

LAKEERS

S O F T B A L L

PL

2024
KICKOFF
MEETING



2024 KICKOFF MEETING AGENDA

- Introduction to PL Staff & Captains
- Purpose, Mission, & Philosophies
- Tryout Information & Expectations
- Practice & Game Uniform Information
- Practice Schedules & Spring Break
- PL Softball Handbook – Parents & Players
- Miscellaneous
- Closing



SOFTBALL

2024 PL SOFTBALL STAFF

VARSITY COACHING STAFF

HEAD COACH	Erika Smyth	softball.plhs@gmail.com
ASSISTANT COACH	Brooke Otterstatter	softball.plhs@gmail.com
ASSISTANT COACH	Taylor Elasky	telasky28@gmail.com

JUNIOR VARSITY COACHING STAFF

HEAD COACH	Jon Tolbert	jtolbert@plsas.org
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10TH GRADE/B-SQUAD COACHING STAFF

HEAD COACH	Katie Koren	kkoren@plsas.org
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9TH GRADE COACHING STAFF

HEAD COACH	Beth Fuller	bfuller@plsas.org
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2024 PL CAPTAINS

2024 PRIOR LAKE SOFTBALL CAPTAINS		
Courtney Hennen	952-240-0710	courtneylhen@icloud.com
Jenna Ulin	952-290-3579	jennaulin13@gmail.com
Lauren Thurk	612-790-1921	laurenthurk@gmail.com

- If players have not done so already, please make sure to contact a PL softball captain to get into the PLHS Softball GroupMe for any important updates.
- Captains Practices: We have two final Captains Practices – please make sure to attend these as it is the best way to prepare for tryouts.
 - Monday nights from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM in the Activities Center
 - Last two sessions: 2/26 & 3/4



PURPOSE & MISSION

2024 PL SOFTBALL PHILOSOPHIES



- **PURPOSE:** To help navigate student-athletes unlock their potential in both sport and life in a way that inspires and demonstrates empathy, authenticity, and hardwork.
- **MISSION:** To create and maintain a positive softball environment that encourages teamwork & development mentally, physically, and academically.
- **PHILOSOPHY:** Our coaching staff will always prioritize building outstanding people first and foremost.
 - We will be honest and build relationships through positive leadership.
 - We will create an open line of communication between staff, athletes, and families.
 - We will teach the highest level of softball knowledge, fundamentals, and strategies.

2024 PLGSB TRYOUTS

WHAT TO EXPECT & WHAT TO GET DONE



All athletes must have the following documents in the Activities Office before our first tryout date. Failure to do so will result in the player not being able to participate.

- 1. Current athletic physical**
 - 2. Completed health questionnaire**
 - 3. Signed MSHSL eligibility statement**
 - 4. Athletic fee paid or arrangements made**
- Tryouts are open to all positions 8th grade – 12th grade. 7th grade players are welcome to tryout if they are pitchers or catchers – email hpierson@plsas.org
 - We will open tryouts to all 7th graders if registration shows that we have a need for additional players – our goal is to limit cuts in our program and reserve spots for those who tryout at the older ages.

2024 PLGSB TRYOUTS

WHAT TO EXPECT CONTINUED



- Tryouts begin on Monday, March 11th from 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM in the AC.
 - Check-in begins ASAP.
 - Roster formation & cuts (if necessary) will be on Thursday, 5/14.
 - Some athletes will be placed on lower-level teams with opportunity to join Varsity.
- Please register ASAP as we will be sending a player survey over to get important information for each player before tryouts begin.
- **T-Shirt Colors for Tryouts** – the following age groups will need to wear these colored t-shirts for each day of tryouts:
 - 7th Grade: Gray
 - 8th Grade: Navy
 - 9th Grade: White
 - 10th Grade: Yellow
 - 11th Grade: Black
 - 12th Grade: Pink

PRACTICE/GAME UNI'S

NECESSARY UNIFORM ITEMS



NECESSARY GAME UNIFORM ITEMS:

- **Navy & White:** Socks, Belts, Softball Pants, Undersleeves
- **Navy** WristCoaches Wrist Band – Amazon WristCoaches Football Play Wristbands
- **White** Helmet – Navy/White helmets are grandfathered in

***Prior Lake Softball uniforms are to be tucked in and worn as intended during games.**

NECESSARY PRACTICE UNIFORM ITEMS:

- **NO** Club Softball or outside Prior Lake Apparel Allowed (Softball Bags OK)
- PL Gear or PL Colors **ONLY**:
 - Navy, Gold/Yellow, White, Gray, etc.
 - Special game day PL shirts
 - Black Pants Allowed
- T-Shirts, Softball Pants, & Socks Required, unless stated otherwise.

BRAND NEW JERSEYS!

COURTESY OF PL SOFTBALL BOOSTERS



We are proud to announce we will be getting another set of brand-new uniforms! This will be for our ENTIRE organization at all four levels. Boosters will be purchasing new uniforms for each athlete in our program as well as matching stirrups.



