

ARAA Fastpitch Softball Handbook



Last Revised February 18, 2019

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Program Philosophy

The ARAA Fastpitch program strives to provide a positive opportunity for every eligible girl in the Anoka/Ramsey area to play fastpitch according to their ability; no matter what skill level they possess. ARAA will deliver a structured, enjoyable, and learned softball experience. ARAA Fastpitch promotes teamwork, sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and respect.

Program Goal

ARAA Fastpitch is part of Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association, a non-profit, volunteer organization which provides athletic programs to the children in and around the cities of Anoka and Ramsey. Each year our programs continue to grow and we continue to look for more opportunities for the youth in this area. Our mission is to offer a program that is available to all who want to play fastpitch that teaches fastpitch skills, builds self-confidence and teaches the benefit of team work.

Softball Board

Board of Directors

The ARAA Fastpitch Softball Association Board of Directors shall consist of nine people who will serve as elected officers. Each member of the Board of Directors will serve for two years with elections taking place in September of the last year of service. This allows for overlap and training between the departing and incoming officers. To resign, an officer shall submit their resignation in writing to the Secretary, who shall present it to the Board for action. Vacancies will be filled by the verbal recommendation of one officer, seconded by another officer, and a majority vote of the Board.

Elected Officers

The Officers of the Association shall be a Commissioner (who is elected by the ARAA membership), 12U/14U/16U Director, 6U/8U/10U Director, Secretary, Treasurer, Tournament Director, Communications/Sponsorship Director, Uniforms/Volunteer Director, and Field/Umps/Equipment Director. Officers shall be elected from the fastpitch membership (i.e. any parent or guardian of a fastpitch player who has attended six meetings in the twelve months immediately preceding the election). The term of office shall be two years unless the office was vacant. There will be no term limits and officers and coordinators may hold more than one position if no other volunteers are available. Elections for 6U/8U/10U Director, Secretary, Uniforms/Volunteer Director, and Field/Umps/Equipment Director are held in even number years in September and their term of office begins in October. Elections for 12U/14U/16U Director, Treasurer, Communications/Sponsorship Director, and Tournament Director are held in odd years. Any vacancy because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise will be filled by the verbal recommendation of one officer, seconded by another officer, and a majority vote of the Board.

Organization Officers

Softball Commissioner will supervise all business and affairs of the organization; preside at all meetings of the membership and the Board of Directors; sign all official documents of the organization; appoint committees as needed; serve as ex-official member of all committees; co-approve all expenditures prior to funds being issued; and act as co-

chairperson of Travel Team Selection Committee and Coaches Selection Committee. The Uniform/Volunteer Director will report to and work with the Commissioner to order all ARAA uniforms.

Treasurer shall have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the organization; receive and give receipts for money due and payable to the organization from any source and deposit all money in the name of the organization in the bank of choice of the ARAA Board; shall co-approve all expenditures prior to funds being issued; shall maintain all appropriate books and reports; and shall, upon completion of duties, deliver all receipts, books, and reports to the newly elected Treasurer. The out-going Treasurer will conduct, with the ARAA Executive Board Treasurer, a financial audit of the fastpitch account.

Secretary will take the minutes of full board meetings and will record and provide copies to Officers.

12U-16U Director (Director I) will manage teams playing at all levels. Director I will be the main contact for coaches at these levels and will attend all league meetings. Director I will oversee team formation and coach selection. The Player/Coach Development, and the Assessment Coordinator will report to Director I.

6U/8U/10U Director (Director II) will manage teams playing 6U, 8U, and 10U level. Director II will be the main contact for coaches at these levels and will attend all league meetings. Director II will place all registered players on teams and assign coaches. This position reports to Director I.

Tournament Director will lead our annual fundraising event, the Dirt Devil Tournament. He/She will secure all people necessary to host a tournament including but not limited to: security, concessions, field maintenance, vendors, sponsors and umpires. This position chairs the Dirt Devil Committee.

Volunteer/Uniform Director will manage volunteer hours and DIBS, will work with volunteers on assigned duties. VUD is responsible for sourcing uniforms, obtaining bids, design, and submitting to board for final approval. VUD is responsible for uniform fittings and delivery. This position reports to the Commissioner.

Fields/Umps/Equipment Director will work with Anoka and Ramsey Parks departments to insure that fields are in good condition and are prepped for games. The Field/Ump/Equipment Director will be the point of contact for coaches with concerns about field conditions, field schedules for games, and rescheduling of games. The Field/Ump/Equipment Director will work with head umpire to schedule all regular season games as well as make up games. The Field/Ump/Equipment Director will also coordinate the maintenance, distribution, and collection of equipment to identify replacement and/or additional equipment purchases.

