

**Black Swamp Gamers Constitution and By-Laws**  
**Updated March 2024 – FINAL**

**ARTICLE I: NAME & PURPOSE**

**Section A: Name** – The name of this club shall be Black Swamp Gamers.

**Section B: Location** – The club main office is located at 18 N. 3rd St (basement suite), Waterville, OH 43566.

**Section C: National Affiliation** – Black Swamp Gamers is not affiliated with any nationally known organizations. We are currently independent of any other board game clubs or retail stores.

**Section D: Purpose** – The purpose of this club shall be:

1. To Provide a safe and encouraging atmosphere with like-minded people who have a common interest in board games, card games, etc; also known as hobby gaming.
2. To give our members a relaxing and entertaining experience through group interaction and conversation.
3. To raise awareness of the growing community of hobby gaming.

**Section E: Codes of Conduct** – It is important that members have a common understanding of what behavior is expected to ensure the physical and emotional well-being of our members and guests.

- We are a private group. Guests who intend on playing must be accompanied by a member and in some cases, approved by a limited partner OR have donated for a guest pass. This is for security reasons. Visitors, such as walk ins, are welcome to browse and converse but are not allowed to participate in any gaming unless said guest pass is used.
- There is absolutely NO CHEATING while gaming. If caught, you'll be warned but if it's consistent, you'll be asked to leave and possibly have your membership revoked. These will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Please keep our area clean and tidy. Once a game is played, please put it back properly in its box and put it back on the shelves where you found it. Please also dispose of any trash into the waste basket.
- Please also remember to practice clean personal hygiene while gaming. Many other people will be playing these games after you so to keep the spread of germs to a minimum, always remember to wash your hands after using the bathroom or eating greasy foods. There will also be hand sanitizer bottles placed around the club area.
- Accidents do happen but to try and prevent them all together, UNCAPPED drinks are not allowed to be placed on tables where games are in play. Leave your drinks anywhere OTHER than the play area to keep spills from ruining the games.
- If you intend on playing a game with others, you are expected to FINISH the game as well. We understand if you have to leave, then someone else can take over your turns, but not finishing a game simply because you don't want to is not fair to the other players. To keep each game going smoothly, you should only be playing 1 game at a time, no jumping back and forth between tables.
- The way you play your game is different than how others play theirs. BE RESPECTFUL of other people's playing styles.
- Be considerate of other players opinions and ideas. Everyone is neither right nor wrong. If needed, grab an officer to settle your disputes. EVERYONE INCLUDING OFFICERS, are expected to be mindful of your topics of conversation and refrain from excessive foul language, racist comments or slurs, etc. Conversation as such creates a bad, uninviting image that the club does not condone. Members or Officers caught using such language will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- ABSOLUTELY NO TABLE FLIPPING. Calmly remove yourself from the table and relieve your tensions outside.

**Section F: Hours of operation** – The club location will be accessible by paid members and guests on Saturdays & Sundays starting at 1PM EST. Other days of the week may be announced via our Facebook page.

**ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP, DUES, & MEMBER RIGHTS**

**Section A: Eligibility** - Membership shall be open to the public for anyone who has an interest in Black Swamp Gamers upon payment of the dues as outlined below.

**Section B: Dues** – Dues are as follows for each membership type:

**Partner** –\$250 per year

**Basic Membership** –\$125 1st year, \$150 at renewal

**Additions to primary account holder plus 1 named family member** – see below Sec B

All dues are to be paid in full when an application is being submitted OR before the start of the accounts next year of membership. If a membership is being renewed, any date prior to their expiration date for payment is allowed. Installment plans are accepted with the approval of the club treasurer. (NOTE – the only installment option is only broken up from the single payment into 4 smaller payments and no further.)

## **Section B: Membership Rights**

**Partner** - This allows you \*AND 1 NAMED FAMILY MEMBER to be a capable voting share member in the club. Being a partner, you “may” be asked to help open the building on game days and be a staff organizer of hosted events. Partners can bring as many guests as they please, as often as they want with the intent to try and get them to become a member down the road. Partners are also allowed to store their game collections at the shop while space is available. Participation as a partner for their involvement can be as little or as much as they choose to give to the club. MARCH 2024, a motion was passed that all Partner level memberships will be allowed to hold a key to the building for access without extra cost. Partner memberships are not eligible to receive reward points as stated in the next section for basic members.

