



Softball Ulster Constitution

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Document Details.....	3
1. Aims and Objectives.....	4
2. Membership.....	4
3. Registration of Clubs	4
4. General Meetings.....	5
5. Officers.....	6
6. Regulation of the Game	8
7. Drugs in Softball	8
8. Equality in Softball	8
9. Child Protection.....	8
10. Sponsorship.....	8
11. Interpretation and Amendment.....	8
12. Dissolution.....	9
Appendix 1: Equality Policy	10
Appendix 2: Child Protection Policy	11

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1. Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 Softball Ulster (“SU”) is the governing body for the sport of softball in Ulster and is affiliated to Softball Ireland (“SI”) the governing body of softball in Ireland.
- 1.2 SU is a non-profit organisation whose purposes are:
 - 1.2.1 Representation, promotion and development of softball within Ulster as an amateur sport for all who wish to participate within the terms of this constitution.
 - 1.2.2 Provision of support, direction and facilities for members and affiliated clubs.
 - 1.2.3 Liaison and maintenance of links with Softball Ireland and corresponding organisations in other countries and with international bodies.
 - 1.2.4 Management of Ulster’s representation in Irish & UK competitions, promoting inter-provincial and club competitions, tournaments and matches.
 - 1.2.5 Development of appropriate sponsorship and other revenues to support this purpose.

2. Membership

- 2.1 Membership of Softball Ulster is open to anyone whom signifies his or her acceptance of the terms of this constitution by paying the required annual subscription through registration with an affiliated team or club.
- 2.2 The required subscription will be determined annually by the SU council and will include appropriate insurance.
 - 2.2.1 Members are required to abide by all rules, regulations and bylaws referred to in this constitution.
 - 2.2.2 Any club or team affiliated to SU may allow members under the age of 18 at their discretion but this must be done in consultation with SU.

3. Registration of Clubs

- 3.1 All clubs will register with SU and will also be affiliated to SI and will be governed on all SI matters by the SI Constitution.
- 3.2 For voting and other purposes of this constitution, a team is a group of nine or more members who have registered as a team under an affiliated Club and are fully paid up at least 2 weeks before the AGM of the year in question. Under further amendment of this constitution at the General Meeting of the membership of SU, each member registered in accordance with Article 2 of this constitution and are fully paid up at least 2 weeks before the AGM of the year in question is entitled to one vote at the AGM.
- 3.3 Registration requires:
 - 3.3.1 Adoption of a name approved by SU.
 - 3.3.2 Nomination of a home ground approved by SU.

- 3.3.3 Payment of the required registration fee to SU and SI.
- 3.3.4 Nomination of a club representative (captain, manager or coach) for all dealings with SU and SI.
- 3.4 SU will not approve a club or team name that is likely to give offence.
- 3.5 The required registration fee will be determined annually by SU and SI.
- 3.6 Where disputes about the ownership or status of a team name cannot be resolved by agreement, SU will issue a ruling.
- 3.7 Where an individual is registered to more than one team they cannot be counted twice for the purposes of **section 3.2**. The individual may nominate which team they wish to be included on for the purposes of assessing whether a team has sufficient numbers in accordance with section 3.1 and whether it therefore qualifies as a team for the purposes of votes at General Meetings. Where nomination is made the individual will be counted as a member of the club for which they are registered the longest.

4. General Meetings

- 4.1 An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in each calendar year.
- 4.2 The AGM will be held before 30 November or prior to the SI AGM, whichever comes earlier.
- 4.3 The business of the AGM is (see Appendix 3 for example agenda):
 - 4.3.1 Adoption of the agenda.
 - 4.3.2 Minutes of the last General Meeting and matters arising.
 - 4.3.3 Report of the Chairperson (to include reports from the Competitions Officer and Media Officer).
 - 4.3.4 Audited accounts and report of Treasurer.
 - 4.3.5 Report of the Chief Umpire
 - 4.3.6 Motions and amendments of which notice has been received.
 - 4.3.7 Election of council members.
 - 4.3.8 Election of representative to SI Board.
 - 4.3.9 Appointment of auditors (who may be professional auditors, or two ordinary members of SU) for the coming year.
 - 4.3.10 Appointment of representatives to attend Softball Ireland AGM
 - 4.3.11 Items covered under AOB can be discussed at the end of the AGM.
- 4.4 Any member may propose a motion/amendment and may nominate/second any member for election.
- 4.5 The following timescale will apply (reckoned from the date of the AGM):
 - 4.5.1 The date, time and location of the meeting will be notified by the Secretary to membership 14 days in advance.
 - 4.5.2 Motions for the agenda must be received in writing by the Secretary 14 days in advance of the date of the AGM.
 - 4.5.3 Written nominations for election of committee members must be made and seconded at least 14 days in advance of the date of the AGM.