Communications/Sponsorship Director will manage website and social media, prepare quarterly newsletter and send association emails. Will procure sponsors for Teams, Dirt Devil, and Winter Clinics. Communications/Sponsorship Director will report to the Commissioner.

Removal

An Officer may be removed from the Board of Directors and forfeit their position for failing to carry out expected duties, or conduct detrimental to ARAA and/or the ARAA Fastpitch Softball Program. To remove an Officer, a written complaint must be presented to the Board in advance of the meeting. A vote of seventy-five (75%) of all Officers is required for dismissal of an Officer. A replacement for the removed Officer may be elected by a majority vote at this or any other subsequent Board meeting. Three consecutive absences from scheduled Board Meetings could result in an inquiry which could result in removal from the Board.

Coordinators

Current non-voting coordinator positions are: Player Development, Assessment/Dome Ball, Fundraising, and Registration. At the discretion of the Board, two (2) or more individuals may act as co-coordinators. The Board may add or remove coordinator positions as deemed necessary. A coordinator may be removed, with or without cause, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board Members present at a duly held meeting; provided that not less than five (5) days and not more than thirty (30) days' notice of such meeting stating that removal of such coordinator is to be on the agenda for such meeting shall be given to each Board Member.

Player Development will establish and coordinate skills and specialty clinics, secure clinic coaches, and work with the Communication Director to communicate information to families.

Assessment/Dome/Registration will coordinate assessments, establish assessment scoring/ranking, secure assessors and venue, form Dome Ball teams, complete Dome Ball registration, coordinate season registration, collaborate with ARAA Grant in Aid coordinator, field calls and emails from registering families, and work with the Communication Director to communicate information to families.

Coach Development will establish coaches training and serve as a resource for coaches.

Meetings

The Board meets once a month. For the 2019 calendar year meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month in the first and fourth quarter, and the second Sunday of the month in the second and third quarters with time to be determined. This time is adjusted during the playing season to accommodate coaches and parents. The time and date will be communicated via email to all members and posted on the ARAA Fastpitch website for the public. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Board Members and is required to bring a meeting to order. All Board Meetings shall be open to the public.

Committees

The Commissioner may appoint committees. Members do not need to be a member of the Board. Each committee shall have a chairperson to report activities to the Board as required.

Volunteer Hours

Due to the work performed all year long behind the scenes, all officers and coordinators are considered exempt from the mandated volunteer hours.

Voting Rights

Each Officer has one vote. All votes to elect or remove Officers will be by ballot. The Commissioner, as a member of the Board, has the same voting rights as other Officers. A parent or guardian of a player who has attended six meetings in the twelve months immediately preceding an election may vote on the election of Officers. If a co-Officer position exists they share a single vote.

Risk Disclosure Statement

All Board Members, Coaches, Assistant Coaches and others, as deemed necessary, will comply with the Risk Disclosure Policy as set by ARAA Board of Directors.

Prohibition against sharing in Association Earnings

No Member, Officer, Employee, member of a committee, or any person, shall receive any of the net earnings or pecuniary profit from the operation of the Association, provided that this provision shall not prevent the payment of reasonable compensation for services rendered to, or for, the Association. No such person or persons shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the Association assets upon the dissolution of the Association. All members of the Association shall be deemed to have expressly consented and agreed that upon such dissolution, voluntary or involuntary, any remaining assets after all debts have been satisfied will be transferred exclusively to a charitable, scientific, literary, or educational organization qualified under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Changes

This Handbook may be changed at any regular meeting by a majority vote. The proposed change should be submitted in writing to the Secretary for addition to the agenda. The title page of the Handbook will give the most recent revision date. The proposed change shall be discussed and appropriate action taken, a majority vote is required by eligible voting members present at the meeting. A log of revisions will be maintained.

Website

ARAA Fastpitch maintains a website at www.arsports.org. The league uses this website to keep a calendar of games and practices and inform the public about upcoming events. Viewers can also find contact information for Officers and Coordinators, register for fastpitch, download forms, and view team information once loaded. The website is considered the main method of dissemination of information regarding the fastpitch program.

Registration

Announcements about upcoming registrations are posted on www.arsports.org, flyers are sent to area schools and signs are posted in both Anoka and Ramsey. Registration for all ARAA Fastpitch teams opens January 1st, with assessments for all teams 10U and higher will occur no later than early March. Registration closes for all teams end of February. This allows time for teams to be formed, uniforms to be ordered, and field needs to be assessed prior to the start of the season. Registration for fall ball and dome ball will be communicated online and through coaches.

