

Bylaws of the Northland Lacrosse Officials Association

Adopted November 4, 2021

Revised October 26, 2021

Changes approved November 12, 2023

Article 1: Name of organization

The organization is the Northland Lacrosse Officials Association (also known as “Northland LOA,” “NLOA,” or “Northland”) and its principal office is in Independence, Minnesota.

Article 2 Purpose of the organization

The purpose of Northland LOA is to recruit, train, and retain high-quality men’s and boys’ lacrosse officials to work games in Minnesota and surrounding states. Northland will keep officials in the game by prioritizing the best interests of our officials and by having a member-driven, financially transparent organization.

Article 3: Membership requirements

To be a member in good standing, an official must meet the requirements as outlined in the Northland LOA Operating Policies. The operating policies must include specifications regarding annual membership dues, annual training and testing, insurance, and completion of an independent contractor agreement and may include other requirements.

Anyone may join Northland LOA, but to be eligible to vote, a member must:

- complete at least US Lacrosse Level 1 Training (or have completed equivalent officials training prior to the creation of the US Lacrosse training program)
- have paid full dues for the upcoming year (e.g., to vote in elections, the member must have paid dues for the year corresponding to the term of the executive committee members)
- have worked at least 5 boys lacrosse games
- meet any other requirements set forth in the operating policies for members in good standing
- not be currently under any Northland LOA disciplinary action that states that the member may not vote.

All members must maintain and monitor an email account, as email will be the primary method for communicating with members.

The Operating Policies may define other membership categories and reduced membership fees to cover special situations, but members paying reduced or partial dues are not eligible to vote. In addition, if special situations arise that are not covered by the Operating Policies, the Executive Committee can create a temporary membership type to cover the situation for the current year. The executive committee may also authorize the assigner to use officials from outside Minnesota on a temporary basis without requiring membership fees.

Article 4: Executive committee

The executive committee (or “the board”) consists of five officers, elected for approximately one-year terms (spanning from the date of one annual general meeting to the next). Only voting members are eligible for these positions. The positions are:

- *President*: Sets the agenda for and leads executive committee meetings and the annual general meeting. Chairs the discipline and performance committee. Ensures that other officers and committees are up to date in their tasks (e.g., timely release of financial reports and publication of minutes).
- *Secretary/vice president*: Records minutes for executive committee and membership meetings and ensures that those minutes are made available to members. Assists the president with creation and publication of the agenda for general and executive committee meetings. Takes over presidential duties when the president is not available. Chairs the operating policy and bylaws committee. Chairs the discipline and performance committee in cases where the president is unable to participate for any reason.
- *Treasurer*: Fulfills duties normally handled by a treasurer, including tracking membership dues, making payments, doing accounting, and producing detailed financial reports (made available to all members). Chairs the finance committee.
- *Recruiting and retention coordinator*: Serves as or determines point of contact for new officials. Leads recruiting and retention committee. Helps to develop strategies for recruiting new officials and for retaining current officials.
- *Training coordinator*: Chairs the training committee. Helps plan training for new and returning officials. Oversees development of training and testing materials. Tracks completion of training for new and returning officials. Works with assigners to ensure officials have on-field training options.

Assigners are not eligible to hold these positions unless there are no other members willing to hold a particular office, and in no case may assigners serve in the role of president or treasurer. If assigners do serve on the executive committee, they must recuse themselves from any votes regarding assigning.

Each member of the executive committee has one vote at executive committee meetings. Proxy votes are not permitted.

If a member of the executive committee has a conflict of interest, he or she must recuse himself or herself votes in areas where that conflict of interest is present.

Article 5: Initial elections

The initial elections after the approval of these bylaws will be conducted online.

There will be a call for nominations via email, with a nomination period lasting at least 5 days. Any voting member may nominate any other voting member, and self-nominations by voting members are permitted. Each nominee will be contacted prior to the election and must accept the nomination to be included on the ballot. Nominees will be given the opportunity to provide a statement, not to exceed 500 words, to be included on the ballot.

