

**TASO BASEBALL**

**OPERATING PROCEDURES**

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHAPTER**

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## RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHAPTER OPERATING PROCEDURES

### Article I: (1) Definitions (2) Membership (3) Dues and Applications

#### Section 1-a. Definitions – TASO Divisions

- A. **Certified:** a member who has demonstrated consistent superior performance over a sustained period of time. This official is at the top of his peer group and has met standards of performance in excess of those required of Approved or Registered. He must earn 75 proficiency points and score 90 or above on the state test **each year** to maintain this ranking. **Note: The deadline for taking the state test is February 15.**
- B. **Approved:** a member who has demonstrated the competence and gained the experience necessary to officiate at all levels of athletic competition in his sport. This official is in the upper middle range of his peer group. He must earn 50 proficiency points and score 80 or above on the state test **each year** to maintain this ranking.
- C. **Registered:** a member who, for whatever reason, does not meet the qualifications for a higher division and all first-year officials. This official may work any level of athletic competition other than post-season play. He must score 70 or above on the state test.

#### Section 1-b. Definitions – RGV Designations

- A. **Apprentice:** a member with fewer than 3 credited years of experience.
- B. **Coach's preference list:** The ranking list of umpires selected by each coach for his home games.
- C. **Game assignment:** a 1 or 2 week period as determined by the assignor.
- D. **Playoff umpire:** a Recognized member endorsed by the chapter as qualified for playoff selection. Playoff umpires must have attended a 3 and 4 man clinic.
- E. **Recognized:** a member in good standing who must have:
  - 1. paid state and local dues.

2. submitted both a proficiency sheet and a record of games worked by June 10
3. attended at least 70% of scheduled meetings of the previous season (exclusive of mandatory clinics). Three tardies equal 1 absence.
4. attended either the state meeting or the state regional clinic.
5. attended a local, 2-man mechanics clinic.
6. attended the annual rules clinic.
7. passed the state test. (As per TASO, a grade of 70% to officiate varsity assignments, whether tournament, non-district, or district).
8. attended each year the ethics presentation, which includes COPE.
9. signed the following agreement:

I have read the following TASO documents: (1) Operating Procedures (RGV as well); (2) By-laws; (3) Conflict of Interest policy; (4) Solicitation of Games policy; (5) Standards of Conduct; (6) Ethics policy (NFHS & RGV as well), and (7) Baseball Ranking plan. I agree to abide by all TASO regulations. I have also read and agree to abide by the NFHS officials' Code of Ethics and the Rio Grande Valley Chapter's Code of Ethics. I agree to abide by all local regulations. I understand the board, under exigent circumstances and acting for the good of the chapter, may exempt a member from certain local obligations.

F. **Restricted:** a member not in good standing.

## Section 2. Membership

- A. Applicants must be 18 years of age.
- B. The membership year is from July 1 to June 30.

## Section 3. Dues and Applications

- A. State dues must be paid before the member can be Recognized and receive games. The deadline is June 20 (local deadline, state deadline is July 1) of the previous year. Only state members who meet the deadline will be on the roster list given to coaches for the following year.
- B. Members who pay their state renewal dues by April 15 will receive a \$5.00 rebate from their next year's local dues.
- C. Local dues are \$30 for current members, which must be paid by the fifth meeting. Late penalty: \$5.00.
- D. Local dues are \$0 for first-time applicants or reinstatement applicants after not being a member for 2 or more years.
- E. A reinstatement penalty (amount determined by the state board, currently \$25) and a local reinstatement penalty (amount determined by the local board, not to exceed \$25) must be paid by any member who misses the July 1 deadline. **By board action, the penalty is set at \$25.**
- F. Refund of State or Local dues
  - 1. An umpire who resigns from the chapter may request from the state a refund of dues, following their established procedure.
  - 2. An umpire who resigns may request the chapter to refund local dues. If the umpire has a valid health excuse, full refund will occur regardless of when the resignation occurs. Otherwise, refunds for a resignation in January are 100%, in February, 80%; in March, 40%; in April or later, 0%.
- G. Reinstated members may be required by the board to attend the apprentice training program.
- H. To be a member in good standing, all applicants (new, renewal, or reinstatement) must submit their applications to both the secretary and the treasurer and receive receipts of membership from each.
- I. First-time applicants must attend a two-year apprentice training course, which may be extended, with board approval, at the discretion of the apprentice training director.
- J. TASO members transferring from other chapters may be required to attend the apprentice training course.