On-line credit/debit payments or pay pal payments are the only registration options available. Volunteer deposits are made online during the Registration process. You may make a single registration payment or participate in a payment plan, convenience charges will apply.

NGIN

ARAA Fastpitch uses a platform for electronic registration called NGIN (pronounced Engine). You only need to sign up once and it will store your personal information for easy registration every year. Please remember to keep your user name and password information as we cannot get your password for you. Using an email address that you check regularly will help us keep you informed of the latest fastpitch information through email blasts. Logging into www.arsports.org with your NGIN user name and password will also allow you to sign up for volunteer hours through DIBS and personalize your calendar view.

Past Due Accounts

Please contact the Treasurer to find out if you have any outstanding balances owed for prior seasons. If you have a past due balance from a previous fastpitch season registration may be completed and payment for the current season will be accepted but your child will not be placed on a team until the past due balance is paid. If the past due balance is not paid by the beginning of the current season the payment received for the current season will be applied to the past due balance. Any remaining funds will be returned to the registrant and the child will not be placed on a team. You may not register for other ARAA sports if you have an outstanding balance with AR fastpitch.

Financial Aid

ARAA's annual sponsorship drive includes a Grant-in-Aid fund. Local businesses can choose to contribute to our Grant-in-Aid fund instead of putting money towards an individual sport. These dollars are then used to assist families in paying the registration fees for sports. Applications for Grant-in-Aid can be found at www.arsports.org on the forms page of the softball section. This form is turned into the Softball Commissioner and is reviewed by the ARAA Executive Board.

Refunds

If a player chooses to leave the program prior to the start of the season a partial refund may be made. If the uniform has already been ordered, the uniform will be delivered to the player and the cost will be deducted from the portion of fees being returned. Refunds for registration after the season starts are considered on a case-by-case basis. Refunds may be pro-rated or denied depending on time spent in the program. Any refund is subject to a fee of 50% of registration cost, please contact the Treasurer for more information.

Uniforms

All registration costs include a uniform. Players in the 6U and 8U programs will get a shirt and socks and are not required to be fitted. You can select a shirt and sock size during registration. Players 10U and older are provided with a full fastpitch uniform and must be fitted prior to uniforms being ordered. If, for any reason, a player is not sized, ARAA will not guarantee the uniform fit. Families would have to re-order from our vendor at their own expense. ARAA Fastpitch covers pieces that need to be re-ordered due to our error. If a uniform fitting is attended, but the uniform does not fit upon receipt, please contact the uniform coordinator ASAP. Uniform shirts are custom made and cannot be returned for another size. The dates for fittings will be included on registration flyers and posted on the website. Only association issued uniforms are allowed to be worn during games. Unauthorized alterations to the uniform are not allowed.

Required Equipment

Players will need to provide their own fielding glove and batting helmet with cage at all levels. They may also want to purchase their own bat (no bats are provided), cleats, batting gloves and defensive mask. Each coach will give you recommendations at the beginning of the year. Matching batting helmets are strongly encouraged for teams playing on ARAA Fastpitch teams. Helmets are available for purchase at the beginning of each season.

Program Information

6U and 8U Teams –

This level is the core and foundation of our softball program. This level will provide a program for girls to have fun while building skills. Everyone who signs up to play by the registration deadline will be guaranteed a place on a team.

Registered players are first sorted by age group; then teams of a predetermined size are created. 6U/8U teams do not use assessments in team formation. Once the rosters are set and delivered to the coaches, it is up to the parent and coaches if changes from team to team need to be made. Parents are reminded to make any special requests for ride sharing or playing with friends at the time of registration. Requests cannot be guaranteed but do have priority. 6U/8U players may make requests to the Director II to play up (players may never play down to a lower age bracket). Consideration is made for team sizes, coaching and pitchers and catchers.

6U Girls must be age 5 by May 1st of the playing season to be eligible. 6U is a coach pitch league, but tee's can be used for girls that are having a hard time hitting a pitched ball. This is a success based program, scores are not kept and all kids will bat. Coaching staff consists of a Head Coach, Assistant Coach, and 2nd Assistant (Bench Coach). 6U plays Monday and Wednesday nights and each team will be assigned a home field at the beginning of the season. Games will be played against other ARAA Fastpitch teams of the same age level and against teams from neighboring communities. ARAA tries to keep the majority of 6U games at our home fields but some away games should be expected. Practices may start as early as April, and games usually start in May and run through the end of July. There is one game and one practice per week. Full league rules are provided to the head coach with team roster information.