Nominees must disclose any potential conflicts of interest prior the election. This does not count against the 500-word limit on their personal statement.

The online voting will take place over at least a 5-day period and will use ranked-choice voting (see “Subsequent elections” for the procedure). The name of each voter will need to be included as part of the voting process to ensure that only voting members participate.

As soon as the election closes and the winners are determined, the winners will take office.

Article 6: Subsequent elections

All elections after the initial election will be conducted at the annual general meeting using ranked-choice voting. If any candidate is ranked first on a majority of ballots, that person wins the office. However, if no candidate has a majority in the first or any other rounds, the candidate with the fewest number of ballots listing that candidate first is crossed off all ballots and the results are tallied again. This continues until one candidate has a majority of the top votes.

There will be a call for nominations for each position at the meeting. A person need not be physically present to be nominated, but it must be possible to contact the person to confirm that they accept the nomination to be included on the ballot. Nominees will be given the opportunity to make a brief statement regarding why they believe they would be good for the position. Nominees must disclose any potential conflicts of interest prior the election.

The elections will be conducted sequentially, in the order president, secretary/vice president, treasurer, recruiting and retention coordinator, training coordinator. Someone who runs for one position and does not win may run for another position occurring later in the sequence.

If there is a tie for the fewest number of top votes when there are three or more candidates, all tied candidates are eliminated. If there is a tie when only two candidates remain, they will each be given another chance to speak and a runoff vote will be held. If there is still a tie, the winner will be determined by a coin flip.

Article 7: Special elections

Should an executive committee position become vacant for any reason (e.g., resignation, illness), within 1 week the executive committee must email the membership to ask for nominations for a replacement. The nomination period will last 1 week. Each nominee will be contacted prior to the election and must accept the nomination to be included. Nominees will be given the opportunity to provide a statement, not to exceed 500 words, to be included on the ballot.

Within 1 week of the close of nominations, the executive committee must hold an online vote to determine the member who will fulfill the remainder of the term.

If a position becomes vacant within 3 weeks of the scheduled date for the annual general meeting, the executive committee may allow the position to remain vacant until that meeting.

As with regular elections, ranked-choice voting will be used if there are more than 2 candidates for a position.

Article 8: Executive committee meetings

Executive committee meetings will be held in person or virtually (or with a combination of in-person and virtual participation) at least semi-annually. They will be announced to the membership at least 48 hours in advance, and members will be invited to attend the meeting virtually or, at the executive committee's discretion, in person.

A quorum for conducting business is three executive committee members.

From time to time it may be necessary to have emergency executive committee meetings without 48 hours advance notice to the membership. Should this occur, any member may request that any business conducted at the meeting be revisited at another executive committee meeting (for which the 48-hour advance notice is provided). That request must be done by emailing the executive committee within 48 hours after the minutes for the emergency meeting are published and detailing the specific issues the member objects to. Those issues will be revisited at an open meeting and any votes regarding the issue will be conducted again after members are given an opportunity to speak on an issue.

In the interest of conducting meetings in a timely manner, the executive committee may limit the amount of time each member is given to speak on an issue at a executive committee meeting provided the time limit set is not less than 2 minutes.

Minutes will be provided to all members in a timely manner (within 2 weeks) after each executive committee meeting.

Executive committee meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Article 9: Annual general meeting and other membership meetings

There will be an annual general meeting of the membership each year between November 1 and December 15. The meeting may be conducted in person, virtually, by a combination of the two. At this meeting, the membership will vote on the operating policies for the upcoming year, hold elections, and vote on any proposed bylaw changes that followed the rules for proper submission. Each member in good standing has 1 vote.

The date and time of this meeting must be announced to the membership by email at least 2 weeks in advance (and will preferably be announced at least a month in advance). A quorum for the annual general meeting is the number of voting members who show up to the meeting, either in person or virtually, provided proper notice was sent to the membership.