Navy & White
Stripe Stirrups



PRACTICE & GAME SCHEDULES

2024 PL SOFTBALL PRACTICE SCHEDULE:

- **Days:** Monday – Friday (Non-Game Days)
- **Times:** 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM
- **Location:** PLHS Activities Center & Daggit Field/JV Field
 - Times remain the same on early release dates unless otherwise notified.
 - Spring Break practice times will be taking place in the morning – times are TBD.

There will be days where teams will practice together, especially inside, but once we are outside and games begin we typically practice separately.

2024 PL SOFTBALL GAME SCHEDULES:

- All games will continue to get updates on South Suburban Conference Website – southsuburbanconference.org
- All levels of games are up to date online – 9th & 10th Grade games may have to be adjusted in the case that a team is unable to be formed from other schools.

	
 BURNSVILLE TUESDAY, 4/8 - 4:30 PM BURNSVILLE HS - BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA	 LAKEVILLE NORTH WEDNESDAY, 5/1 - 4:30 PM LAKEVILLE NORTH HS - LAKEVILLE, MINNESOTA
 ROSEMOUNT WEDNESDAY, 4/10 - 4:30 PM ROSEMOUNT HS - ROSEMOUNT, MINNESOTA	 BURNSVILLE FRIDAY, 5/3 - 4:30 PM PRIOR LAKE HS - SAVAGE, MINNESOTA
 LAKEVILLE SOUTH SATURDAY, 4/13 - 12:00 PM & 2:00 PM PRIOR LAKE HS - SAVAGE, MINNESOTA	 ROSEMOUNT MONDAY, 5/6 - 4:30 PM PRIOR LAKE HS - SAVAGE, MINNESOTA
 EASTVIEW WEDNESDAY, 4/17 - 4:30 PM PRIOR LAKE HS - SAVAGE, MINNESOTA	 EASTVIEW WEDNESDAY, 5/8 - 4:30 PM EASTVIEW HS - APPLE VALLEY, MINNESOTA
 APPLE VALLEY FRIDAY, 4/19 - 4:30 PM APPLE VALLEY HS - APPLE VALLEY, MINNESOTA	 APPLE VALLEY FRIDAY, 5/10 - 7:00 PM PONDS COMPLEX - PRIOR LAKE, MINNESOTA
 EAGAN MONDAY, 4/22 - 4:30 PM EAGAN HS - EAGAN, MINNESOTA	 MINNETONKA SATURDAY, 5/11 - 6:00 PM UNIV. OF MINNESOTA - DINKYTOWN, MINNESOTA
 FARMINGTON WEDNESDAY, 4/24 - 4:30 PM PRIOR LAKE HS - SAVAGE, MINNESOTA	 EAGAN MONDAY, 5/13 - 4:30 PM PRIOR LAKE HS - SAVAGE, MINNESOTA
 CHANHASSEN THURSDAY, 4/25 - 7:00 PM CHANHASSEN HS - CHANHASSEN, MINNESOTA	 FARMINGTON WEDNESDAY, 5/15 - 4:30 PM FARMINGTON HS - FARMINGTON, MINNESOTA
 SHAKOPEE SATURDAY, 4/27 - 12:00 PM & 2:00 PM SHAKOPEE WEST MS - SHAKOPEE, MINNESOTA	 FOREST LAKE FRIDAY, 5/17 - 7:00 PM PONDS COMPLEX - PRIOR LAKE, MINNESOTA

2024 SPRING BREAK

INFORMATION & PHILOSOPHY



Spring Break is an important time for coaches to get to know players, their positions, potential batting order, and equipment handout. We need athletes to be physically ready to start the season.

Varsity ONLY: If a player misses a mandatory practice over Spring Break, that player will sit one Varsity game for each practice missed.

- Athletes are excused from Spring Break practices and will not face loss of game eligibility if the absence is due to a Faith and/or Prior Lake High School sanctioned activity.
- All levels: players must let their assigned coach know their availability throughout the week of Spring Break at all levels.
- Any lower-level players that miss 4/4 – 4/5 will not be eligible to participate in the first 1 – 2 Varsity games of the season.
- Junior Varsity, 10th Grade, and 9th Grade will have OPTIONAL practices from Friday, 3/29 – Friday 4/5. There will be no mandatory practices for the lower levels over Spring Break.
- Varsity will have OPTIONAL practices from Friday, 3/29 – Wednesday, 4/3. Varsity will have MANDATORY practices on Thursday, 4/4 and Friday, 4/5.

IN-SEASON TRANSPORTATION



- All athletes are required to ride the bus to away games. If there are conflicts with this, the exception must be submitted to the Activities Office and approved.
- Players are expected to ride the bus back to PLHS but are welcome to submit requests to ride home with parents/guardians **ONLY**. Head coaches must be notified and must approve beforehand.
 - Players that choose to ride home with parents/guardians are required to help bring equipment back onto the bus before leaving.
- Any inappropriate behavior on the buses will be met with disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension from team, game, and/or practices.
- Phones are expected to be put away into individual bags before we exit the bus and get to the field – no phones allowed in the dugout.
- Middle school pick-up will be communicated for away games beforehand. Typically, pick up will be at TOMS. **It is required for middle school athletes to use the Activities bus for transportation to the high school for game days.**

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES



Missing practices and/or games, without prior notification to the coaching staff, will be treated the same as missing a school day on game days.

