

**POTSDAM YOUTH LACROSSE ASSOCIATION
HANDBOOK & OPERATIONAL RULES**

Revision 1

Date: 4-21-2018

Potsdam Youth Lacrosse Association (PYLA) is a volunteer, not-for-profit, community based organization. All members should familiarize themselves with the contents of this Handbook which explains the Codes of Conduct, policies, and procedures that must be adhered to.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This Handbook has been designed to provide all members (players, parents, coaches, Board or Directors, etc.) with information regarding PYLA programs, policies and procedures that govern the operation of the association. The Handbook will evolve as situations arise and are individually resolved.

While this Handbook has been written to provide comprehensive information, it is emphasized that it is intended as a guide to the governing structure in order that the Board of Directors (Board) has flexibility to reasonably deal with a variety of issues that may present themselves. It is therefore understood that the Board reserves the right to grant exceptions to policies and procedures outlined in the Handbook to best meet PYLA's mission. Updates to this document must be approved by the PYLA board at a regularly scheduled and announced meeting.

Additional information regarding the structure and procedures of the Board are set forth in the PYLA By-Laws.

It is the responsibility of all players, parents and coaches to understand the contents of the Handbook. Ignorance shall be no excuse for failing to know and understand policies and procedures.

A list of Board members is provided on the website, www.potsdamlax.com.

POTSDAM YOUTH LACROSSE ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATION

PYLA is run on a volunteer basis by a Board of Directors consisting of nine members. Members of the board are elected by vote of the association while officers are elected by the Board. The officers make up the Executive Board and are as follows:

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

In situations when decisions need to be made on behalf of PYLA, and it is not feasible or practical for the entire Board to meet, the Executive Board will have the authority to make decisions. All Executive Board decisions will be presented to the Board at the next scheduled meeting.

Each Board Member will be responsible for various activities within PYLA as specified by the bylaws. The Board is responsible for all aspects of administration of the program.

During meetings of the Board, motions on the floor will be voted on as long as a quorum exists, they will pass by majority vote of the members in attendance.

Responsibilities of the Board include, but are not limited to:

- Setting of all general policies and operational rules for PYLA that are not otherwise covered by the By-Laws
- Setting of registration fees and schedules of fee payments
- Scheduling and ensuring home facilities are available for practices and games
- Determining the number of teams per age group and number of players for each team
- Approving of scheduling policies and all decisions relative to participation in tournaments
- Appointing of head coaches
- Approving team proposed fundraisers / fundraising activities
- Appointing Officers and Executive Board members
- Determining Board structure
- Hearing of grievances not settled at the team level

TIMELINE

- **January:** First Meeting of New Officers
- **February:**
 - Registrations (All month)
 - Pine Street Reserved
 - Outdoor Fields Reserved
- **March:** Uniforms Ordered
- **April:** Indoor Practices at Pine Street Arena
- **May:** Outdoor Practices / League Games
- **June:** Season Wraps by end of public school year
- **July:** Box Lacrosse Season (6 weeks) **TBD**
- **August:**
- **September:** Annual Association Meeting, officer reports, nominating committee appointed
- **October:** Slate of officers presented (via email or board meeting)
- **November:** Vote in new officers

REGISTRATION

Registration for PYLA will be done online through the website, www.potsdamlax.com, the preferred method of payment is via credit card at the time of registration. Families wishing to pay by cash or check must make arrangements with the registrar or the treasurer. Registration fees, uniform fees, and any upfront fundraising costs must be paid prior to a player taking the field.

FEES

Registration fees will be determined by the board based on projected costs and projected number of player registrations for the year.

Uniform fees will be assessed as determined by the board and will represent the cost of board-approved uniforms. This fee will be due at the time of registration.

Fundraising fees represent the upfront cost of raffle tickets that will be distributed at registration. Families will pre-pay the tickets and will have the ability to sell the tickets at face value to reimburse themselves.

DISCOUNTS

Families registering multiple children will receive up to a 10% discount on the additional child(ren) registered. Ex: if the registration fee is \$50, the first child will be charged \$50 and any additional children in the immediate family would be charged \$45.

TEAM FORMATION

PYLA, whenever possible based on numbers, will field boys and girls teams by grade cohort as follows: PK/K, 1st/2nd, 3rd/4th, and 5th/6th.

