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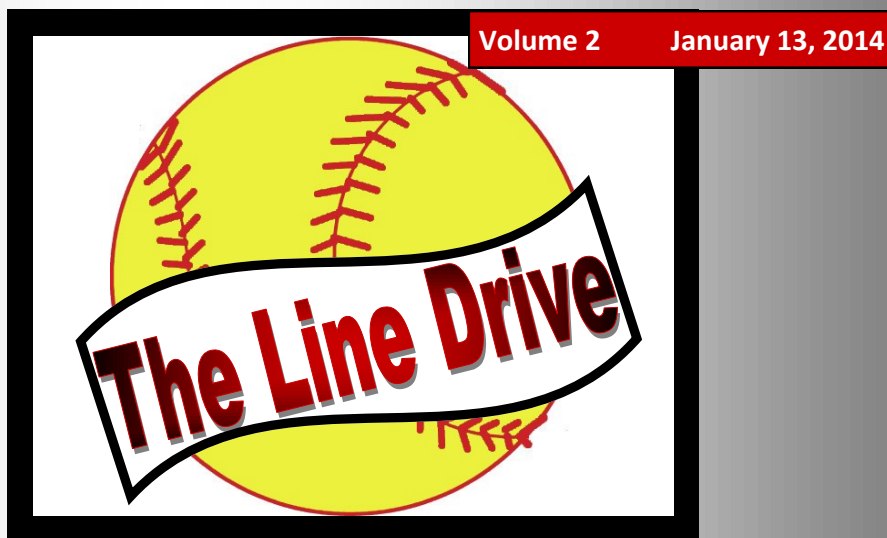
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Greetings from the WFSCA,

We are excited for this year's clinic which will be held at Chula Vista in Wisconsin Dells on February 8-9. We hope the move to the Dells will make our clinic more family friendly. Cindy Suess has once again put together one of the finest clinics in the Midwest, and as a board we want to thank her for all she does.

Illegal pitching and enforcement continues to be a dark cloud that hangs over our sport. John Ruffolo has a great article in this edition of our bulletin and it is a must read. If you have any suggestions on this issue or any other issue please contact your district representative or myself with ideas on how to make softball better in Wisconsin.

The board would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest district representative Tim Whitford from Winneconne. Tim will be serving the Valley/Lakeshore District.

Finally I would like to thank all of our board members for all the hard work they do. We have an executive board that is dedicated to making high school softball in Wisconsin better every day. This board does a great job of promoting softball and creating opportunities for the young ladies that play the game. We will continue to strive for excellence and continue to grow as an organization.

Once again if you have any suggestions we want to hear from you. Contact your district representative or myself with any suggestion on how we can grow as an organization. I look forward to seeing a lot of you at the clinic.

Jeff Hodgson
WFSCA President

Dear Softball Coaches,

Happy New Year to everyone! Softball season is rapidly approaching and the Wisconsin Fastpitch Softball Coaches Association will again sponsor our annual clinic. The clinic has been moved to the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. The 2- day clinic will be held on Saturday, February 8 and Sunday, February 9. The Saturday session will begin with registration at 8:00 a.m. and speaking sessions at 9:00. The Hall of



Fame and Coaches Awards Banquet is at 5:00 p.m. beginning with dinner, which is included in your clinic fee. The coaches' social will follow the banquet at 8:00. Sunday begins with registration at 7:30 a.m. and speaking sessions starting at 8:00. Vendors will be on hand to display the latest softball equipment, uniforms and fundraising opportunities.

The WFSCA Coaches Clinic and membership registration is completely ONLINE. Go to www.wfsc.org to register and pay. **Checks will not be accepted.** Pre-paid debit cards are accepted if you do not have a credit card. Additional information is available on the registration form.

Speakers include: Charlie Green, Milwaukee Brewers Catching Instructor; Margie Wright, Former Fresno State and NFCA Hall of Fame Coach and Carie Dever Boaz, Northwest Mississippi Community College and Mississippi Glory Coach. Carie has also coached at the NCAA Division I level and the National Champion Washington Glory of the NPF. Speaker bios and the clinic agenda can be found online.

Head coaches **MUST** be a current member of the WFSCA for their players to be eligible for All-District and All-State recognition. Seniors are also eligible to be selected for the Senior All-Star games, Team Wisconsin and Academic All-State. Member coaches are awarded Conference Champion, State Tournament and other achievement awards. Please forward this information regarding the clinic and membership to other coaches on your staff. Assistant, youth, summer, and travel coaches are welcome to attend.