**Article II: (1) Officers and Elections (2) Board Members (3) Duties of Office  
(4) Standing Committees**

Section 1. Officers and Elections

- A. The officers shall be an **elected** president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, assignor, and **appointed** rules interpreter, apprentice training director, sergeant-at-arms, chairman of the fiscal committee, and the immediate past president.
- B. Nominations may be made during April. Members may rise to nominate in a meeting or notify the Webmaster. A member may nominate himself. Nominations cease at 7:00 P.M., 7 days before the election.
- C. After accepting a nomination, the member may submit a list of his qualifications for publication on the Website.
- D. The election shall be held at the next-to-last meeting of the year. Only **Recognized umpires present** at the meeting may vote. When 3 or more nominees run for the same office, if no nominee receives a majority of the votes, a run-off election shall be held between the top 2 vote-getters.
- E. Nominees for at-large positions do not run against any specific candidate. The 3 nominees receiving the largest number of votes are elected.
- F. Before the vote, the order of campaign speeches (limit of 5 minutes) shall be candidate(s), incumbent. Any Recognized member present may rise to speak for 1 minute in support of anyone running for election.
- G. Officers assume their duties on July 1.
- H. No member may hold more than one **elected** office. An elected board member may be appointed to be the rules interpreter, sergeant-at-arms, apprentice training director, or member of the fiscal committee.

- I. All officers are elected for 2-year terms. The election cycle is:
  - 1. Elected in odd years: vice-president, secretary, treasurer, two division representatives.
  - 2. Elected in even years: president, assignor, 3 at-large board members.
- J. An officer is not limited in the number of terms he may serve.

## Section 2. Board Members

- A. Voting board members include all elected officers, 3 at-large members, chosen by the entire chapter, and 2 district members, elected by Recognized members of the district they represent. District One is composed of Cameron and Willacy counties. District Two is composed of Hidalgo and Starr counties. The district representative must live in the district he is elected to serve.
- B. The voting board consists of 10 members as outlined in Article II, Section 2, Clause A. In case of a tie, a motion fails. The president may vote:
  - 1. To create or break a tie
  - 2. Penalize a board member
  - 3. Submit amendments to the O.P.
- C. Each elected board member and all appointed board and committee members each year shall sign the following confidentiality agreement:

Board members have a solemn duty to handle personnel and other chapter business in a responsible, mature way. To that end, my signature indicates I will not breach that trust. If I am shown to have broken this pledge, then I will resign my position. After the board has taken action on a topic, I understand it is my duty to explain that action to any chapter member wanting information and include my personal opinion on the decision if I desire. That is, I may discuss WHAT happened, including which board member supported or opposed a motion. I may not discuss the WHY of board action. That is, by definition, confidential.

Discussion with the District Director and the TASO Executive Director are not covered by this document. The board, by recorded, majority vote, may exempt any topic from this pledge for the purpose of investigation in a search for the truth.

### Section 3. Duties of Office

#### A. The **president** shall:

1. Set the agenda for general chapter meetings.
2. Preside over chapter and board meetings. **Note 1: Chapter meetings shall follow this general schedule: president's remarks (5 minutes); secretary's business (5 minutes); treasurer's business, when needed (5 minutes); vice-president's training (35 minutes); rules interpreter questions and answers (15 minutes) and assignor's business (15 minutes). The meeting times are flexible. Note 2: New business shall be covered during the president's remarks. Note 3: The order of conducting general meetings in the event of the president's absence is: vice-president, secretary, treasurer, assignor.**
3. Serve as the vice-chairman of the education, ethics, and fiscal committees. At committee meetings he may vote only to break or create a tie. In case of a tie, the motion fails.
4. Appoint a rules interpreter, apprentice training director, sergeant-at-arms, and the non-**ex officio** members of the standing committees. (See Article II, Section 4.) All appointed officers serve at the pleasure of the president, who may, without appeal, replace any appointee.
5. Appoint members to any temporary, select committee, such committee to exist until the president dissolves it.
6. Represent the chapter in meetings with the RGV Athletic Council.

7. Attend the state meeting at chapter expense. If exigent circumstances exist, he may be excused by the board from the meeting.
8. Propose to the board any action he deems necessary for the betterment of the chapter.
9. After leaving office remain as a non-voting board member (called the immediate past president) until the current president leaves office.