The goal of PYLA is for every child to get the most time on the field and touches of the ball so they can develop as a player and team member; the number of players on a team is a huge factor in this. As a general rule teams will be split when numbers reach the following:

- PK / K: Not needed, games are not applicable at this level
- 1st / 2nd: 15 players (games are 7v7)
- 3rd / 4th: 15 players (games are 7v7)
- 5th / 6th: 22 players (games are 10v10)

In accordance with the Northern Lacrosse League, placement on a team will be determined based on a player's demonstrated level of ability, attitude, and skills. The intent of multiple teams is develop all ranges of skill, maturity and ability, while providing a safe learning environmental that doesn't frustrate, embarrass, or deter a young player from developing. All kids develop at different rates and age levels; attitude, support and a desire to improve determines which kids succeed in lacrosse. Parents, coaches and volunteers are crucial to this development and the success of multiple teams at every age level. Comments, concerns or questions concerning team make-up or numbers should be brought to the board.

PLAYER MOVEMENT

Players must remain with the team that represents their grade cohort. On occasion, players may be allowed to play up in a division above his/her age group. This decision requires Board approval and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Requests to play up should be made to

the Board **prior to registration**. Board decisions shall be based on whether or not the move-up is beneficial and/or not detrimental to the following:

- the player
- the team(s)
- the association

If a player wishes to move down to a lower level team, a written request for a board meeting with both team's coaches and the parents to determine where the player best fits. Again, the board will make a determination based on the impact to the player, the team(s), and the association.

Player move up or move down can only be considered if there is an open spot on a team's roster.

GAMES / PLAYDAY POLICY

PYLA believes in progressively developing player skill sets as they move up through the association. In order to support skill development, structured high touch practices are preferred to low touch game situations. Coaches are encouraged to use intrasquad scrimmages to teach and create game type situations.

PYLA supports all players being involved in every game they dress for. Player development and having fun outweighs "winning at all costs" strategies. In upper divisions, some players may receive more game time than others, (power plays, penalty killing, etc.), late in close games or in tournament championship games. However, "shortening the bench" should be a rare occurrence and not the norm. Travel should be limited to within 2 hours driving distance. The Board reserves the right to limit travel, number of games and tournaments and will use the following as a guideline:

- PYLA Teams will have the following number of games per level; "playdays" are not supported by PYLA. K / PK – Zero to two games/ year
 - 1 / 2 – 6 games / year (or per Northern Lacrosse League)
 - 3 / 4 – 8 games / year (or per Northern Lacrosse League)
 - 5 / 6 – 10 games / year (or per Northern Lacrosse League)
- 2018 Season Exception
 - K / PK: Games are not necessary and should be inter-squad scrimmage
 - This is consistent with other associations
 - This year only: up to three scheduled 'game days' (could be scrimmages or playdays)
 - 1 / 2: This year, they are not in the leagues, so
 - Six games to be scheduled by Ryan Warr for both 1 / 2 teams
 - Playdays aren't necessary, coaches agree

- 3 / 4 and 5 / 6 League only for this year

COACHING

The Association Coaching Coordinator (board member) will solicit and review coaching applications each year. The Coaching Coordinator will present a slate of coaches for the upcoming season which will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Board. Assistant Coaches may be determined by the board at their discretion, but shall generally be chosen by the appointed Head Coach. Candidates will be evaluated by the Board based on their capabilities in the following areas:

- knowledge of lacrosse (not necessarily playing experience)
- ability to commit the necessary time and energy to the position
- ability to communicate with players, and to a lesser degree parents
- previous coaching experience and ratings

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

PYLA is an organization that serves a large number of members that fall into one or more of the following categories: player, parent, coach, volunteer, etc. Due to the size of PYLA and the diversity of its members, PYLA recognizes that incidents can occur that result in disputes, disagreements, misunderstandings, etc. among members. This is defined as a Grievance. PYLA strongly encourages its members to try and resolve grievances amongst themselves if at all possible. However, in the event that self-resolution is not possible, PYLA will assist its members in resolving grievances in an orderly, fair and consistent manner.

Grievance Procedure Steps:

The Grievance Procedures are a series of escalating steps. Members desiring to file a grievance must adhere to these procedures in proper order. Failure to follow these steps may result in an invalid Grievance that may not be reviewed. The steps are as follows:

1. Before the formal Grievance process can be initiated, the aggrieved member (complainant) must wait 24 hours after the incident occurred that prompted the desire to file a Grievance. After the 24 hour period, the complainant may start the formal Grievance process.
2. After the 24 hour period, the complainant is encouraged to discuss the incident with another member, such as a coach, Team Manager, parent, or even the adverse party to the Grievance, to determine if a resolution is possible. If the Grievance pertains to a coach, the complainant is strongly encouraged to discuss the incident with the coach prior to proceeding to step three.
3. If complainant does not wish to discuss the Grievance with another, or if there is not a satisfactory resolution reached, the complainant must complete a Grievance Submission Form, and mail or email it to the Board, within 15 days of the incident.
4. Upon receipt of the form, the Board will confirm receipt of the Grievance with the complainant. The Board will proceed with discussions and investigations of the incident to understand it fully. Upon completion of discussions and investigations, the Board shall render a decision/resolution on the Grievance and notify the complainant (by the next scheduled Board meeting or within 2 weeks of receipt of the Grievance,

whichever is longer). The President may then disseminate the decision/resolution of the Board to other members that the President believes should be made aware of the decision/resolution.

5. Decisions/resolutions of the Board are final and not subject to appeal.

EQUIPMENT

Families are responsible for providing necessary equipment for their child(ren). PYLA will provide coaches with a medical kit and balls at the beginning of the season and each team will have access to fields and nets.

UNIFORMS

REFUND POLICY

All requests for refunds must be made in writing to the Board. Each request will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. PYLA has a very short season and refunds are not allowed in most situations. Refunds in the amount of 50% of the fee may occur within the first two weeks of the official start of the season, refund situations within this timeframe are as follows:

- season-ending injury to a player
- player moving more than 20 miles away from the Village of Potsdam
- player decides to not to play lacrosse

DESTRUCTION/DAMAGE OF FIELD / EQUIPMENT / PROPERTY

Parents and/or guardians will be held financially responsible for any damage to facilities including but not limited to, loss, damage and/or destruction of another player's personal belongings or equipment as a result of inappropriate actions by their child, both home and away. Anyone found to be responsible for the theft of another player's personal belongings or equipment will be immediately suspended from the organization including but not limited to further actions deemed necessary by the Board. Failure to adhere to these rules will result in progressive disciplinary action which may include suspension of play.

BUDGET

The annual budget for the association will be presented by the treasurer. The officers of PYLA shall ensure a minimum fund balance of \$2,500 at any given time. This amount is the anticipated total fixed costs for the association in any given year and it shall be maintained in order to sustain a constant level of protection and operation of the organization.

UNIQUE EXPENDITURES

Any expenditures outside of normal operations (league fees, referees, insurance, website, pinnies, etc) OR expenditures exceeding 20% of the annual operating budget are encouraged to be announced to the membership in order to take advantage of connections that may be available to assist with the funding or discounting of anticipated costs.

DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY

PYLA Board of Directors has the authority to suspend players, parents, coaches and spectators for any and all infractions of the PYLA Code of Conduct (as stated in this document).

PYLA CODE OF CONDUCT

PYLA adheres to the following Code of Conduct for players, parents, coaches, spectators, volunteers, etc.

PLAYERS

- Play lacrosse for fun
- Work hard to improve your skills
- Be a team player by getting along with teammates
- Learn and practice teamwork, sportsmanship, and discipline
- Be a punctual as possible for all games and practices
- Learn the rules of the game
- Respect coaches, teammates, parents, officials, opponents and spectators at all times
- Respect the property of others including personal property as well as facilities in which lacrosse is played
- Refrain from any arguing with coaches and/or officials

PARENTS

- Do not force your child to participate in sports, but support any desire to play their sport(s) of choice
- Encourage your child to play by the rules
- Act in a positive manner
- Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches, officials or other spectators
- Emphasize skill development in your child through practice
- Learn the rules of the game and support officials both on and off the field
- Applaud a good effort in victory as well as defeat
- Recognize the importance of volunteers, especially coaches
- Communicate respectfully with the coaches and show them your support
- Volunteer to help support your child's team and the association
- Utilize the "24-hr Rule" when having an issue with a coach

COACHES

- Be a positive role model to players, stressing discipline while representing PYLA
- Display emotional maturity
- Be alert to the physical safety of players
- Understand that winning is a consideration, but it is more important to ensure players are competing and having fun
- Be generous with praise when deserved, and do not criticize publicly
- Be consistent, honest and fair
- Be an effective communicator and do not yell "at" players
- Be understanding
- Be a good listener

- Provide the opportunity for all players to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem
- Teach the game
- Organize practices that are fun and challenging for players
- Encourage perseverance
- Maintain an open line of communications with parents, making sure to explain goals and objectives for your team
- Help enforce decisions, rules and regulations regarding player non-participation for non-payment of fees or for violations of code of conduct
- Attend meetings as requested by PYLA Board and/or Coaching Coordinator

Approved by unanimous vote on 5/15/18