



North Down Softball Club

Bylaws

2025

Document Details

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North Down Softball Club Council

Chairperson	Will Gilpin
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Treasurer	Naomi Connor
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Captain, Sluggers	Peter Maxwell

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1. Membership

Payment of player registration fee is a requirement for membership & matchday eligibility. The club council will set player fees at the start of each season for the following categories:

- **Returning player fee**
- **New player fee**
- **Concessionary player fee**

Monies received via membership fees cover overheads including:

- Softball Ulster registration
- Softball Ireland public liability insurance cover
- Local council pitch hire
- Equipment & other miscellaneous costs

Concessionary rates in the case of hardship will be considered on a case by case basis by the club council each year post AGM.

2. Umpires

Club members fulfilling the Softball Ulster league requirement of 2 Umpires per established team will be exempted from club membership fees, providing they have met a satisfactory level of match officiating duties by the Softball Ulster Chief Umpire.

3. Teams

3.1. Recommended team size

In 2023 SU implemented **Mandatory Run Ahead**, as such ball game may be called after 4 full innings if conditions are met, additionally it is SUs long term intention to move to the **WBSC standard of 5/5**. These factors and the borrowing restrictions put in place by the league (see SU bylaws) have led to the following **recommendations**.

- Division A teams 9/9
- Division B teams 8/8

This recommendation seeks to balance equitability & sustainability, but does recognise the variations in player availability, as such Captains may exceed this recommendation to maintain a legal team, providing good reason & with council approval.

New players will be added to the club Academy group to learn the basics of softball & determine level of commitment.

NB: It is our understanding that the Softball Ireland liability cover requires members to be registered to a team. To meet this requirement new members may be added to a team registration, however this does not mean they are part of that team.

3.2. Player responsibilities

Players must inform their captain of match day availability & any last minute cancellations in good time. Captains have authority with regards to match day selection & players are required to respect their Captain's decisions.

3.3. Player numbers

Player numbers are club numbers ranging 1-99, this enables players to move among teams without requiring a new player number.

The council will maintain a player number document detailing allocated and unallocated numbers.

Player numbers will be considered abandoned, and available for reallocation if a player has been absent for **1 year** and has not paid a membership fee. Exceptional circumstances such as pregnancy, serving council in administrative role etc, will be considered at the discretion of the club council.

3.4. Reschedules

Team Captains must canvas their team before agreeing to a reschedule request. The needs and availability of NDSC players must be prioritised above those of the opposition.

4. Player transfers

4.1. Pre registration deadline

Post end of season members may seek to transfer to a different team within the club versus the team they played for in the previous season, providing the receiving team captain is agreeable to the transfer.

There is no fee for a pre registration player transfer, however the club council should be advised early to prevent mis-registering a player on the basis of past registration.

4.2. Post registration deadline

4.2.1. Captain led request

1. **Team Captain A** asks **Team Captain B** if they would accept transfer (no player involvement at this stage)
2. **Team Captain B** - Y/N
 - 2.1. **No** - End
 - 2.2. **Yes** - **Team Captain A** approaches player re: transfer
3. **Yes** - Player is transferred
 - 3.1. **Team Captain B** to inform NDSC secretary
 - 3.2. NDSC secretary to complete SU player transfer form - [Softball Ulster Player transfer form](#)
 - 3.3. NDSC secretary to update the SU secretary secretary@softballulster.com
4. **No** - Player declines decision, **Team Captain A** may refer to NDSC club council
 - 4.1. Decision upheld - Player transferred and rationale given to player.
 - 4.2. Decision quashed - Player advised that appeal was successful & remains in team.

**Player transfer fee payable by the requesting Captain to Softball Ulster (£10, 2023 & minimum 3 remaining league fixtures).*

4.2.2. Player led request

1. Player requests transfer from **Team Captain A**
2. **Team Captain A** - Y/N
 - 2.1. **No** - End
 - 2.2. **Yes** - **Team Captain A** asks **Team Captain B** of desired team if they would accept the transfer
3. **Team Captain B** - Y/N
 - 3.1. **No** - End
 - 3.2. **Yes** - Player is transferred
 - 3.2.1. **Team Captain B** to inform NDSC secretary
 - 3.2.2. NDSC secretary to complete SU player transfer form - [Softball Ulster Player transfer form](#)
 - 3.2.3. NDSC secretary to update the SU secretary secretary@softballulster.com

**Player transfer fee payable by the requesting player to Softball Ulster (£10, 2023 & minimum 3 remaining league fixtures).*

5. Coaches & coaching

The Head coach is a council appointed role to the most capable individual in terms of experience, ability and motivation to organise training for the club players throughout the season.