The WFSCA website is a valuable resource for information and forms. Go to www.wfsc.org for updated clinic information. Also, use the website to find your conference and district representatives.

Contact the Chula Vista Resort at 855-360-6691 and use the WFSCA Booking Code: C97470 for room reservations for the WFSCA room rates. A standard room with two queen beds is \$109. The Villa Studio with two queen beds, sofa sleeper and kitchenette is \$119. The two bedroom condo with pull-out sofa, two full baths, two person Jacuzzi, full kitchen and living room which sleeps eight is \$229. The three bedroom condo with pull-out sofa, three full baths, four person Jacuzzi, full kitchen and living room which sleeps up to fourteen is \$399. **The WFSCA block will expire Saturday, January 25, at 5:00 p.m.** Prices may change after this date. **Free Chula Vista Resort Indoor Water Park passes are included for everyone so bring your family!**



Please join us for this outstanding clinic. We hope to see you in Wisconsin Dells on February 8 and 9.

Sincerely,

Cindy Suess, *WFSCA Clinic Director*

ON DECK WITH A BOARD MEMBER....



Illegal Pitches

by John Ruffolo, South East District Rep. & Kenosha-Bradford Softball Coach

Illegal pitches have marred recent WIAA State Softball Tournaments – the showcase of our sport. Replants, leaps, illegal release points, and strides outside the pitching lane have occurred with troubling regularity. Some of these illegal pitches have been called by the umpiring crews. Curiously, some have not. But the video doesn't lie.

Enforcement of pitching rules varies greatly. Whereas teaching legal pitching mechanics is the coach's job, enforcement of legal pitching mechanics is the umpire's job. And, to take it a step further, ensuring uniform enforcement of all rules is the responsibility of the WIAA.

Ultimately, the integrity of our game needs to be everyone's concern.

As a coach, it is my professional responsibility to know the pitching rules. This takes minimal effort – simply read the NFHS rulebook. Nearly every year, the WIAA rules meetings and corresponding NFHS illustrations address pitching. We can all access pitching coaches, college coaches, and instructional videos for further education on proper mechanics. YouTube puts us within a few clicks of countless examples of both legal and illegal pitching. Simply put, there is

no excuse for ignorance of the rules – especially by those who are hired to compete within them.

It is my responsibility to train my players to pitch legally. The reality is that illegal pitching habits such as replanting can be difficult to correct, especially when we have limited coaching contact with the athletes. But if my pitcher is pitching illegally, then it is my responsibility to help her fix it. Therein lies the challenge of coaching.

Each of us has been involved in a game where a coach or a fan is wrongly alleging that an opposing pitcher is pitching illegally. If that person is associated with my team, it's my job to set him straight. If one of my parents or any other person associated with my team is barking at the umpires for making a proper illegal pitch call against my team, that too is my responsibility to address.

Inevitably, each coach will face the challenge of how to discuss illegal pitching by an opponent with an umpiring crew. After mishandling this for years, it is now my policy to alert the umpires and then accept their decision to call or not to call the illegal pitch. Harping on the issue is simply a waste of

ON DECK WITH A BOARD MEMBER.....



Illegal Pitches (cont'd)

by John Ruffolo, South East District Rep. & Kenosha-Bradford Softball Coach

time that robs my players of their focus.

But this raises an important question: Why are umpires – even those selected to call state tournament games – frequently unwilling to call illegal pitches? I can only speculate. But one reason seems to be that they are hoping to take the path of least resistance. Once an illegal pitch is called, that umpire is likely to deal with at least one angry party: the player, the coach, the pitcher's parents, the fans. It would be easier to turn a blind eye and hope it goes unnoticed.

Another reason umpires may not call illegal pitches is due to a lack of knowledge of the rules. For instance, how many fastpitch softball umpires in our state are “baseball guys” who only have a passing knowledge of fastpitch softball rules? Furthermore, windmill pitching is “technical,” and some umpires frankly may not know the rules as well as they should. However, there is no excuse for ignorance of the rules – especially by those who are hired to enforce them.

Finally, variances in the pitching rules of governing bodies could be a cause for lack of umpire enforcement. NFHS, NCAA, and ASA pitching rules are not identical. And there are few rules remaining in men's fastpitch.