8U Pitching is determined based on the league that ARAA joins each year. Girls may have coach pitch, machine pitch, or kid pitch with coach assistance. Coaches will teach pitching fundamentals during practice. Coaching staff consists of a Head Coach, Assistant Coach, and 2nd Assistant (Bench Coach). 8U plays Monday and Wednesday nights and each team will be assigned a home field at the beginning of the season. Games will be played against other ARAA Fastpitch teams of the same age level and against teams from neighboring communities. ARAA tries to schedule the majority of 8U games at home fields but some away games should be expected. Practices may start as early as April, and games usually start in May and run through the end of July. There is one game and one practice per week. Full league rules are provided to the head coach with team roster information.

10U - 16U Teams

This level requires a larger time commitment from both players and their parents. Focus is on player development and fielding the most competitive team possible. The goal of AR Fastpitch is to field an A team at each age. Teams at all age levels play in the Big West League against other teams of similar skill level in the Twin Cities area. Away games may be

played at fields an hour or more away. Games and practices will be scheduled twice a week either Mon/Wed or Tues/Thursday. Leagues do not solidify which teams play which days until April prior to the season start. Double header games start mid-May and run through the end of June. Additional practices may be set by coaches.

Playing Up: ARAA Fastpitch strongly believes that the best team at each age group should be put on the field and this team when possible should play at the highest level.

Players must have board approval before assessments to be allowed to assess at a higher level. If a player tries out for the next age level and is not selected for the A team they will be ranked in order and placed on the appropriate team at the higher age level. A player may not move back down to their age group which would displace a girl offered a spot on an A or B team. In the event that there are not enough girls in a given age group to form a full team the criteria does not apply. Girls in 14U and older are in open divisions, no board approval is needed for a player to assess.

Assessments: Assessments at all levels will be scored by independent evaluators when possible. For whatever reason if independent evaluators are not used, assessments will be done by past and/or current travel coaches. A coach cannot assess players at a level he/she has applied for or intends to coach that season. The Assessment Coordinator will provide a process, scoring guideline, and score sheet for graded drills. Grading will be applied to demonstration of skills, situational awareness, and overall athletic ability. All players will be ranked according to their total score for team selection.

Team Selection: The coach named to the top team at each age group will select the amount of girls he or she has decided to take (ideal number is 11) from the ranked graded scores. A coach can take into account past performance, attitude, and/or dedication to off season work so that player can be moved up and take the bottom spot of the roster. Pulling up multiple players is discouraged unless they are fulfilling the need for specialty positions. The coach named to the 2nd team at the age group will apply the same format to fill his/her team. In the event that a pitcher or catcher occupies the bottom spot, the next player above that specialty player would be bumped for the girl being selected. Pitchers and catchers could be asked to play on a different team to increase play time and/or fill a need. Team placement is not guaranteed.

Once teams are decided by the coaches, they will be reviewed by the Team Selection Committee which currently consists of Commissioner, Assessment Coordinator, Directors I and Directors II. If a selected coach currently serves in one of these positions, they will be removed as part of the team selection committee for the age group in which they are coaching and act specifically as a coach. Any deviation from the selection process above will need to be approved by the team selection committee. Rosters will be posted online within 24 hours of team finalization, and coaches will be asked to reach out to players within 48 hours. Placement on a team is not guaranteed.

Playing Time: Playing time will be determined based on performance, participation in off-season clinics/dome ball and team needs. Over the course of the season, coaches will ensure that each player gets ample playing time to foster player development although positions played may not necessarily be at the player's or parents' desired position. As the season progresses, players will be placed in positions that make the team the most competitive. At the older age levels (typically 12U and above), certain tournaments require the coach to follow rules that limit the number of batters to 9 with substitutions allowed. This is common within the "A" brackets of weekend tournaments, state qualifier and state tournament. Please be

aware that the coach is following the rules of the tournament and therefore playing time will be impacted. Coaches will notify parents and players if they are playing under these rules so that everyone can be prepared.

Tournaments: Teams participate in up to three weekend tournaments during the summer season. In addition, teams will participate in state qualifiers as scheduled by Big West League. If the team qualifies, a state and/or national tournament could be a possibility as well. Teams may choose to participate in additional tournaments at their own expense. ARAA Fastpitch requires that coaches do not schedule tournaments on the weekend of the Dirt Devil.

Waivers

ARAA complies with any and all league rules regarding player eligibility. Age divisions 14U and older, or girls age 13 or older as of December 31st prior to the start of summer season, are open divisions and no permission is needed to play up in age level, or play for another organization. Age divisions 12U and younger, or girls age 12 or younger as of December 31st prior to the start of summer season, are closed and must receive a waiver from their home organization before being selected for a team elsewhere. Waivers into ARAA Fastpitch must comply with league rules and receive board approval before assessments. Players without waivers from their home organizations will not be allowed to try out. ARAA eligible players who wish to receive a waiver out to another organization must seek board approval before assessments.