The Head coach will be supported by a minimum of 4 coaches per team who will facilitate training drills under direction of the Head coach.

A rota system will determine on-call coaches for: drills, pavilion access, equipment control etc.

6. Media

The Media Officer has purview over all club affiliated social media accounts, and has authority over media posts & any changes to accounts.

Members of the NDSC Council or the media working group who wish to post to or amend the NDSCSM must seek permission/ authorisation from the MO who can upload on their behalf or who can grant permission to upload themselves.

7. Working groups

Working groups will operate under the direction of the relevant council officer.

7.1. Media working group - Media officer

Minimum 2 representatives from each team who will have the responsibility for:

- Match day streams
- Updating swish live scores
- Taking photos
- Supporting the Media officer as required

7.2. Sponsorship, grants & fundraising working group - Vice chair

Work with the Vice chair to explore and support activities relating to club/team sponsorship, sports development grants and fundraising opportunities both club and charitable in nature.

8. End of Season Awards

Team captains will record player match stats from across the season on a macro enabled Excel document. Prime records will be uploaded to the council drive for cross checks.

Captains must ensure that a prime record, score sheet or match stream, is maintained for audit purposes. If deliberate manipulation of data is identified it will be considered a misconduct violation and appropriate action will be taken inline with the club complaints procedure. In cases where no prime record exists no stats are to be recorded on the stats sheet.

Player stats used for End of Season awards;

Offensive plays:

- **Total Runs**
- **RBIs**
- **On Base**

In the event of a tie in points, the total outs will be used to determine the winner.

Defensive plays:

- **Unassisted outs**
- **Assisted outs**

Awards:

Team:

- **MVP Male** - Offensive stats.
- **MVP female** - Offensive stats.
- **Golden glove** - Defensive stats.
- **Captain's choice award** - Picked by team Captain (excl Captain)
- **Rookie of the Year** - Offensive & defensive stats (n/a if no rookies)
- **Team spirit award** - Popular vote among teammates.

Club:

- **Club Coach of the Year** - Coaches vote
- **Club Umpire of the Year** - Umpires vote

8.1. Softball Ulster MVP nominations

Player nominations to Softball Ulster **will be the team MVP male & female**, & the runners up for a total of 2 nominations per team per category (*current SU policy of 2 male & 2 female nominations per team). In the event of a tie refer to section 8. End of season awards for tie breaks.

9. Player Code of Conduct

NDSC will not tolerate bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or hate crimes of any kind. If a member of the club feels that they have experienced any of the above behaviours they should speak with their team captain, or submit an official complaint to the club secretary in writing, as per *Article 11 Discipline and Appeals* of the NDSC constitution.

9.1. Bullying

Bullying can be defined as “Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.”

9.2. Harassment

Harassment can be defined as “unwanted conduct, including that of a sexual nature, related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.”

9.3. Discrimination

Direct discrimination can be defined as “treating a person or group less favourably than another in the same situation on account of one of the protected characteristics, including; race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment & religion or belief.”

Indirect discrimination is when a condition that is applied to everyone equally disadvantages one group of people more than another whether that is intended or not, and cannot be justified.

9.4. Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when someone is treated less favourably because they: have brought, or are considering bringing, a formal concern or legal proceedings against another, have given (or intend to give) evidence or information about a formal concern or legal proceedings brought by another, have taken part in legitimate activities or have raised genuine concerns about wrongdoing in a responsible manner.

9.5. Hate crimes

Hate crime is a term used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

It is the responsibility of everyone to be aware of these behaviours and speak up if they see any activities that fall short of expected members' behaviour.

By registering as a member of the club it is considered that players have read and accepted these terms.

9.6. Scale of Penalties

Depending on the seriousness of the offence, the club may impose any combination of the penalties within the following ranges for infraction of these bylaws. [source: SU Bylaws 2024]

Category of Offence	Range of penalties for individuals
1	1. Permanent expulsion. 2. Suspension for more than one season.
2	1. Suspension for one season. 2. Suspension for more than five games or weeks.
3	1. Suspension for less than five games or weeks. 2. Suspension for more than two games or weeks.
4	1. Suspension for one game or one week. 2. Fine of between £50 & £150.
5	1. Fine of less than £50. 2. Written caution.

Incurring more than two written cautions for any individual or club in any three-month period is a category 4 offence. Where a fine is incurred by any individual or club their membership will be paused until the fine is paid in full.

