

Policies and Procedures - Policy on Resolution of Volunteer Personnel Issues

The purpose of this document is to provide a process for addressing concerns or issues that emerge from time to time involving volunteer personnel of the Association.

Guiding Principles

Resolve Issues at the Closest Leadership Level. The Association's mission is best served when issues are addressed by the volunteer leaders closest to the situation. For example, team managers must respond to misconduct or poor sportsmanship on the part of their players. Issues involving managers will be addressed by the league commissioner. Issues that involve commissioners will be addressed by the Director of Baseball or Softball. Commissioners or Directors should consult with an Executive Officer prior to communicating their decision.

Following well-established precedent, if an issue is brought to the attention of an IFPAA officer or board member the issue will be referred to the appropriate level for fact-finding and resolution.

If a situation arises in which the responsible leader has a conflict of interest, the issue should be referred to the next higher level. A conflict of interest arises, for example, whenever someone is called upon to make a decision directly or indirectly affecting his or her child's team.

Resolve Issues in a Timely Manner. Prompt and timely feedback is essential for learning. When an issue is identified it must be addressed promptly and resolved in the shortest reasonable timeframe.

Focus on the Issue, Not the People Involved. When a situation-specific issue is identified, volunteer leaders and others involved should collect facts about the situation, the behavior and the outcomes. Address what should be done differently. Do not attack the person or voice conclusions about an individual's motives.

Work to Achieve Consensus. While not always possible, consensus solutions should be sought that are responsive to the differing viewpoints of the parties involved in the issue, within the boundaries established by the IFPAA's mission, policies, and rules. Outcomes should be "win-win" whenever possible. When not possible, all involved should believe the resolution process steps were followed in a consistent and impartial manner.

Resolve Issues in the Context of Continuous Improvement. All IFPAA volunteer leaders spend substantial time coaching their players about how to be better players. Volunteer leaders should take the same perspective, striving to refine our programs and policies to make them even more effective. Our focus should not be punitive but learning-oriented.

A Resolved Issue is a Closed Issue. After a situation has been resolved it should not be re-opened unless there is compelling reason; we do not need to re-plow old ground.

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Policy vs. Personnel Issues

"Personnel issues" actually divide into two broad categories. Only one of these is focused primarily on an individual; the other is focused on Association policies.

Policy Issues. An issue may occur that is not explicitly covered by league or Association rules or policies, or where interpretation of a rule or policy is ambiguous and clarification is desired. Although the issue may have arisen out of a specific situation, the focus is on the issue, and not on the involved volunteers. The objective is to provide an open forum for rational discussion.

Steps in the resolution process will involve clarifying circumstances in which the issue occurs, identifying possible solution options, addressing the pro's and con's of each of the potential solutions, and (depending on specific circumstances) recommending a solution, policy, rule or interpretation to the league or Association board.

In many cases issues will occur that affect only a certain league. These issues should be dealt with in an open manner by the league commissioner in consultation with team managers and others who may be interested. The existing process for revising rules should be followed if changes are suggested to league rules.

In other cases, an issue may require a more formal review process that parallels the existing process for revising rules and policies, and which ends in a formal vote of the Board of Directors. The focus throughout cases of this sort is on the policy or rule under discussion, and must not be personalized.

Personnel Issues. An issue may occur in which a pattern of individual conduct is believed to be in conflict with the Association's mission, policies and rules. In this case the objective is to collect relevant facts (about the situation, what was said and done, and what resulted), and to resolve the issue in a fair and impartial manner. Fact finding will follow the Guiding Principles stated above.

Behavior that is criminal, dishonest or that threatens the well-being of players and other members of the Association will not be condoned.

In the event that sanctions are imposed on an individual, such as probation or removal from a volunteer leadership position, that individual may appeal the decision to the next leadership level. (See "Role of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors" below.)

If a volunteer leader is a party in the issue, the issue will be addressed by the next higher level, unless the next higher level is the Executive Committee. In that case, the Executive Committee will appoint a volunteer leader to investigate and bring the issue to resolution.

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Role of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors in Personnel Actions

The Executive Committee will serve as the final review level of any sanctions imposed on an individual, subject only to appeals to the Board of Directors. The role of the Executive Committee is not to gather facts, but to review the process steps as they have unfolded to assure equitable and fair treatment for all involved.

The Executive Committee has two roles regarding personnel actions:

1. In cases dealing with policy issues the Executive Committee will assure that policy recommendations are consistent with the IFPAA charter, mission, and applicable rules of organizations with which the Association is affiliated.
2. In cases where sanctions have been imposed, the Executive Committee serves as an appeals level and may accept or modify the sanction. When an appeal is made, the Executive Committee will not engage in further fact-finding, but will consider if the sanction is appropriate given the facts of the case. (If new evidence is discovered, the issue should be sent back to the closest volunteer leadership level for reconsideration.)

After an appeal has been acted on by the Executive Committee, a final appeal may be made to the Board of Directors at a scheduled Board meeting. The basis of an appeal must be that the decision or decision-making process was not in accordance with policies and established precedents of the IFPAA.

A majority of all eligible Board of Director members present at the meeting is needed to overturn a decision. If a decision is overturned, the issue should be sent back to the closest volunteer leadership level for reconsideration, with guidance from the Board regarding the interpretation of policies and precedents.

History

Written November 22, 1997. Adopted December 1997.