Coach Selection

Coaches for 6U and 8U teams are selected based on parent request during registration process. If there are not enough coaches for the teams at a particular age group team formation will not be completed until additional coaches can be found from emails to parents. If there are more coaches than spots available, the coach with more experience will be given the position. ARAA Fastpitch has a mandatory coaches training session with equipment hand-out. Mentoring for new coaches will be made available from seasoned coaches.

Coaches for 10U – 16U teams must fill out an application each year. Coaching selection is based on experience and is made by the Commissioner and Director 1. If necessary, information can be brought to the entire board in closed session. The designation of level of play is not made until teams are formed, coaches are selected and player strength has been assessed.

Volunteer Requirements

Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association is a community organization run entirely by volunteers. Each player is required to have a parent or guardian work a designated amount of hours each season. A 14U or 16U player may be allowed to work their own hours if pre-approved by the Volunteer Coordinator. If a family has more than 2 players, there is a cap of hours. Most, if not all, volunteer time is needed at the Dirt Devil Tournament. When working your hours, you cannot have any children with you that need your immediate attention or care. The Tournament Director or Volunteer Coordinator have the right to send you home and not validate your hours. This is our weekend to work together and bond raising money to keep the fields upgraded and to purchase the necessary equipment for the organization. Teams are not to schedule tournaments on Dirt Devil Weekend.

The Tournament Director and the Volunteer Coordinator will not offer any volunteer hours until the Dirt Devil Tournament is filled first. Each team will be given three volunteer credits for their Head Coach and up to two assistants. A team manager/parent can be included in the three credits provided to a team but this role is not given a stand-alone credit. Assigned head coaches will be responsible for providing the names of assistants to the Volunteer Coordinator after the team selection process is complete.

As mentioned earlier, all officers and coordinators of the Anoka Ramsey Fastpitch Board are exempt from the mandated volunteer requirements.

Bond Options:

- **OPTION #1:** Buy-out*. By selecting this option the family understands that their check will be cashed upon receipt and they are under no obligation to fulfill any volunteer hours during the current softball season.
- **OPTION #2:** Bond charge*. By selecting this option, the family understands that their credit card will be charged a non-refundable \$1.00 at the time of registration. If they do not complete the volunteer requirement by September 30th of the calendar year, a fee (determined by the board each year) will be charged to the credit card on file.

Volunteer hours must be filled from posted opportunities found through the ARAA website under the “Dibs” section. If any family wishes to fulfill their requirements outside of these posted opportunities, the request must be presented and approved by the board prior to the date of the event. The board reserves the right to refuse such requests on the basis of the benefit to the organization.

Revision Log

Date	Revision
10/17/2014	New Handbook
	2015/2016 Edits to volunteer and playing up sections, readjustment of page numbers...etc.
3/25/2016	Under Registration/Refund "Any refund is subject to a fee of 50% of registration cost, please contact the Treasurer for more information," added per March 2016 Board Mtg and April 2016 Board approval
1/10/2017	Northstar Program and References removed; Northstar, 6U/8U, Website, and Advertising/Sponsorship Coordinator positions removed; Communications Coordinator position added; "The Board meets once a month, typically the 3 rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm," changed to, "The Board meets once a month, typically the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 8:30pm."; "Due to the work performed all year long behind the scenes, all officers and coordinators are considered exempt from the mandated volunteer hours," added; "Coaching staff includes a Head Coach, Assistant Coach, 2 nd Assistant Coach and Team Manager," changed to, "Coaching staff includes a Head Coach, Assistant Coach, and either a 2 nd Assistant Coach or a Team Manager."; Bond Option #2 bond check process replaced with bond charge process.
2/21/2017	Suburban League changed to Big West League
11/30/2017	Elected Officer changes; Travel Director changed to 12U-16U Director, Rec Director changed to 6U-10U Director, Volunteer/Uniform Director definition, Communication/Sponsorship Director definition. Program changes; Rec Program changes to 6U-8U Program, deleted 10U-14U C, Travel A & B changed to 10U-16U.
2/18/2019	Page 3: Revision of Field/Ump Director to Field/Ump/Equipment Director Page 4: Merge of Equipment Coordinator with Field/Ump Director Page 5: Addition of Registration Coordinator and Dome Ball to Assessment Coordinator along with definition of Coordinators roles. Revision of anticipated 2019 meeting dates.