10. Role profiles

10.1. Chairperson

Role title	Chairperson
Duration of the role	2 years fixed term.
Purpose of the role	Provides vision and leadership to the club Council. Chairs regular council meetings. Ensures club participation in the SU league & tournaments. Maintains up-to-date guidelines and policies. Maintains a good working relationship with SU and assists other members of the Council in delivering their duties.
What you will be doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning and implementing strategy for the club each year with the development of a timeline-roadmap to ensure deadlines are met. ● Chairing regular club council meetings, discussing club business and overseeing activities of club council members. ● Attend SU/SI AGM/EGM to keep abreast of constitution, bylaw, any other updates to softball and sharing this information to club members via appropriate channels. ● Maintain a good relationship between the club and SU/SI ● Assessing the needs of the club and implementing strategies to support growth.
Skills, experience, and qualities needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of good leadership skills, including the ability to supervise others in completing their individual tasks. ● Excellent written and verbal communication skills are essential, with an understanding of the importance of mediation and the ability to deescalate difficult conversations. ● Good organisational skills and the confidence to work independently and as part of a team. ● An understanding of the need for confidentiality and GDPR.
When and where	Approximately 4 committee meetings per year plus 1 AGM. Home based role, candidates will need access to suitable IT devices to carry out their responsibilities.
Support offered	The Chairperson will oversee club development, but will be supported by the council.
Other relevant information	Voluntary role subject to a nomination process and election at the AGM (or co-opting onto the current Council by elected members if the position sits vacant).
What to do if you're interested	Contact club Secretary, your nomination will require seconding by another member in good standing. For further details speak to a member of the council.

10.2. Secretary

Role title	Secretary
Duration of the role	2 years fixed term.
Purpose of the role	The Secretary records Council decisions; minuting, noting action points. Maintains a current player registry, updating the SU Secretary as required. Communicates with the club membership (e.g. AGM notice etc).
What you will be doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Council meetings, AGMs & EGMs: minuting discussions and circulating minutes promptly to council. • Maintaining relevant governance and policy documents including; constitution, bylaws, league rules, insurance policies and issuing relevant information packs ahead of meetings. • Maintaining a current player register of the club membership and securely storing this information for up to 2 years. • Managing correspondence between the Council and the membership, SU clubs, SU council, SI board and other 3rd parties. • Working with the Treasurer to collect player registration fees, and pay SU/pitch hire fees promptly.
Skills, experience, and qualities needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good written and verbal communication skills. • Knowledge of Google drive suite and database management. • Good organisational skills and ability to work independently and in a team. • Understanding of confidentiality and GDPR.
When and where	Approximately 4 committee meetings per year plus AGM. Home based role, candidates will need access to suitable IT devices to carry out their responsibilities.
Support offered	The Secretary will oversee the administrative duties of the Council, but will be supported by the council.
Other relevant information	Voluntary role subject to a nomination process and election at the AGM (or co-opting onto the current Council by elected members if the position sits vacant).
What to do if you're interested	Contact club Secretary, your nomination will require seconding by another member. For further details speak to a member of the council.

10.3. Treasurer

Role title	Treasurer
Duration of the role	2 years fixed term.
Purpose of the role	The Treasurer oversees the club finances, ensuring proper record keeping procedures are maintained. Providing guidance and financial advice to the Council ensuring the club remains fiscally viable.
What you will be doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in Council meetings, AGMs & EGMs in matters financial. ● Work with Council to ensure compliance to governing bodies and relevant legislative regulations. ● Maintain accurate and detailed records for club finances using accounting procedures and controls and updating signatories to club accounts as required. ● Working with the Secretary to collect player registration fees, and pay SU/pitch hire fees promptly. ● Produce end of year financial records and projections for the following year based on income vs expenditure.
Skills, experience, and qualities needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good organisational skills and the confidence to work independently and as part of a team. ● Strong financial skills and an ability to develop and maintain accounting procedures and policies. ● An understanding of the need for confidentiality, GDPR and financial legislation.
When and where	Approximately 4 committee meetings per year plus 1 AGM. Home based role, candidates will need access to suitable IT devices to carry out their responsibilities.
Support offered	The Treasurer will oversee the financial management of the club, but will be supported by the council.
Other relevant information	Voluntary role subject to a nomination process and election at the AGM (or co-opting onto the current Council by elected members if the position sits vacant).
What to do if you're interested	Contact club Secretary, your nomination will require seconding by another member. For further details speak to a member of the council.