- 4.5.4 A draft agenda containing all motions and nominations will be circulated to the membership one week in advance.
- 4.5.5 The Treasurer's report and accounts will be circulated to the membership one week in advance.
- 4.5.6 In the event that there are no nominations for Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Competitions Officer, Media Officer or Chief Umpire by the due date, the Secretary will immediately inform the membership by email, and the deadline will be extended by one week.
- 4.6 An Extraordinary General Meeting for a specified purpose will be held within three weeks of a written request by any one the membership.
- 4.7 Any member may attend and may speak at a General Meeting.
- 4.8 In voting on motions each member in attendance will have a single vote at the meeting.
- 4.9 The quorum for a valid General Meeting is the presence of at least one fifth of the membership.

5. Officers

- 5.1 The duties of the **Chairperson** are (but not limited):
 - 5.1.1 To convene all Meetings and General Meetings.
 - 5.1.2 To convene a meeting of the Council within two weeks of any request from any Council member.
 - 5.1.3 To ensure that all the Council business is efficiently and fairly conducted in accordance with this constitution.
 - 5.1.4 To report to the AGM on the activities of the Council.
- 5.2 The duties of the **Vice-Chair** are (but not limited):
 - 5.2.1 To aid the council in their duties.
 - 5.2.2 To undertake the Chairpersons duties when unavailable.
 - 5.2.3 To temporarily undertake the role of any member of the Council in their absence.
 - 5.2.4 To promote and co-ordinate the development and strategic direction of softball in the region of Ulster.
- 5.3 The duties of the **Secretary** are (but not limited):
 - 5.3.1 To ensure that correct records are kept of the business of SU.
 - 5.3.2 To prepare the agenda for all Meetings.
 - 5.3.3 To ensure that correct minutes are kept of the Council and General Meetings.
 - 5.3.4 To provide copies of such minutes on request of any member.
 - 5.3.5 To ensure members are kept informed of the Council's activities via email.
 - 5.3.6 To conduct appropriate correspondence with other bodies.
- 5.4 The duties of the **Treasurer** are (but not limited):
 - 5.4.1 To ensure that a record is kept of the paid-up membership.
 - 5.4.2 To control SU's funds in prudent manner in accordance with decisions of the Council.

- 5.4.3 To ensure the proper maintenance of SU's bank account.
- 5.4.4 To ensure the recording of transactions in sufficient detail to enable an audit.
- 5.4.5 To provide any records or information as required by the appointed auditors.
- 5.4.6 To supply the membership with a financial report together with balance sheet, and income and expenditure accounts at least one week in advance of the AGM.
- 5.4.7 To reimburse from SU funds any reasonable expenses of members in the conduct of Council business.
- 5.5 The duties of the **Competitions Officer** are (but not limited):
 - 5.5.1 To ensure organisation of the league fixtures prior to commencement of the SU regular league.
 - 5.5.2 To ensure all postponed fixtures are rescheduled in accordance with the SU Bylaws.
 - 5.5.3 To ensure organisation of all aspects of SU branded tournaments throughout the SU season.
 - 5.5.4 To directly liaise with all SU teams who wish to organise tournaments in the Ulster region.
 - 5.5.5 To provide an updated league table on a weekly basis to the Council so this can be published to the SU website and social media platforms.
- 5.6 The duties of the **Media Officer** are (but not limited):
 - 5.6.1 To manage and update the SU website on a weekly basis during the regular season.
 - 5.6.2 To manage and update SU social media platforms on a weekly basis during the regular season.
 - 5.6.3 To ensure members are kept informed of the Council's activities via the website and social media platforms.
 - 5.6.4 To promote SU positively using all media platforms (e.g. internet, magazine, social media etc.).
- 5.7 The duties of the **Chief Umpire** are (but not limited):
 - 5.7.1 To ensure organisation of umpires to cover all SU league fixtures.
 - 5.7.2 To ensure organisation of umpires to cover all SU branded tournaments.
 - 5.7.3 To ensure adequate training of all umpires in the Ulster region.
- 5.8 Authority for cheques or withdrawals from the SU funds requires the signature of two of the following council members: **[Updated 2018]**
 - 5.8.1 The Treasurer
 - 5.8.2 The Chairperson
 - 5.8.3 The Secretary
- 5.9 All council members shall strive to protect the best interests of SU.
- 5.10 A council member is elected for a maximum of two years, after which time the council member must be re-elected in order to remain on the Council. They may be re-elected into the same or a different position. No maximum term is defined for serving on the Council.
- 5.11 The Association's accounting year ends on 30th September each year.