**Basic Membership** - This allows you \*AND 1 NAMED FAMILY MEMBER access to the club location during normal operating hours. This level of membership does not have voting rights when it comes to club changes to rules and procedures but will have the chance to voice their opinions on certain changes when it comes to membership pricing. Basic Members are allowed to bring 1 guest a month. If they would like to come more than 1 time, a guest pass would be necessary for additional attendance. Basic members can check out games from the shelves making sure they record it through the club library website. Basic members also are automatically enrolled in the rewards system, which through club participation in outreach events and attendance, members are awarded points with highest points member at the end of a 2-month cycle being allowed to pick an unopened game from our donation shelf. More details can be obtained through a club officer. Basic members must have approval to leave games at the club due to possible shelf space limitations.

**Explanation of 1 named family members** - All plans listed are to be considered “Family” plans that include 1 named family member. This means that every plan consists of its primary account holder and 1 named family member. This would include a spouse, child, sibling, or other immediate family member, preferably living under the same roof as the primary account holder. This does not include “Significant others” or “Longtime boyfriend/girlfriend” who do not live together. ID proof would be appreciated when filling application in which all additions named should also be listed. Age restrictions apply for family member additions, see Article VII, Section C.

**Example of 1 Named Family Member** - If a married couple with no kids would like to become members, they would only need a single Basic Membership level plan for \$125 the 1st year OR a parent and a single named child would also only pay \$125 their 1st year. Any additional children or family members would cost an additional \$25 per year PER named addition.

**Note for New Members** – There is a 3-visit grace period that we ask all members must do to get to know the officers before checking out any games. This is to ensure that someone isn’t becoming a member just to check out a game, then we never hear or see them or the game again. This is flexible based on officers’ discretion.

**Termination of Membership** – If a club member violates any of the following club bylaws, codes of conduct, or there is probable cause that the member should not be associated with Black Swamp Gamers as they may be a danger to our club or its members, that member may be removed from the property and membership revoked by an affirmative vote by two thirds majority of the capable voting shares.

## **ARTICLE III: OFFICERS**

**Section A: Officers** – The officers shall be a Club President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, Event Organizer, and Public Relations (PR) officer.

**Section B: Eligibility** – Officers must have a partner membership status.

**Section C: Election** – The officers shall be elected by ballot, distributed up to 6 months prior to the May officer meeting. Results are a majority of the votes cast for that office by all paid and willing participant club members and appointed board members.

**Section D: Term** – The officers shall serve for one year and their term of office shall begin at the commencement of the May officer meeting. All officer positions can be held for multiple terms until they are voted out of office or choose to resign. Black Swamp Gamers Officer terms run from June 1<sup>st</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Section E: Vacancy** – If a vacancy occurs in the office of Club President, the Vice-President shall assume the office for the remainder of the term and vacancies in any other office shall be filled by a special election (Article V, Sec B).

## ARTICLE IV: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

**Section A: President** – it shall be the duty of the Club President to:

- Preside at monthly officer meetings.
- Represent the club in an appropriate manner.
- Appoint Events Committee chairpersons/members.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.
- Perform other duties as assigned with the assistance of other officers.
- Coordinate with all officers and create officer meeting agenda.
- Votes from President are counted last to break ties.

**Section B: Vice-President** – It shall be the duty of the Vice-President to:

- Preside in the absence of the President.
- Serve as chairperson of the Events Committee.
- Coordinated with other officers to provide help to any officers as needed.
- Keep records of current RPG sessions/groups/campaigns that are utilizing the club space (all DM's, members of each group, general description of their style of game if D&D or other).
- Work with DM's to fill possible open slots with other interested members that are looking to get into role playing games.
- Help get other RPG groups formed on other days that are not currently filled by a group.
- Generate new ideas on how we can get more role players into the club (D&D Adventure league, Other events strictly in RPG gaming, More 1-off sessions, etc.).
- Perform other duties as assigned by club president to assist other officers.

