USAS the required sanctioning fee, provided that such fee shall be reasonable and nondiscriminatory;
- C. submits a report of the most recent trip to a foreign country, if any, that the amateur sports organization or person sponsored for the purpose of having United States amateur athletes compete in international amateur athletic competition, and
- D. submits a letter from the appropriate entity that will hold the international amateur athletic competition certifying that –
 01. appropriate measures have been taken to protect the amateur status of athletes who will take part in the competition and to protect their eligibility to compete in amateur competition;
 02. appropriate provision has been made for validation of records which may be established during the competition;
 03. due regard has been given to any international amateur athletic requirements specifically applicable to the competition;
 04. the competition will be conducted by qualified officials;
 05. proper medical supervision will be provided for athletes who will participate in the competition;
 06. proper safety precautions have been taken to protect the personal welfare of the athletes and spectators at the competition; and,
 07. appropriate measures have been taken to prevent abuse of athletes, including emotional, physical, child and sexualized abuse.

SECTION 18. RECORDS OF THE CORPORATION

Section 18.1. Minutes.

USAS shall keep as permanent records minutes of all meetings of the Board, a record of all actions taken by the Board without a meeting, and a record of all waivers of notices of meetings of the Board.

Section 18.2. Accounting Records.

USAS shall maintain appropriate accounting records.

Section 18.3. Membership.

USAS shall maintain the record of persons, including organizational members, accepted as members of USAS.

Section 18.4. Records in Written Form.

USAS shall maintain its records in written form or in another form capable of conversion into written form within a reasonable time.

Section 18.5. Website.

USAS shall maintain a website for the dissemination of information to its members and to members of its Local Associations. USAS shall publish on its website (i) its Bylaws, (ii) its rules, and regulations (iii) a procedure for communicating with the Chair of the Audit Committee regarding accounting, internal accounting controls, or audit-related matters; (iv) its three (3) most recent audited financial statements; and (v) its three (3) most recent 990 Forms filed with the Internal Revenue Service. So as to facilitate the ability of interested parties to communicate their concerns or questions, USAS shall publish on its website a mailing address and an e-mail address for communications directly with USAS.

Section 18.6. Records Maintained at Principal Office.

USAS shall keep a copy of each of the following records at its principal office:

- A. the articles of incorporation;
- B. these Bylaws;
- C. rules or regulations adopted by the Board pertaining to the administration of the sport of softball;

- D. rules or regulations that govern the conduct of USAS, the USAS's Board and Committees, USAS members, and the members of USAS' Local Associations;
- E. rules and regulations that govern the technical conduct of USAS's events in the United States as USAS Board and Chief Executive Officer determine is appropriate in their sole discretion;
- F. the minutes of all meetings of the Board, and records of all action taken by the Board without a meeting, for the past three (3) years;
- G. a list of the names and business or home addresses of the current directors and officers;
- H. a copy of the most recent corporate report delivered to the Oklahoma secretary of state;
- I. all financial statements prepared for periods ending during the last three (3) years;
- J. USAS's application for recognition of exemption and the tax-exemption determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service; and,
- K. all other documents or records required to be maintained by USAS at its principal office under applicable law or regulation.

Section 18.7. Inspection of Records by Members.

The following rights and restrictions shall apply to the inspection of records by members:

- A. **Records Maintained at Principal Office.** A member shall be entitled to inspect and copy, during regular business hours at USAS's principal office, any of the records of USAS described in Section 18.6., provided that the member gives USAS written demand at least five (5) business days before the date on which the member wishes to inspect and copy such records.
- B. **Financial Statements.** Upon the written request of any member, USAS shall mail to such member its most recent annual financial statements showing in reasonable detail its assets and liabilities and results of its operations.
- C. **Membership List.**
 - 01. **Preparation of Membership Voting List.** After determining the members entitled to vote in an election USAS shall prepare, by class, an alphabetical list of the names of all members who are entitled to vote. The list shall show each member entitled to vote, that member's name and address, and the number of votes the member is entitled to cast.
 - 02. **Right of Inspection.** A member shall be entitled to inspect and copy, during regular business hours at USAS's principal office, a list of members who are entitled to vote in an election, provided that (i) the member has been a member for at least sixty (60) days immediately preceding the demand to inspect or copy, (ii) the demand is made in good faith and for a proper purpose reasonably related to the member's interest as a member, (iii) the member gives USAS written demand at least five (5) business days before the date on which the member wishes to inspect and copy such voting list, (iv) the member describes with reasonable particularity the purpose for the inspection, and (v) the inspection of the list of members is directly connected with the described purpose. Any member seeking to inspect and copy a membership list shall, prior to such inspection and copying, execute a signed agreement in the form as approved by USAS limiting the use of such list in accordance with Section 18.7.

03. **Limitation on Use of Membership Voting List.** Without the consent of the Board, a membership voting list may not be obtained or used by any person for any purpose unrelated to a member's interest as a member. Without limiting the generality of the previous sentence, without the consent of the Board a membership voting list may not be: (i) used to solicit money or property; (ii) used for any commercial purpose; or (iii) sold to or purchased by any person.

