

Creating an LGBT softball league in your city can be an exciting venture. Here's a comprehensive guide outlining the steps you can follow to establish a successful softball league:

1. Research and Planning:

- **Assess Interest:** Gauge the interest level in your community by conducting surveys or informal discussions to determine if there's a demand for a softball league. Identify if there is other sports organizations and partner to learn about their challenges and successes.
- **Identify Target Audience:** Determine the age groups, skill levels, and demographics of potential players. In International Pride Softball (IPS), our organizations focus in bringing a safe environment for the LGBT, but we also love the participation of our allies.
- **Location and Facilities:** Research available fields or facilities suitable for softball games. Consider factors like accessibility, lighting, amenities, cost, etc.

2. Formulate a Plan:

- **League Structure:** Decide on the league format (recreational, competitive, IPS rated divisions, etc.) and the number of teams you aim to have.
- **Rules and Regulations:** Develop league rules and bylaws governing player eligibility, game format, conduct, safety measures, etc. IPS Membership team can help provide examples from other leagues, so it facilitates the creation of those documents for your league.
- **Budgeting:** Plan a budget covering expenses such as field rentals, equipment, permits, insurance, marketing, and administrative costs. Maximize the use of social media to communicate with your potential players. Make sure you can partner with other LGBT organizations for marketing events, hosting registration or for communications.

3. Legalities and Administration:

- **Establish a Legal Entity:** Consider forming a legal entity (non-profit, LLC, etc.) for liability protection and operational purposes. Even though most of the IPS organizations are 501.c3, it is not a requirement to be a member. However, there is some advantages in being non-profit, regarding taxes and donations. One tip that some organizations have done to start is to partner with their city Pride organization, to fall under their umbrella for the first couple of seasons and get volunteer and financial help.



Starting a LGBT Softball League

- Obtain Necessary Permits: Secure permits and permissions from local authorities or landowners to use fields for games and events.
- Insurance: Acquire liability insurance to protect the league, players, and volunteers against potential risks.

4. Recruitment and Promotion:

- Recruit Participants: Advertise and promote the league through social media, local newspapers, community bulletin boards, and word-of-mouth to attract players, coaches, and volunteers.
- Registration Process: Set up a registration system for teams and players, including fee structures, waivers, and necessary documentation.

5. League Operations:

- Scheduling: Create a game schedule, considering factors like available field times, team preferences, and any special events.
- Equipment and Uniforms: Purchase necessary equipment such as bats, balls, bases, scorekeeping materials, and uniforms for teams.
- Volunteer Coordination: Recruit and manage volunteers for various roles like umpires, scorekeepers, and event organizers. As soon as possible, set a board to manage the leagues operations.

6. Promote Engagement and Community Involvement:

- Events and Tournaments: Organize events, clinics, or tournaments to engage the community and attract more interest in the league.
- Sponsorship and Partnerships: Seek sponsorships or partnerships with local businesses or organizations to support the league financially or through in-kind contributions.

7. Launch and Evaluate:

- Launch the League: Host an opening day event to kick off the inaugural season and generate enthusiasm among participants and spectators.
- Evaluate and Adapt: Continuously evaluate the league's progress, gather feedback from participants, and make necessary adjustments to improve the league's operations and experience for all involved.

Remember, creating a softball league requires dedication, organization, and enthusiasm. Flexibility and adaptability are crucial as you navigate challenges and adjustments along the way.