**Section C: Secretary/Treasurer** – It shall be the duty of the Secretary/Treasurer to:

- Record the minutes of all meetings.
- Maintain club's monetary transactions and records, keep an itemized account of all receipts and expenditures for reports as directed.
- Maintain current roster of memberships.
- Receive all funds and process Request for Payment, Deposit Slip, and Officer Signature Forms. This also includes control of the club bank account.
- Perform other duties as assigned by club president to assist other officers.

**Section D: Event Coordinator** – It shall be the duty of the Event Coordinator to:

- Work with the Vice President and Public Relations Officer to organize and plan any events that the club will be involved in such as local retail store events, conventions, public Saturday event at the club, outreach events, etc.
- Act as the point of contact for outreach events alongside the club president.
- Perform other duties as assigned by club president to assist other officers.

**Section E: Public Relations Officer** – It shall be the duty of the PR Officer to:

- Maintain the clubs outward/public facing social media pages when appropriate (Facebook, Intstagram, etc.).
- Create posts of recent news for social media pages, schedule future posts when appropriate for upcoming club events.
- Generate ideas for local marketing, possibly working in tandem with the Event Coordinator.
- Concentrated efforts in networking and community outreach.
- Perform other duties as assigned by club president to assist other officers.

**Section F: Club Librarian** – It shall be the duty of the Club Librarian to:

- Maintain all board game inventory housed within the club location.
- Manage the club library checkout website - ensuring member list is up to date, games are being properly checked out/returned, and that inventory is properly entered into system with all needed information.
- Organize inventory in an appropriate manner with the assistance of club officers to promote clean shelving practices.
- Maintain the "For Sale" shelf as seen fit to promote healthy change of games to sell and trade for members.

**Section G: Future Officer Positions** – The following are position that have been consider but are currently not offered as valid roles to be filled:

- Recruitment Officer – combine PR officer into this role

## ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

**Section A: Meetings** – Monthly Officer meetings shall be held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month to discuss club happenings and ideas. Club-wide “state of the club” meetings are to be held (as necessary) every other quarter during the year, usually in May and November, to discuss larger events, club finances, etc.

**Section B: Special Elections** – Special elections may be called by the President or Vice President to fill a vacant or newly created officer role.

**Section C: Quorum** – A quorum shall consist of at least 4 officers or board members for meetings to be considered valid.

**Section D: Parliamentary Authority** – Officer majority shall govern this club in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws.

**Section E: Board Member (non-officer)** – In addition to officers stated above, other individuals listed in Article VII Section F may attend the officer meetings and are considered part of said officer meeting, allowing them to share ideas and comment on discussions. This role also allows for a right to vote with parliamentary authority. Board members are appointed by the President and Vice President and are to be persons who have a background in the gaming community or feel would provide important knowledge on board games or club functionality related topics. They do not have to be a paying club member to be an appointed board member but if they are not a member, they may not participate in any other club functions and events other than officer meetings.

**Section F: Means of voting** – All votes cast for changes to club functionality and bylaws will be held through a Google Form presenting the participant with a YES/NO option and details on the motion. All votes cast must be done before the next officer meeting in which any open votes will be closed at that time unless specified that voting will end on a specific date. Voting will include all capable voting share officers and board members and in some cases, all club members if a club wide change has been proposed (such as membership price changes). Approved motions will be passed based on majority of participating votes.

## ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES

**Section A: Responsibility** – In the circumstance that a committee is needed to help with the creation or flow of an event or outreach, it will be at the club president’s discretion for any such committee.

**Section B: Membership** – Any created committee shall consist of the officers as listed in Article III and appointed club members.

**Section C: Meetings** – Any created committee shall meet as necessary between monthly officer meetings.

**Section D: Other/Special committees** – Listed are possible committee types that may be needed once the club becomes more established: Marketing, Game Design, Fundraising, etc. When new committees are announced, they will be recognized via the club website as needed. The President shall have the authority to appoint any special committees, with the approval of the officers, from time to time as need demands.

## ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS

**Section A: Bylaw Changes** – These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the partner membership level and appointed board members.

**Section B: Notice** – All Officers & Partner Memberships shall receive notice of the proposed amendment up to a month prior of the next officer meeting in which a majority vote is needed and completed through the google voting form.

**Section C: Age Restriction** – Although we encourage people of all ages to participate in the club and in the board game community, for liability reasons, we ask that all primary account holders are 18 years of age and older. Family member additions may include individuals under 18 years of age but must be accompanied by their parent or guardian.

Remember that if you are bringing your children with you, they may be subjected to conversation that may not be appropriate for their age.

**Section D: Limited Partner Memberships** – As of August 5th 2021, there is no longer a limit on the number of partner memberships allowed for the club.

**Section E: Guest Passes** – Guest passes are available through donation that will allow the presenter of the pass either 2 or 8 days of game play on any publicly accounted member day. A donation of \$5 for each 2 day pass is required and will expire 3 month after being issued if unused. A \$10 donation for each 8 day pass is required and will expire 3 month after being issued if unused. Passes must be approved and dated by an officer before being handed out. If they are received with no signature, date, or approved hole punch, they cannot be accepted. Specialized hole punch for either 2 day or 8 day passes will also be verified. Once a day is used, use the same hole punch to mark how many uses the guest pass card has left which if this is the 1<sup>st</sup> use of the card, lifts is expiration. At the end of the pass, guest may keep it for club information. Guests should be provided all club flyers and detailed information upon entry.

**Section F: Current officers & Board Members** – Current elected & appointed board members as of August 5th 2021 are:

Club President: Anthony Kniss

Club Vice President: Matt Gruenwald

Secretary/Treasurer: Natalie Kniss

Event Coordinator: Kyle Smith

PR Officer: Matt Voyer

Club Librarian: Dan O’Neal

Board Members:

Josh Sapp – Owner of Old School Gaming

Mike Pelton – Original Club Founder

Aimee Gruenwald – Marketing professional

Damon Shiley – Club Member

**Section G: Club Liability Waivers**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK OR INJURY POSSIBILITY** - As a member, volunteer, or guest of the Black Swamp Gamers club and facility, each person recognizes the risk and acknowledges that there are certain risks of physical injury – including death, damages, property damage, or loss

– which said person may sustain as a result of participating in any and all activities connected with Black Swamp Gamers, or the use of the facilities or equipment.

**WAIVER OF CLAIM FOR INJURY CLAUSE** - Members, volunteers, or guests agree to waive and relinquish all claims that they may have for injuries or damages as a result of participating in the club or using the facilities or equipment against Black Swamp Gamers and its officers, agents, servants, employees, other volunteers, and affiliates.

**RELEASE FROM LIABILITY CLAUSE** - Members, volunteers, or guests do hereby release and discharge Black Swamp Gamers and its officers, agents, servants, employees, volunteers and affiliates from any and all claims for injuries, including death, damages, property damage, or loss which may have or may in future accrue to said person in account of participating in or volunteering for Black Swamp Gamers.

**Section H: Fiscal Year for taxes** – Black Swamp Gamers fiscal year begins January 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Section I: Clubhouse Key Holders** –BSG Basic members will have the option for key holder access, if all the following requirements are met:

1) Must have been a member with the club for over 1 year

2) Must have their membership paid in full

3) Must pay a key holder service fee of \$50 (paid annually in addition to their membership payment)

4) and must have been unanimously voted on for approval by BSG officers.

The key holder can use the club at any time they so wish to utilize the club space. Key holder payment will be considered an agreement to the terms listed here of their responsibilities to the contents of the club as well as the people either they are bringing or members/guests that walk in looking for information about the club. Access may not be shared with other members who have not paid for a key unless authorized to do so by an officer. If a member’s key is caught being used by another member, the club officers hold the right to remove the members key holder access with no refund as well as the possible termination of their membership, depending on the severity of the issue. The clubhouse is monitored 24/7 with motion activated cameras. BSG Officers also hold the right provide key holder access to specific RPG game masters to allow their game participants access to the club during non-standard operating hours as stated in Article I, Section F.