Proxy votes are not permitted.

Should any additional membership meetings be deemed necessary by a majority of the executive committee, the same policies will apply. In some cases, the executive committee may choose to have an issue put to an electronic vote rather than holding a meeting; this is permitted provided the issue is presented by email to the members and the members are given at least 1 week to cast votes.

Executive committee members and assigners will have their game counts disclosed at each annual general meeting.

Meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Article 10: Communication

The primary means of communication with members will be via email to the email address each official has listed in ArbiterSports.com for their Northland LOA account.

While it is recommended that meetings and other important notifications also be posted in the Northland group's ArbiterSports.com announcements section and/or to the Northland website, an email to all Northland members is sufficient. A particular member or member not receiving a notification (e.g., because they didn't check their email, because of spam filters, or because of other technical issues beyond the control of Northland) will not invalidate the requirement of notifying members so long as a good-faith effort to notify the membership was made.

For all executive committee meetings, meetings of all members, and committee meetings, if an electronic participation option is provided (e.g., Zoom), participating in that manner counts the same as participating in person, including the right to vote for voting members.

Article 11: Committees

Northland LOA will have the following standing committees:

- training committee
- finance committee
- recruiting and retention committee
- discipline and performance committee
- operating policy and bylaws committee.

The executive committee will draft guidelines for each committee listing responsibilities and the scope of their work. These will be reviewed and potentially revised each year by the executive committee in collaboration with each committee. Although the input of the committee members will be taken seriously, the executive committee has the final vote on these guidelines.

The executive committee may form additional committees as needed and name a chairperson for each such committee. The executive committee may also dissolve these committees if they believe they are no longer needed but may not dissolve the standing committees.

Non-voting members may participate in committees but may not vote.

The executive committee will review all committee decisions and can, by majority vote, overturn any policies enacted by or decisions made by those committees.

Article 12: Finances

The executive committee may authorize reasonable expenditures necessary for the operation of Northland LOA. However, the executive committee may not authorize payments that would put the association in debt.

The executive committee and/or the finance committee should put together an annual budget with estimated income and expenses for the year.

The executive committee will determine payment amounts for instructors, observers, assigners, and other positions.

The treasurer must provide detailed quarterly reports showing all income and expenses, including line-by-line explanations of what the expenses were for and to whom the payments were made. The treasurer and/or finance committee should make these reports available within 30 days of the close of the quarter.

Some payments, such as for observers and for instructors for training classes, may be made by means of an online payment system such as ArbiterPay. When producing the quarterly report, any unused amount in the Northland LOA ArbiterPay account will be counted as an asset, and the treasurer must obtain a listing of payments for that quarter, with payees, from the assigner or training committee member making the payments.

The most recent quarterly report, as well as any previous reports, must be made available to any member upon request. An annual report will be provided to members at the annual general meeting or prior to that meeting.

The treasurer is responsible for making deposits and payments on behalf of Northland LOA. All payments require approval from a majority of the executive committee members, either at a meeting or by an email vote. However, for regular payments such as payments for training class instructors, the executive committee may pre-authorize a total amount so that each individual payment does not require a vote. The treasurer must keep records of the votes approving of each expense to be included in the financial records (date of approval and which executive committee members voted for/voted against/abstained).

If the treasurer is unavailable for some reason (e.g., resignation, vacation, suspension), the vice president may temporarily take over the duties of making deposits and payments on behalf of Northland LOA. All such payments must go through the normal approval process.

Payments and receipts may be made by check, online bill-pay service, or electronic means such as ArbiterPay, PayPal, or Venmo.

The treasurer is responsible for filing taxes on behalf of Northland LOA if they are required by law.

Article 13: Discipline and performance review procedures

Northland LOA members are subject to discipline if they fail to fulfill their obligations or duties as members, as committee members, or as officers or if they act in a way that is detrimental to Northland LOA and its lacrosse officiating mission. Northland LOA members are subject to performance review if there are credible reports of the official being unable to successfully officiate games at certain levels of play.

Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to:

- forfeiture of game fees
- removal from upcoming assignments
- suspension (including being ineligible from future assignments for some time period or until some requirements are met)
- ineligibility from working games at particular levels of play or for particular teams or organizations for some time period or until some requirements are met
- ineligibility from working playoff games for particular leagues or tournaments for some time period or until some requirements are met
- removal from a committee
- removal from the executive committee

- termination of membership

Performance-related follow-up may include, but are not limited to:

- requiring additional training or testing
- observation of the official
- restricting the official to lower-level games
- suspending the official from one or more levels of play until there is an opportunity for the official to demonstrate that he or she is capable of working games at those levels.
- removal from Northland LOA (possibly with some or all of the official's membership fees for the year refunded)

The formal discipline procedure generally begins with a (possibly electronic) written complaint from a party with standing (the complainant) about a Northland LOA official (the complainee). This complaint must be regarding improper behavior or activity by the complainee and cannot be solely due to judgment calls which the complainant disagrees with or errors in judgment. Similarly, a documented error in judgment or an incorrect ruling is generally not grounds for a disciplinary hearing.

The complainant should be filed by a party with standing (e.g., a coach, an athletic director, a league official, an assigner, a Northland LOA officials, or a tournament official associated with the game, league, or tournament in which the incident occurred). However, if the executive committee determines that the circumstances make it appropriate to address the issue, direct complaints may be heard from parents, player, or fans rather than asking them to work with the league, coach, athletic director, or tournament official. The complainant must submit a report as soon as possible after the incident, and the executive committee may refuse to hear complaints that occur more than 2 weeks after the date of the incident in question.

Once the written complaint is filed, the report must be forwarded to the executive committee, who will discuss the complaint as soon as possible, preferably in person, by phone, or virtually, but via email if necessary.

If the complainee is an executive committee member, the complainee is immediately suspended from the executive committee and the complaint is referred to the discipline and performance committee. The complainee will remain suspended from the executive committee until the discipline and performance committee addresses the complaint. The complainee will also be barred from working games until the until the discipline and performance committee addresses the complaint unless a majority of the remaining executive committee members vote to allow the complainee to continue officiating.

If the complainee is not on the executive committee, the executive committee will review the complaint and may choose to either deal with the complaint directly or refer it to the

discipline and performance committee. If they vote to refer the issue to the discipline and performance committee, the executive committee must also vote to determine whether the complainee may continue working games until the discipline and performance committee is able to meet.

If the complainee is a member of the discipline and performance committee, including the case where the complainee is the president of the association, the complainee will be suspended from the discipline and performance committee until there is a ruling regarding the complaint, either from the executive committee or the discipline and performance committee.

If there is a perceived bias conflict of interest, either the complainee or complainant may state their reasons for believing recusal is appropriate and request that any member of the group hearing the case (the executive committee or the discipline and performance committee) recuse himself or herself from the case. If the person in question does not voluntarily recuse himself or herself, the group hearing the case will vote on whether to remove that person from the proceedings, with the person in question not being allowed a vote.

Whichever committee is handling the case will seek additional information regarding the incident (e.g., if the incident occurred during a game, statements may be taken from coaches, table personnel, and other officials who were present at the game). The complainee will be given a chance to respond to any information gathered before any votes are held. Whether the case is heard by the executive committee or the discipline and performance committee, there will be a vote to determine whether the complaint is valid or, if the complaint has multiple components, whether each complaint is valid. If any complaints are determined to be valid, there will then be discussion and a vote regarding the discipline to be assessed. All votes regarding the issue will be decided by simple majority vote.

Decisions regarding whether the complaint was valid and, if so, what discipline was assessed are not routinely announced publicly or to the complainant. However, the executive committee may vote to inform the complainant whether their claim was found to be valid and, in some circumstances, may vote to disclose the discipline assessed.

The performance review procedures are the same as discipline procedures, except that it need not be initiated by a formal complaint if the Executive Committee becomes aware of credible concerns regarding the performance of an official.

