



**AFCS SEEDING Committee** – Derek Allister, Jim Barcelona, Paul Nakama, Krista Crawford, Don Minard, and Travis Cotsenmoyer

The goal of the Seeding Committee and Seeding Process is to serve the Alliance Fastpitch and its organizations by providing an equitable process of seeding for the Alliance Fastpitch Championship Series (AFCS) that produces the best champion and provides for the highest level of competition in each age division.

The AFCS Seeding Committee is tasked with seeding each tournament from 1-96 (or the total number of teams in the AFCS) while relying on as much objective data from actual competition as is possible while still utilizing the common sense decision-making of the seeding committee.

## **AFCE SEEDING PROCESS**

The AFCS Seeding Process for each age division begins with the Seeding Committee looking at all qualified teams and resumes. Below is the process used by the Seeding Committee the past two seasons.

**STEP #1** – Divide teams into buckets of approximately 16 teams. In 2021 there were four buckets (64 teams max). Last year, there were 5/6 buckets (96 teams max).

**STEP #2** – In each bucket organize the teams #1 - #16 with #1 being the “best” of the 16 teams.

- Utilize as much objective data as possible.
- Get advice from people in the various Leagues

**STEP #3** – Lock in Seeds #1 - #16. Then lock in Seeds #17 - #32.

**STEP #4** – Look at potential match-ups for teams #1 thru #32

- In this stage, teams can move up or down a bit, i.e. move from being the #28 seeded team to the #31 seeded team. Or from being the #5 Seed to the #6 Seed.

**STEP #5** – Look at potential matchups between teams #1 thru #96

- In this stage, teams can move a bit more in order to protect teams appropriately – i.e. #65 Seed can move up to #60 or down to #70

## The AFCS Seeding Committee utilizes the following objectives and principles to inform the Seeding Process.

- Objective #1 – Get the seeding right so the competitive tournament provides opportunity for all, even as it protects teams from facing one another until the proper round.
  - Top level teams should not face one another until later rounds. And lower level teams will have to prove themselves against high level competition in early rounds.
  - Review early match-ups to safeguard against teams from the same League, same organization, and/or same state playing each other early, if applicable
- Objective #2 – Managing the OBJECTIVE with the SUBJECTIVE data. The Seeding Committee aims to blend the two. While objective data is good, it is not always the final answer.
  - OBJECTIVE DATA
    - League Rankings & Results
    - League Championship Results
    - Major Tournament Results (i.e. Triple Crown, PGF, Team NJ, and other independent event operators with game results)
  - SUBJECTIVE DATA
    - There is a place for the subjective to make common sense decisions. The Seeding Committee recognizes that some objective data relies upon leagues and individuals submitting correct data, thus, objective data cannot be a “be all and end all.”
    - Committee’s Personal Knowledge of the softball landscape
      - 18U Example – 2021 Williamsburg Starz. Despite playing a limited schedule, the committee knew that the Starz had two of the best pitchers in the country, one of which was Emma Lemley now at Virginia Tech. Despite the fact that most of the country didn’t know much about them, the committee gave them a #17 seed. They proved themselves worthy of that seed by beating the #16 seed and taking the #1 seed to the wire in the Super Regionals finishing 9<sup>th</sup>.
      - 18U Example – 2021 Firecrackers Rico. The Firecrackers had modest success early in the summer but were missing some pieces. They were making a run in the TCS Nationals and the committee recognized that with a #8 seed. They justified that seed by finishing 7<sup>th</sup>.
      - 16U Example – 2022 a.i Bandits. The NW league had modest results against other leagues. However, the committee knew the a.i Bandits had a great young pitcher who could beat anyone. The committee gave the Bandits a #31 seed. They beat the #2 seed and knocked them into the Tier II tournament. They ended the tournament tied for 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Alliance Fastpitch empowers this neutral Seeding Committee to oversee all seedings. While we understand there is no perfect system, we believe in having a process that a neutral party evaluates the resumes of the current team and their annual results. This helps level the playing field and due to the AFCS format, each team gets several chances to compete at the highest level and earn their advancement to the next round through their performance on the field. Our seeding committee is dedicated to giving all teams a real chance to earn a National Championship through their play in the AFCS.