B. The **vice-president** shall:

1. Become the president if that office becomes vacant unless he declines to serve.
2. Conduct the training program for general chapter meetings.
3. Conduct (or cause to be conducted) all field clinics.
4. Conduct all elections in which the general membership votes for officers and board members.
5. In consultation with the education committee, present a calendar of meeting dates and subjects for the following year to the board at the last scheduled meeting in March. **Note 1: The proposed calendar shall include the date, time, and place for the five mandatory board meetings. Note 2: In the context of the O.P., the end-of-year BBQ is not considered a chapter meeting.**
6. If not already certified, become a state clinician at the earliest opportunity and at chapter expense.
7. Serve as the chairman of the education committee.

C. The **secretary** shall:

1. Record attendance at meetings and clinics and provide that to the board.
2. Certify the roll of Recognized members by July 1 of each year.
3. Submit to the TASO office signed proficiency sheets for each member renewing. **Note 1: Each umpire shall include with his proficiency sheet a record of games worked during the season. The form will be on the Website, but it will always include the following information: date, level, place, home**

team, visiting team, partner. The secretary may enlist other members to help him check the games-worked list. The proficiency and record of games worked must be in the hands of the secretary by June 1. **Note 2: Umpires who do not submit a timely proficiency sheet and record of games worked will drop 1 level for the next season.**

4. Publish rosters or cause to be published on the chapter Website and update them at least twice a month, if needed.
5. Provide to the members by July 1 of each year a certified roster of Recognized members for the coming season.
6. Post on the Website or cause to be posted in March of each year the calendar of meetings for the next season.
7. Record the minute of board deliberations and business meetings of the general membership
8. Deliver to the board a list of members eligible for playoffs.
9. Along with the president, conduct the chapter's ranking of umpires for the **UIL List of 20**, using the following method:
  - (a) Each board member shall, from the roster list certified on June 1, rank 20 umpires in order of excellence.
  - (b) At a scheduled board meeting in March, each member in attendance shall present a chapter roster with 20 ranked umpires.
  - (c) Each board member's rankings will be unsigned and sealed in an envelope. The president and secretary shall take custody of the envelopes. **Note: No one will know how any individual ranked the roster.**
  - (d) The president and secretary shall enter the rankings on a spread sheet.
  - (e) Any umpire who does not appear on an individual board member's ballot, but has been ranked by other board member(s), shall receive a ranking of 22 on that ballot.
  - (f) The secretary shall transmit to the UIL the names of the 20 umpires with the lowest total of points. They shall be listed in five 4-man crews.

10. Handle all correspondence with the state office and such other correspondence as directed by the president or the board.
11. Manage or cause to manage the chapter website.
12. Attend the state meeting at chapter expense. If exigent circumstances exist, he may be excused from the meeting.
13. Receive compensation determined by the board.

D. The **treasurer** shall:

1. Keep an accurate account of the chapter's money and present in writing to the membership that balance sheet at the second, sixth, and last meetings of each season.
2. Pay such bills as are authorized by the board.
3. Select the bank used by the chapter and ensure that the president, vice-president, and treasurer each may sign checks. **Note: Two signatures will be required on all checks.**
4. Maintain a chapter Debit Card and require receipts for all transactions.
5. Require receipts for all expenditures.
6. Consult with the secretary to submit membership dues and applications by June 20 of each year.
7. Serve as **ex officio** chairman of the ethics committee.

E. The **assignor** shall:

1. Determine who umpires all tournament and regular season, varsity games.
2. Appoint, in consultation with the board, associate assignors who handle sub-varsity schedules.
3. Use any method he chooses to make varsity assignments, except that he must consult the preference list submitted by each coach for regular season, varsity games.
4. Be the final arbiter for game assignments, regardless of the level.
5. Assign scrimmages, using any method he chooses.
6. Accept no more than 3 scratches of umpires from each coach unless the coach and his Athletic Director/Coordinator present in writing the reason for the disqualification. **Note: the chapter honors scratches for district games only.**

7. Notify all potential playoff coaches of the chapter's method of selecting playoff umpires, as outlined in Article II, Section 3, Clause J-4.
8. Receive compensation determined by the board.

