

February 23, 2026 Manager's Meeting

- Board Member introductions (Roger, Nate, Ryan, Keith, Bernie, Kinni, Kelly)
- 2025 league placer awards presentation (Bernie)
- Schedule of 2026 meetings (April 6, April 27, classification meeting, post season meeting)
- Post season meeting held 9-9-25 (Nate)
 - o Brainstorm good things from season and improvement opportunities while items are fresh in minds
 - o Add post season meeting to distribute league placer awards. May also distribute league placer awards the last week of league – provide a team photo opportunity
 - o Combine the three spring meetings into two meetings in 2027
 - o Replace league trophies winners with league plaques. Easier for sponsor to display and cost reduction
 - o Offer equipment trade day and vendor show – initial show was held in January
 - o Brainstorm how to grow leagues, get new players, especially young players, offer discounts for new teams or teams with 6 or more players 20 years old or younger
 - o Reverse trend of declining team numbers. Both for league play and teams entering tournaments
 - o Develop and distribute informational flyers to local high schools and universities.
 - o Discuss increase sponsor fee by \$50 then refund team \$25 for each of the two spring meetings attended
 - o Continue with upper, middle, and lower leagues for each night, where possible
 - o Discontinue allowing lettered players to participate in our Monday night leagues. Table discussion until after we see Monday night team registrations.
 - o Develop umpire rating system. Nate to work with Mike. Bismarck has been known for having best umpires in state and we would like to continue that
 - o Investigate opportunity for interleague play with Mandan
- Parks and Rec meeting (11-20-2025 attended by Roger and Keith)
 - o South Bismarck storm water project update. Parks and city commissioners listened to our concerns regarding three storm water storage options and their negative impacts to men's softball
 - o Youth baseball plan to update cottonwood diamonds 1, 2, and 3
 - o Plans include turf fields, lighting, dugouts, indoor practice facility
 - o We would not oppose as long as dimensions remain 300 feet and slow-pitch softball "size" infields
 - o Did not have preliminary cost estimate; however, recognized project would have high cost
 - o Increased user fees for 2026 – Player fees changed from \$12 to \$13/player, diamond tournament rental changed from \$8 to \$9/team, \$12 to \$13 for 2 day tournaments
 - o Kevin Klipfel summer retirement
- Slow pitch task force meeting (11-15-25 AM) and Master task force meeting (11-15-25 PM)
 - o Brainstorm things that went well and improvement opportunities
 - o Forward agenda items for the Executive team to discuss and consider at January winter meeting
 - o State tournament format

- State tournament locations and dates
- Purchase softballs at \$42.50/dozen, up from \$39/dozen previously
- Will not discuss these items further here as they will all be included in our January 2026 Executive winter meetings agenda and minutes
- Roger resigned state administrative positions including tournament coordinator, slow-pitch task force, master's task force, classification committee, men's slow-pitch secretary, Bismarck league rep, and state advisory council
- Winter Executive meeting (Nate)
 - Full register play implementation
 - Full online rosters
 - Delayed roster revision deadline date
 - Changed player classification - used to be higher of current team class or player data base class. Change to flow chart plan (expand on this)
 - Define "E+" classification
 - Changed number of players rated one class higher from 3 to 4
 - Allow 3 pickups for tournaments with maximum of 20 players regardless of how many players you will have
 - Revised mandatory move up guidance. Only McQuade tournament champion in Rec 2 thru Rec 4 classifications will be mandatory move ups
 - Eliminate the two day pickup player rule
 - Split "C-D" state to "C" on Saturday and "D" on Sunday
 - Eliminate tournament series
 - Address pickup player rule to be used for league play
 - Revise master 35 to master 30
 - Did not advance the idea of adding master 45 division or changing master 50 to master 45
- Board meeting 2-9-26 (Nate)
 - Use of Register Play for league and tournaments. Extra cost to make leagues open for public viewing. Used trial last year with three leagues
 - Potential use of online registration and payment for tournaments
 - Rollout of mentorship program for newer managers
 - Rollout of umpire excellence recognition program. Weekly reviews run thru survey monkey. Looking for comments as far as knowledge of rules, consistency of calls, on field hustle, attitude, ability to deescalate situations. Tabulate survey responses and discuss feedback with Mike. Potential to recognize highest performers with a gift card or plaques at season end. Looking for honest managerial feedback, regardless if win or lose game.
 - Review of Board member pay, possibly going back to varying pay per board position
 - Discussion to post upcoming meeting agendas several days prior to meeting
- Umpires
 - Mike Wolf to update on McQuades, umpire registration, and rules clinic
- Financial report (Roger for Keith)
 - Started around 1989 with huge commitment to Cottonwood 90 and added several long term pledges since

- I was here for the initial planning, fund raising, land purchase, and total development of cottonwood complex
- Our long term vision has been fully developed and my goal of being debt/pledge free will finally be realized
- Last \$40000/year pledge payment due April 2026
- Funding was supplemented by increased player fees. I request leaving player fees as is to offset all other increased costs such as higher umpire pay, higher softball cost, higher fees for parks n rec, higher team fees to state office, new fees for using register play
- Tournament coordinator (Nate)
 - Discussion on sanctioning statewide invitational tournaments
 - Local tournament discussion (Kinni)
- April 6 meeting
 - Receive practice schedule
- April 27 meeting
 - Collect completed roster, team player fees, and \$30 beverage permit
 - Distribute league schedules
 - Distribute 14 new softballs
- Election of Officers
 - Two year term, paid position
 - Roger, Bernie, Ryan, and Kinni's two year terms are up in 2026
- Questions
- Thanks for attending
- Call up team managers by preferred league night. Please help us by identifying night and skill set as we do not see rosters until after organize leagues. Old teams, please note if you expect to be substantially better or worse than last year so you will end up in correct skill set league
- Registering tonight with \$200 sponsor fees reserves a spot in our leagues