These variations pose a special challenge to umpires, but they do not excuse them from proper enforcement during high school games.

Too often, we hear a coach say after an illegal pitch call “She hasn't been called for that all year.” The odds are that this is not the first time this pitcher has pitched illegally. This just brings to light a failure of the player's coaches to teach proper mechanics and a failure of previous umpires to make the right call.

And what is the WIAA's role in this? As the governing body of our sport, they bear the responsibility to provide umpire education that will lead to proper enforcement of the rules. As the WIAA Constitution states, its purpose is “to promote uniformity of standards in interscholastic athletic competition.” In fastpitch softball, there is no issue more in need of “uniformity of standards” than the enforcement of the pitching rules.

Maybe 2014 will be the year when there is no illegal pitching controversy at the WIAA State Softball Tournament. Probably not. But if that is ever going to occur, it will take the collective effort of everyone involved to preserve the integrity of our game.

ON DECK WITH A BOARD MEMBER....



Softball Fundraising



Fundraising: A Necessary Evil

by Jeff Agnew, South Central District Rep. & Fort Atkinson Softball Coach

I remember how it was 20 years ago. Our high school softball budget could cover all of the programs needs.

The 1994 softball supplies budget was larger than it is today and the dollar back then had the same buying power as \$1.60 does today. I should not even mention that I spent \$60 on the best fastpitch bat available. Those were the days of an 18-game regular season.

Boy, times have changed. We now play a 26-game regular season and the hot new bat costs \$300. Yet our high school supply budget has been frozen for the past 20 years. A few years ago every program had to pledge 10% of their budget to the general fund. Today's softball budget covers umpires, non-charter buses, softballs and scorebooks. All other expenses including tournament fees, charter buses, new equipment, nets, tees, pitching machines, jackets, field improvements, clinic fees, player awards and everything else must come from outside sources.

We are very fortunate to have an athletic booster club that has consistently helped our program with some of our needs. Our softball program's fundraising has increased from \$1,000 in 1999 to a projected \$7,500 profit in 2013. At our school, clubs and athletics are allowed one fundraiser per year. The original fundraiser (a pizza sale) just cannot cut it for us anymore.

I have met with the fundraising companies and have heard all of their sales pitches. I did like the coupon books (our football team sells a Gold Card in the fall), but I wanted a higher profit margin and a lower product cost. So we've joined forces with our baseball program and solicited 10 area businesses to provide coupons and cover the cost of printing 1,500 booklets that we would sell for \$10 each. We held our printing costs to a minimum by working with our local printer at W.D. Hoard and Sons Company. The booklets were a huge success and we were

ON DECK WITH A BOARD MEMBER....



Fundraising: A Necessary Evil (cont'd)

by Jeff Agnew, South Central District Rep. & Fort Atkinson Softball Coach

able to cover our added costs for the season and print a sponsors poster for advertising. We plan on increasing our sales this coming season.

This new fundraiser worked in the Fort Atkinson community and something similar may work for your softball program. Here are a few guidelines for creating your own program's successful fundraiser:

1. Set a fundraising goal to achieve (example: 30 players x \$100 profit = \$3,000).
2. Approve your fundraiser with your school district administration.
3. Make your fundraising goals clear to all of your athletes and their parents.



4. Maximize your profit margin (example: 40 percent or more).
5. Keep it simple (one sale, one due date, maybe one day). Your fundraiser should not get in the way of your first goal: suc-

cess on the field.

6. Know your community. Create a need/want for your customers to support the fundraiser.
7. Do not duplicate another school program's fundraiser (Our FFA chapter profits \$25,000 a year with a holiday fruit sale, our football team sells the Gold Card and profits \$15,000 a year, our soccer team has a car wash and makes \$5,000 in a single day).
8. Make sure that the income produced is used to benefit your program that same year. Do not sit on proceeds earned by players today. It was their fundraiser and they deserve to reap the program's rewards.

**DO NOT
DUPLICATE**



**Softball
Fundraising**



FINAL INNING.....

IMPORTANT DATES

- ➔ February 8-9 (*Sat-Sun*): Coaches Clinic
- ➔ March 17: First Day of Practice
- ➔ May 25: Earliest Game
- ➔ May 27, 29: D-1 Regionals
- ➔ May 22, 27, 29: D-2, D-3, D-4 Regionals
- ➔ June 3, 5: Sectionals
- ➔ June 12-14: State Tournament

