

APPENDIX G
College of William and Mary Recreational Sports

GUIDELINES FOR SPORT CLUB CONSTITUTIONS & BY-LAWS

I. Name of the Organization

For example, "This organization will be known as..."

II. Purpose of the Organization

A statement of the reason for the organization and a general declaration of its goals.

III. Membership in the Organization

This article includes all provisions for membership and rules for attendance, if any. It should make clear the requirements that must be met to remain a voting member. Membership ought to be open to all interested undergraduate students at the college. If membership is open to anyone else, make it clear. For example, "Membership in this organization will be open to all interested members of the William and Mary college community."

IV. Officers

This article declares all the officers involved and the duties and obligations inherent to each. If there are no officers and instead a sponsor, specify this and enumerate the duties of the sponsor.

V. Elections

This is a very important article and should be drafted with care. Be certain to try to cover every possibility because odds are the worst will happen eventually. Never assume that everyone simply knows how something is done or chaos may break out during election proceedings. Be sure to specify:

1. how and when each officer is elected or appointed
2. how the officers are replaced if they fail to complete a term of office
3. how officers are removed if they fail to meet required duties and obligations
4. terms of office

In every voting procedure note what type of majority is required (simple majority, 2/3 majority, etc.). Make clear whether the body considered to determine the majority is the entire membership or only those attending the meeting and specify the voting rights of the officers. If more than one voting procedure is used, depending on the office or for whatever reason, define every procedure.

VI. Committees

If there are any standing committees, name them and describe their purpose and function. Detail how committee members are determined, how committee officers, if any, are elected and appointed, and how special (temporary) committees are created. If committees are expected to give reports to the general membership at regular intervals, this is the place to say so. If committee meetings can be closed, make it clear, so state how the determination is made. You may also specify how often committees meet.

VII. **Meetings**

Declare how often the organization meets and if there are any minimum requirements such as one meeting per month, five per semester, or one meeting to be held no later than the fourth week of class, etc.

VIII. **Dues**

If dues are required, state how much they are or describe the process that governs how much they are. It is a good idea to provide a means of changing dues through time other than amending the constitution. Take care to point out who is to collect dues under the duties of the officers (if it's an officer) or the functions of standing committees (if it's a committee).

IX. **Amendments**

ALL ORGANIZATIONS MUST HAVE PROVISIONS FOR AMENDING THEIR CONSTITUTIONS OR BY-LAWS!

It is usually best that constitutions and by-laws are amendable only at certain times under certain conditions. These documents are supposed to be permanent guides for your organization and so should not be prone to constant modification. The most common method is only allowing amendments at the meeting when elections are held; it is not at all advisable to allow amendments to be voted on at the meeting at which they are proposed unless the meeting is such a constitutionally defined time. Include what type of majority is required and who makes the amendments as well as when amendments can be made. Make this process excessively clear.

Amendments are one of the most important provisions in a constitution or by laws- and have been the most frequently omitted. If the organization desires to change any procedure in the constitution/by-laws, it is done by means of an amendment which changes, deletes, or adds something in the document. Any time the constitution or by-laws is changed, put the amendments in writing and submit the altered document to the Student Activities Office.

X. **Ratification**

This article is the last one in a constitution or by-laws and includes when they took effect, whether they void any previous documents or conflicting legislation, who passed it, and what majority was needed for ratification. Please include the date ratified.

According to Robert's Rules of Order, an organization may choose to adopt both a constitution and by-laws, only a constitution, or only by-laws. Whichever course your organization chooses to follow, please make use of these guidelines; they apply to both. If you decide to draft both a constitution and by-laws, the constitution will be an outline of the structure of the organization and the by-laws will be the specific rules governing the organization. The constitution should be the more binding document and is usually more difficult to amend. Both documents require articles describing how it may be amended.

You may want to refer to Robert's Rules of Order where you can find additional help and you can be assured of finding all the proper ways to conduct your organization's business.

Constitutions should be written in the third person and use the definite future tense ("will") in such statements as "The officers will be elected at the annual election meeting." "Shall," "should," and "would" are not to be used except where absolutely grammatically correct.