F. The **apprentice training director** shall:

1. Conduct training sessions required of all apprentice umpires on rules, mechanics, game control, and general procedures before each chapter meeting except the first and the last, and ( if authorized by the board ) at such other times as he deems necessary. This extra training will include at least one mandatory field clinic. The education committee shall provide the course curriculum. He may appoint other chapter member of his choice to assist him in the training sessions.
2. Report attendance to the secretary, who shall certify to the board the names of apprentice umpires who did not make 75% of the meetings **after joining the chapter**. Penalty: No credit for apprentice training that season. During the 2-year course, apprentice umpires pay no local dues. **Note 1: Umpires who do not pass their first year must thereafter pay local dues. Note 2: After being a member for 3 years, an umpire who has not passed the apprentice training program shall not be accepted for renewal for a period of 5 years.**
3. Certify the graduates of the apprentice training course. **Note 1: Apprentice umpires must receive credit for 2 years of training before being Recognized.**
4. Attend board meetings as a non-voting member.
5. If not already certified, at the earliest opportunity become a state clinician at chapter expense.
6. Serve as an **ex officio** member of the education committee.

G. The **rules interpreter** shall:

1. Present the new rules to the members and coaches.
2. Conduct the annual rules clinic.

3. Answer any rules questions.
4. Be the final, chapter arbiter regarding rule interpretations.
5. Attend board meetings as a non-voting member.
6. Serve as an **ex officio** member of the education committee.
7. Update as needed the Rio Grande Valley chapter case book published on the Website.

H. The **sergeant-at-arms** shall:

1. Maintain order in meetings and clinics by circulating through the meeting area.
2. Act in a professional manner by treating all members with respect.
3. Interpret for the board and members the Operating Procedures.
4. Attend board meetings as a non-voting member.
5. Serve as an **ex officio** member of the ethics committee.

I. The **chairman of the fiscal committee** shall:

1. Certify to the board all information by the committee and report all action taken.
2. Inform the UIL and TASO of schools not paying the correct fees and of schools that are late paying those fees.
3. Inform the board of scrimmage fees collected and owed.
4. Serve as a non-voting member of the board.

J. The **immediate past president** shall:

1. Offer counsel and advice to the board.
2. Serve as a non-voting member on committees as directed by the president.
3. Unless running for election, serve as the judge when counting ballots.

K. The **board of directors** shall:

1. Conduct all chapter business, including but not limited to: investigating alleged misconduct, assessing penalties, evaluating umpires for the UIL, and accepting excuses for missed meetings. Due process shall be followed at all times. Five voting members constitute a quorum for enacting business, but 1 of the 5 must be an elected officer.

- (a) The board shall hold a minimum of 5 meetings during the calendar year (July 1 to June 30):
    - (i) July: Discuss goals / objectives and ratify the agreement for services to schools for the coming season.
    - (ii) August: Certify the roster for the coming season and define committee agendas.
    - (iii) January: Discuss general chapter business.
    - (iv) March: Ratify and post on the Website the calendar for the coming season and select the **UIL List of 21**.
    - (v) April: Certify playoff umpires.
  - (b) The order of conducting meetings in the absence of the president is: vice-president, secretary, treasurer, assignor. The board may not meet unless one member present is an elected officer.
  - (c) Other meetings may be scheduled by the president as needed. If agreed to by 5 board members, any board member may call a meeting.
  - (d) The rules interpreter, apprentice training director, sergeant-at-arms, and all appointed committee members may take part in board deliberations, but they may not vote.
  - (e) By the majority vote, the board may go into executive session with only elected board members participating.
  - (f) Any Recognized member of the chapter may attend board meetings but may not be present during executive sessions. They may be allowed to take part in a board discussion.
2. Submit for a vote to the general membership:
    - (a) Any increase in the local dues.
    - (b) Any penalty in excess of 2 games.
    - (c) Any proposed changes to the O. P.
    - (d) Any other issue as determined by 7 board members, not counting the president.
  3. Certify the chapter roster.
  4. Meet at the end of the regular season to ratify the selection of playoff umpires, using the following method:

- (a) If an umpire is selected for simultaneous series, the umpire must inform the assignor and board which series he desires.
  - (b) Competing coaches must agree on 6 acceptable umpires for each playoff series, ranked in the order of preference.
  - (c) Vacancies in a series shall be filled in the order of selection after agreement of the competing coaches.
  - (d) The assignor shall notify the board via e-mail of each agreed upon list at least 2 days before each series.
  - (e) In exigent circumstances, the board must be polled by phone to certify any playoff umpire not already on the certified list.
5. Have power to penalize or remove board members. Elected and appointed board members must remain members in good standing. **Note: In all board deliberations concerning penalizing a board member, the member being discussed may not vote though he may be heard.**
- (a) Absences: Any elected board member who, without just cause, misses 3 consecutive board meetings or does not attend 75% of board and general meetings shall be considered to have vacated the position without board action. Request for excused absences will be determined by a majority vote (by secret ballot) of the board members present.
  - (b) Official misconduct: If any board member is alleged to have violated the trust placed in him by the chapter, the ethics committee, by direction of the president, shall investigate the charges and report its' findings and recommendations to the board.
    - (i) The board, after hearing the committee's report, and on a finding of guilty by 6 board members (by secret ballot), may assess a **lesser penalty**:
      - (a) Public reprimand.
      - (b) Prohibition from taking part in board deliberations for up to 3 meetings.
      - (c) Suspension of voting privileges for up to 3 meetings
    - (ii) The board, after hearing the committee's report, and on a finding of guilty by 7 board members (by open ballot),

may assess a **major penalty**: Permanent removal from the Board.