10.4. Vice Chairperson

Role title	Vice Chair
Duration of the role	2 years fixed term.
Purpose of the role	The Vice Chair oversees the growth and development of the club. Seeking sponsorship, grants and fundraising opportunities. Engages with 3rd parties to raise the profile of the club.
What you will be doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in Council meetings, AGMs & EGMs with responsibility for sponsorship, grants and fundraising and club development. ● Ensuring council decisions abide by the constitution, relevant legislation/regulations and best practice. ● Engaging with suitable 3rd parties to raise the profile of the club, seeking out new relationships for sponsorship, grants, fundraising and marketing opportunities. ● Audit team stats sheets confirm validity of stats against the prime records. ● Chair meetings in Chairpersons absence.
Skills, experience, and qualities needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good organisational skills and the confidence to work independently and as part of a team. ● Strong interpersonal skills within and between different groups. Able to identify and action new opportunities for the club.
When and where	Approximately 4 committee meetings per year plus 1 AGM. Home based role, candidates will need access to suitable IT devices to carry out their responsibilities.
Support offered	The Vice Chair will oversee club development, but will be supported by the council.
Other relevant information	Voluntary role subject to a nomination process and election at the AGM (or co-opting onto the current Council by elected members if the position sits vacant).
What to do if you're interested	Contact club Secretary, your nomination will require seconding by another member. For further details speak to a member of the council.

10.5. Media officer

Role title	Media Officer
Duration of the role	2 years fixed term.
Purpose of the role	The Media Officer promotes Club activities across social media to raise awareness of the club. Drives recruitment of new players Regularly crafts engaging content to connect with the general public.
What you will be doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in Council meetings: reporting on current club media campaigns. ● Implement an annual media plan utilising the media budget to promote club activities. ● Lead Media working group comprising members from across club teams to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organise match day streams & live scoring software ○ Taking match day photos for promotional purposes. ○ Upload match reports from team captains to social media platforms with match photos & “box scores” graphics. ○ Sending match reports to local newspapers with dynamic action shots, ensuring representation of male and female players (striving to use photos of different players across the season). ● Engage & respond to enquiries received via social media in a timely manner with a view to recruiting new players. ● Crossposting SU & SI posts. ● Be cognisant of Northern Ireland politics and avoid posting content that could be viewed as pro Unionist/Nationalist to maintain Softball’s apolitical profile.
Skills, experience, and qualities needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong communication skills and an ability to engage with the public. ● Knowledge of different social media platforms.
When and where	Approximately 4 committee meetings per year plus 1 AGM. Home based role, candidates will need access to suitable IT devices to carry out their responsibilities.
Support offered	The Media Officer will take the lead on media but will be supported by the council & the media working group.
Other relevant information	Voluntary role subject to a nomination process and election at the AGM (or co-opting onto the current Council by elected members if the position sits vacant).
What to do if you’re interested	Contact club Secretary, your nomination will require seconding by another member. For further details speak to a member of the council.

10.6. Captain

Role title	Captain
Duration of the role	2 years fixed term.
Purpose of the role	<p>The Captain manages player training and development to ensure match day readiness.</p> <p>Communicates with the players to ensure awareness of fixtures and training sessions for maximum attendance.</p>
What you will be doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote league fixtures to the team. ● Field the team that will provide the best opportunity for a victory. ● Competent in match scoring and tabulation of player stats. ● Understand the rules of Softball, SI and SU bylaws. ● Able & willing to Umpire to meet league umpire requirements if required (should encourage capable players to umpire). ● Assign match day duties to players; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ base coaching ○ scoring ○ bat collection ○ field setup & breakdown (home team) ● Participate in the SU Captain's meeting (reporting back to club council) & engaging within the SU Captains group in matters relating to the team (reschedule requests, venue changes etc).
Skills, experience, and qualities needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowledge of WBSC rules, SI/SU league Bylaws, Umpiring & scoring ● Good leadership skills, mediation and de-escalation skills and good organisational skills.
When and where	As captain a 100% match day attendance is expected, excluding emergencies or unavoidable situations, notification to the council is expected in these circumstances.
Support offered	The Captain will oversee the development of players, support offered through the club coaches and council.
Other relevant information	Voluntary role subject to a nomination process and election at the AGM.
What to do if you're interested	<p>Contact club Secretary, your nomination will require seconding by another member.</p> <p>For further details speak to a member of the council.</p>

11. Appendices

11.1. Media Officer supporting guidance

The Media officer should seek to promote the Club and its teams via social and traditional media utilising a media budget agreed by the Club council at the start of each year.