All meetings regarding discipline and performance may be conducted in person, virtually, or as a combination of the two.

Article 14: Appeals to discipline decisions

If the complainee or complainant believes the ruling of the executive committee or discipline and performance committee (whichever one heard the case) was incorrect, he or she may appeal to the other body by filing a letter stating the intent to appeal along with a deposit of \$100 to Northland LOA. That person (the appellant) will be given the opportunity to be heard, as will at least one person from the committee whose decision is being

appealed. The discipline and performance committee may also hear from other witnesses and parties, including the complainant, before deciding.

The appeal will be decided by a simple majority vote of the members present, with a minimum of 4 people (regardless of whether the appeal is being heard by the executive committee or the discipline and performance committee) present to hear the case. If there is a tie, the original decision stands.

If the original ruling is overturned, the \$100 deposit is returned to the appellant. If the appeal is denied, the \$100 deposit is forfeited.

Article 15: Criminal activity and background checks

Leagues and tournaments may require background checks on Northland LOA officials before allowing the officials to work games; if they do so, such leagues or tournaments must work with the assigner to ensure only officials who have passed those background checks are awarded games. Northland LOA does not run background checks on officials.

If the executive committee receives credible information about a potentially illegal activity by a member that could reflect negatively on Northland LOA as a provider of officials for high school or youth-level games, the issue will be referred to the discipline and performance committee.

The discipline and performance committee may require the official to obtain an updated background check (normally through US Lacrosse or through the MSHSL). The official in question will not be permitted to officiate (and will be suspended from committee work and/or from the executive committee, if applicable) until the background check is completed and passed. If the official fails the background check, the official's Northland LOA membership will be terminated and the official will be refunded a pro-rated portion of their Northland LOA membership fees for the year.

If there is a pending court case regarding the incident in question, the executive committee or discipline and performance committee may vote, by simple majority, to bar the official in question from officiating until the court case is resolved. Once that happens, and sufficient time has passed to ensure the result of the case would appear on a background check, an additional background check may be required following the same procedure as above before the official is allowed to return to working games.

Article 16: Assigning

As one of the principal activities of Northland LOA is to connect men's and boys' lacrosse officials with games to officiate, the executive committee may authorize one or more assigners to assign officials to games and create and approve policies regarding assigning. Northland LOA may support that activity by collecting assigning fees from officials and passing them on to assigners via procedures to be set forth in the operating policies.

Article 17: Nondiscrimination statement

Northland LOA does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations with the exception of establishing a minimum age or minimum grade in school for membership.

These activities and operations include, but are not limited to, membership application, assigning of officials, and choosing which schools, leagues, or tournaments to work with.

Article 18: Operating policies

Proposed operating policies will be prepared by the executive committee and/or the by-laws and operating policies committee and will be emailed to the voting members at least 7 days prior to the date of the annual general meeting. Approval of the operating policies requires a majority vote of the members present (in-person or virtually) at the meeting. Changes to the proposed operating policies may be made at the annual general meeting by majority vote prior to final approval of the operating policies.

Article 19: Bylaw changes

These bylaws may be altered or amended via the following process:

Any voting member may submit a proposed bylaw change to the secretary/vice president via email by the October 15 preceding the date of the meeting and may include a rationale for the change. Proposed bylaw changes will be emailed to the voting members at least 7 days prior to the date of the annual general meeting. The executive committee may choose to make a recommendation regarding the change and a rationale for that recommendation; if it does, that will be emailed to members as well. A majority of the voting members at the annual general meeting is required to enact any bylaw changes.

Typographical errors and minor changes to the bylaws may be made at other times during the year provided members are notified of the changes via email and are given a two-week window to object to the changes. If there are objections, each change will be put to an online vote of the membership with a voting period of at least one week and with a majority of voting members approving a specific change for that change to be adopted. If there are no objections during the two-week period, the change is considered adopted.