D. Scope of Members' Inspection Rights.

01. **Agent or Attorney.** The member's duly authorized agent or attorney has the same inspection and copying rights as the member.

02. **Right to Copy.** The right to copy records under these Bylaws includes, if reasonable, the right to receive copies made by photographic, xerographic, electronic or other means.

03. **Reasonable Charge for Copies.** USAS may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to a member. The charge may not exceed the estimated cost of production and reproduction of the records.

04. **Litigation.** Nothing in these Bylaws shall limit the right of a member to inspect records to the same extent as any other litigant if the member is in litigation with USAS, or the power of a court to compel the production of corporate records for examination.

SECTION 19. CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

Section 19.1. Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy.

USAS shall adopt a Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest Policy applicable to all USAS employees, directors of the Board and committee members. Each NGB Board director and employee shall annually certify compliance with the Code of Ethics. Additionally, these individuals shall disclose any possible conflict for review by the Ethics Committee.

SECTION 20. FIDUCIARY MATTERS

Section 20.1. Indemnification.

USAS shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless each director of the Board and each officer from and against all claims, charges and expenses which he or she incurs as a result of any action or lawsuit brought against such director or officer arising out of the latter's performance of his/her duties with USAS, unless such claims, charges and expenses were caused by fraud or willful misconduct on the part of said officer or director.

Section 20.2. Discharge of Duties.

Each director of the Board and officer shall discharge his/her duties: (i) in good faith, (ii) with the care an ordinarily prudent individual in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances and (iii) in a manner the director or officer reasonably believes to be in the best interests of USAS.

Section 20.3. Conflicts of Interest.

If any director of the Board, officer or committee member has a financial interest in any contract or transaction involving USAS, or has an interest adverse to USAS's business affairs, and that individual is in a position to influence a determination with regard to the contract, transaction or business affair, such individual shall: (i) disclose the conflict of interest, (ii) not participate in the evaluation of the contract, transaction or business affair and (iii) not vote on the contract, transaction or business affair.

Section 20.4. Prohibited Loans.

No loans shall be made by USAS to the President, President Elect, Immediate Past President or to any other director of the Board, or to any committee member or to any USAS employee.

SECTION 21. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Section 21.1. Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year of USAS shall commence January 1 and end on December 31 each year.

Section 21.2. Budget.

USAS shall have an annual budget.

Section 21.3. Audit

Each year USAS shall have an annual audit of its books and accounts prepared by an independent certified public accountant as recommended by the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee shall provide the auditor's report to the Board upon completion.

Section 21.4. Individual Liability.

No individual director of the Board or officer shall be personally liable in respect of any debt or other obligation incurred in the name of USAS pursuant to the authority granted directly or indirectly by the Board.

Section 21.5. Irrevocable Dedication and Dissolution.

The property of USAS is irrevocably dedicated to charitable purposes, and no part of the net income or assets of USAS shall inure to the benefit of private persons. Upon the dissolution or winding up of USAS, its assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of all debts and liabilities of USAS, shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated for charitable purposes and which has established its tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

SECTION 22. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 22.1. Severability and Headings.

The invalidity of any provision of these Bylaws shall not affect the other provisions of these Bylaws, and in such an event these Bylaws shall be construed in all respects as if such invalid provision were omitted.

Section 22.2. Saving Clause.

Failure of literal or complete compliance with any provision of these Bylaws in respect of dates and times of notice, or the sending or receipt of the same, or errors in phraseology of notice of proposals, which in the judgment of the directors of the Board do not cause substantial injury to the rights of the directors, shall not invalidate the actions or proceedings of the directors at any meeting.

SECTION 23. AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS

Section 23.1. Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended, repealed, or altered, in whole or in part, and new Bylaws may be adopted by a majority of the total number of directors of the Board at any meeting duly called and at which a quorum is present. The newly approved Bylaws become effective immediately.

ADOPTION OF REVISED BYLAWS

The undersigned, being the Chief Executive Officer and corporate Secretary of USA Softball, Inc., do hereby certify by our signatures hereto that the foregoing revised Bylaws of USA Softball, Inc. were adopted by the Board of Directors of USA Softball, Inc. at a duly called meeting of the Board of Directors of USA Softball, Inc. on October 30, 2024 and are effective and shall supersede and replace any prior Bylaws of USA Softball, Inc., and shall be effective on November 22, 2024.



Name: Craig Cress
Title: Chief Executive Officer



Name: Cheryl Bond
Title: Chief Financial Officer

Rev. 11/25/2024 (Prior revisions 11/15/2019; 12/12/2019; 01/07/2020; 11/19/2020; 11/3/2021; 12/15/2021; 09/20/2022; 12/14/2022; 1/25/2023; 2/22/23; 3/22/2023; 4/27/2023; 3/1/2024; 04/25/2024; 09/03/2024)