Responsibilities:

1. Promotion of match fixtures 7 days prior to match day
2. Publish post match content; Captains report, pictures (Media working group responsibility) & box scores.
3. Forward Captains match report to Bangor Spectator before 5pm Tuesday - sport@spectatornewspapers.co.uk . Include dynamic action photos, ideally 1 male and 1 female player batting, fielding or throwing (avoid inactive passive static photos).

The Media officer will be supported by a media working group comprising 2 members per club team

Responsibilities:

1. Taking match day photographs to share to media working group chat
2. Operate and update the Swish live stream for matches.

General Club promotion:

Utilise relevant hashtags, use paid promotion to extend reach of noteworthy posts, promote club social events and celebrate members sporting successes.

Social media posts:

Title & Event details:

- Location (use @ to tag business/location)
- Date & Time
- Target audience (if applicable)
- Cost (if applicable)
- Hashtags
- Pictures/posters

11.2. Treasurer supporting guidance

Obtaining data:

Access the Club accounts via the online banking portal.

Navigate to transactions & filter to the period of analysis (e.g. 01/01/20XX - 31/12/20XX)

- **Export records to Excel or .CSV**
- **Export Statements (.PDF)**

Duplicate the data tab within Excel to maintain an untouched original for audit purposes and a working copy for accounting purposes.

Apply filters to the column titles and filter by value A-Z

Separate the positive from the negative values, copy and paste to new tabs

Positive values = Money in/Sales/Outputs

Negative values = Money out/Purchases/Inputs

Add a category field and categorise the transactions accordingly (e.g. Fees, Council fees, Softball Ulster, Equipment etc. See previous years accounts for common examples).

The Club also uses PayPal, export a detailed transaction report from Paypal showing the money received and the transfer of this money to the club account. This is important as transfers from PayPal to the club account are typically bulk and lacking a reference. Repeat the above process to confirm that the money received equals the money transferred to the club account (don't add this amount to the final total, this will already have been accounted for in the Club accounts, you just want to determine the break down of what the money is so it can be referenced appropriately).

Use a previous years template to produce the club accounts, a balance sheet and a projection for the new year.

Write up a report summarising your findings and any recommendations (fees etc).

Share with the Chair for verification and seek independent audit from another club or non council member.

Share Accounts with the club council so the Secretary can distribute the Accounts summary (excluding detailed transactions) to the general membership ahead of the AGM.

Auditing Accounts:

Review the Summary of accounts and Balance sheet & compare against the detailed transaction reports.

Auditor seeking to verify that the totals for income and expenses are accurate and that the balance sheet accurately reflects the opening balance, income, expenses and closing balance.

11.3. Vice Chair supporting guidance

The Vice Chair has responsibility for seeking out sponsorship, fundraising and grant opportunities for the club and its teams.

Sponsorship:

Consider partnerships with local businesses or similar, the club can offer opportunities to promote the business ranging from a basic match day sponsorship with a social media shoutout or ceremonial first pitch before a game to a full kit sponsorship in which business branding would appear on team kit. It is important that any deal financially benefits the club and that the team captains and media team are able to support the terms of the agreement so the club does not find itself in breach of contract.

Fundraising:

Social responsibility is an important aspect of any organisation, a designated charity will be selected at the club AGM. A mid season fundraiser should be organised (Quiz, raffle etc) with a view to promoting a good cause and raising the profile of the club. A club equipment raffle (Softball bat etc can be run alongside with funds from that going to the club).

Grants:

There are innumerable grant opportunities throughout the year from local council to private business, a separate living document will be maintained detailing information on different grants that the club is eligible to apply for (work in conjunction with club Chair).

Donations:

Businesses may be open to donating a sum of money to local sports clubs for the purposes of a tax write off. This option should be explored as it may be easier to manage vs a sponsorship deal.

11.4. Captain supporting guidance

Team Captains have responsibility for the organising and running of their team, a captain should be proficient in: knowledge of the rules and bylaws of softball, umpiring, scoring and coaching.

Responsibilities:

1. Ensure set up of field for home games, avoiding forfeits (upskilling opportunity for players).
2. Ensure all required equipment is brought to a game: helmets, bats and match balls, scoresheets & line up card (captains bag).
3. Promote fixtures to the team in good time.
4. Field a line up with a view to securing a win.
5. Upload completed score sheets post game.
6. Update stats sheets based off the score sheet.
7. Send a completed match report to the Media officer within 24 hours.
8. Send completed injury reports to SI where appropriate.
9. Be cognisant of team morale, remain approachable for players to air grievances.