- (iii) The accused may have counsel during the hearing, and the board shall follow due process at all times.
  - (iv) A penalized board member may appeal to the general membership. See Article III, Section 4, Clause C.
6. Appoint a Recognized member to fill any board vacancy for the remainder of the term.
  7. Perform action necessary to ensure the orderly function of the chapter.

#### Section 4. Standing Committees

- A. There shall be 3 standing committees: education (3 members); ethics (3 members); fiscal (5 members).
- B. Other than the president, no elected board member may serve on more than 1 committee.
- C. The education and fiscal committees must meet at least 3 times during the year and as directed by the president. **Note: Since the president is vice-chairman of all committees, no 2 committees may schedule meetings simultaneously.**
- D. The ethics committee shall meet as directed by the president. It shall:
  1. Be the investigative body for the board.
  2. Provide the chapter each year with training in ethics and standards of conduct, including COPE.
- E. The education committee shall:
  1. Determine the course of study required to train apprentice members.
  2. Determine the course of study required to train the general membership.
- F. The fiscal committee is composed of 5 members appointed by the president, who shall ensure geographical diversity. No more than 1 elected board member shall serve on the committee. The committee shall elect its' own chairman. The fiscal committee shall:

1. By August 15 each year, cause to be distributed the agreement for services to the athletic directors of the schools served by the chapter.
  2. Investigate underpayment and non-payment by schools for scrimmages and games and take appropriate action, which may include an incident report to the UIL and TASO.
  3. Handle all collection of fees for scrimmages. **Note: Schools will be directed to submit checks, made out to the RGV Chapter, to the chairman of the committee.**
- G. All committee action is subject to review and modification by the board.

### **Article III: (1) Penalties (2) Appeals**

#### Section 1: Penalties

- A. Restricted umpires may be penalized by loss of games, will not be assigned playoff games, and shall not serve as a board member of the chapter.
- B. A member who misses the meeting when game assignments are distributed will lose 1 game from that assignment.
- C. Members with excessive absences, defined as more than 25% of the previous year, or tardies, defined as coming later than 10 minutes after the scheduled meeting time, may be penalized by loss of games.

#### Section 2. Appeals

- A. Recognized members shall have the right to appeal any disciplinary penalty other than the 1 game penalty imposed by the assignor or a 2 game penalty imposed by the board.
- B. If a Recognized member is suspended from assignments, he shall have the right to appeal to the general membership. The board's penalty is upheld unless two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at a meeting called to consider the appeal shall vote to overturn the penalty. **Note 1: The vote of the membership is final.**

- C. One week's notice must be given before an appeal is considered.
- D. If a board member is removed by board action, he shall have the right to appeal to the general membership. **Note 1: The board member in question may take part in the deliberations, but he may not vote.**  
**Note 2: The vote of the membership is final.**
  - (i) If a board member assessed a **lesser penalty** appeals: The board action is upheld unless two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at the meeting called to consider the appeal shall vote by secret ballot to overturn the penalty.
  - (ii) If a board member assessed a **major penalty** (permanent removal from office) appeals: The board action is upheld unless three-fourth (3/4) of the members present at the meeting called to consider the appeal shall vote by secret ballot to overturn the penalty.

#### **Article IV: (1) Scope (2) Amendments**

##### Section 1. Scope of the O.P.

- A. The O.P. replaces any former by-laws, constitutions, and / or continuing resolutions.
- B. Any provision of the O.P. that conflicts with any provision of the TASO constitution, by-laws, or operating procedures shall be null and void.

##### Section 2. Amendments

- A. A proposed amendment, agreed to by 6 voting board members, shall be presented to the membership after 1 week's notification, which notification shall be made through the Chapter Website.
- B. A majority of the members present at the general meeting which is called to consider the proposal is sufficient to pass the amendment.

Final draft approved by unanimous chapter vote on 01/12/2011