6. Regulation of the Game

- 6.1 SI will publish rules of play and bylaws for SU on competitions and other matters.
- 6.2 SU shall impose appropriate penalties for breach of or flagrant disregard of the rules and bylaws.
- 6.3 Penalties for individuals can include reprimand, fine, suspension or permanent expulsion from SU.
- 6.4 Penalties for teams can include reprimand, fine, suspension, overturning of results, loss of points, or demotion.
- 6.5 A scale of penalties will be incorporated in the bylaws.
- 6.6 The bylaws of SI will govern all appeals and Protest.
- 6.7 No member of SU Council directly involved in an incident for which penalties are being considered will take part in the appeal process.

7. Drugs in Softball

- 7.1 SU and its members are bound by the Anti-Doping Program and relevant regulations of the International Olympic Council and international governing bodies for softball.

8. Equality in Softball

- 8.1 SU and its members agree to follow the equality statement in Appendix 1.

9. Child Protection

- 9.1 SU and its members agree to follow the child protection policy outlined in Appendix 2.

10. Sponsorship

- 10.1 SU may not pursue or receive sponsorship from any tobacco companies. Nor can they use branding, logos or trademarked items or decals representing aforementioned companies in the case where funding is received through vendors of said products.

11. Interpretation and Amendment

- 11.1 Interpretation of this constitution will be determined by SU, which will seek affirmation of its review at the next General Meeting.

- 11.2 If a General Meeting overturns an interpretation by the Council, this shall not affect the legitimacy of any Council actions taken in the interim.
- 11.3 Amendments to this constitution are made by the passing at a General Meeting of a motion of which due notice has been given.

12. Dissolution

- 12.1 In the event that a resolution to dissolve Softball Ulster be proposed, an Extraordinary General Meeting should be called in line with EGM requirements as laid out by the Constitution. In addition, the following special requirements will apply:
 - 12.1.1 Softball Ireland, in their role as the sanctioning body of Softball Ulster, will be invited to appoint an Independent Chairperson. In the event, SI is unable to appoint an Independent Chair, the current Council will appoint an Independent Chair in their stead.
 - 12.1.2 The quorum for a dissolution EGM meeting will be two thirds (2/3) of the registered membership.
 - 12.1.3 In order for the Dissolution Resolution to be passed, a super majority of 80% in favour of those present will be required.
- 12.2 Should the resolution be confirmed, no member of the Council shall receive benefit from the assets. All remaining assets shall, after the payment of all liabilities, either:
 - 12.2.1 be transferred to the body that replaces Softball Ulster as the Regional Governing Body of Softball in Ulster; or in the event a replacement body is not formed
 - 12.2.2 revert to the National Governing Body, on the understanding that they will be designated to further develop the sport in the region of Ulster.

Appendix 1: Equality Policy

SU is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and aims to ensure that all present and potential participants, members, coaches, competitors, officials and volunteers are treated fairly and on an equal basis, irrespective of their gender, age, disability, ethnic origin, race, religion, belief system, social status or sexual orientation.

SU aims to make its services and training schemes accessible to all and may take special measures to ensure that certain groups are not unfairly disadvantaged, provided that such action is within their ability and does not adversely affect the standard, quality and integrity of its plans.

SU reserves the right to take the appropriate action to discipline any of its members who practise any form of discrimination in breach of this policy.

Appendix 2: Child Protection Policy

As defined in the Children's (NI) order 1995, for the purposes of this policy anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child. The policy also applies to vulnerable adults.

It is the policy of Softball Ulster to safeguard children and young people taking part in softball events from physical, sexual or emotional harm. Softball Ulster recognises that the safety and welfare of the child is paramount and that all children, whatever their age, gender, disability, culture, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, social status or sexual identity, have a right to protection from abuse.

Softball Ulster will work on clear guidelines for working with young people alongside their development plans for youth softball. This is not part of the current strategic plan as we are working on building up our volunteer database prior to expansion to youth areas. All softball clubs wishing to include under 18's or vulnerable adults as members must apply for written consent by Softball Ulster. At this time if not already in place Softball Ulster will put into place strict guidelines and procedures for working with young people.