- 1st Offense: 3 inning suspension, meeting with athlete & coaching staff
 - 2nd Offense: 1 game suspension, meeting with athlete, parent/guardian, & coaching staff
 - 3rd Offense: 3 game suspension, meeting with athlete, parent/guardian, Activities Director & coaching staff
 - 4th Offense: Dismissal from program
- Players may not participate in practice or games if they have an unexcused absence from a class. Exceptions can only be approved by the Activities Office.
 - Athletes will be held accountable with grades and attendance in classes. Class and grade checks will be frequent, please make sure any absence is excused.

VARSITY ROSTER FORMATION



Please take the time to read our 2024 PL Softball Handbook that will be sent out after this meeting along with this PowerPoint.

Varsity Roster Expectations: Our Varsity coaching staff will be making final decisions on player placement onto the roster. Our staff will prioritize skill, leadership, and quality of teammate first. If there is an athlete that is viewed of the same caliber as another athlete in all three of those facets, our staff will then prioritize the older athlete for our Varsity team for roster selection.

Varsity Playing Time: This will be at the entire Varsity coaching staff's discretion and by the following criteria: skill level, in-game & practice performance, work ethic, attitude, and off-field conduct. The players who have earned it will play. We are playing to win – age/grade does not play a role in playing time. There is no guarantee of playing time when you are on the Varsity roster and in the dugout. Roster numbers on the Varsity team will vary by game. A select group of players will share time on both JV and Varsity.

All ages of athletes (7th grade – 12th grade) are eligible to be a Varsity player AND play/start on our roster.

24 HOUR RULE & LOC



It is required that a player and/or parent wait a total of **24 HOURS** from the conclusion of a tournament, doubleheader, or game/competition to contact the coaching staff on issues or questions surrounding playing time. This includes contact in person, by phone, or by email.

LINE OF COMMUNICATION: It is required and essential that our line of communication is followed by players, family members, and coaching staff.

1. Athlete and Head Coach
2. Athlete, Coaching Staff, and Parents
3. Athlete, Coaching Staff, Parents, and Activities Director

PLAYER & FAMILY EXPECTATIONS



- It is required that all players respect their parents/family members, coaches, teammates, officials, and the competition. We have ZERO tolerance for any unsportsmanlike behavior or bullying.
- All players are required to help with equipment. If coaches or staff see the same players picking up or helping with equipment each practice or game, we will be implementing an equipment schedule for athletes. Leave facilities better than you found them!
- Players are expected to follow all MSHSL and Prior Lake High School rules & regulations – this includes and is not limited to: drug & alcohol policies, grade requirements, attendance requirements, etc. Failure to do so will result in suspension and/or dismissal from the softball program.
- Teamwork is not a preference; it is a requirement – encourage one another.
- Expect the most from yourself, your teammates, and coaches – hold each other accountable.
- Do your best. When you fail, fail HARD! Learn, adjust, and grow from failure.
- Players are asked to stay in the dugout during games and competitions – only communicate with family members to grab water, snacks, etc.
- No cell phone use or connected watch use allowed during practices and games.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS



THANK YOU for all you do in your involvement and supporting your daughter, her team, our coaching staff, and our program. We ask all our families to understand our following expectations for parents/guardians as well as family members:

- Support your athletes at **home** and at the field.
- We will only tolerate positive comments and cheering for our team, opponents, and officials.
- No parents allowed in the dugout – let our coaches coach.
- Respect the 24 Hour Rule and Line of Communication
- Get involved – volunteer opportunities and creating community.
- Let athletes address their coaches first before you step in.
- Be positive role models and advocates for academics and athletics at PLHS.

RAINOUTS/SCHEDULE CHANGES



Minnesota Springs are unpredictable! We strongly recommend that parents and players follow Prior Lake Softball on a social media outlets. This is where the first reports will be shared with families, and we will follow up via email. Any game cancellations are typically decided by noon day of. The information will be shared on the message boards at school.

Players will be added to their team specific GroupMe's, we will also provide updates immediately via GroupMe text to them on any changes we may receive.

Please follow us on the following social media platforms for immediate updates:

- X (formerly Twitter): @pl_softball
- Instagram: @pl_softball
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/priorlakegirlssoftball

Games can be downloaded to your calendar and notify you on changes at www.southsuburbanconference.org

FAN / TEAM STORE



Our PL Softball Fan Apparel / Team Store is now OPEN!

- We will be releasing the link onto our PL Softball website. We will have 1-2 stores, first one being with PAAR Sports and the second one will be with Custom Apparel.
- Store closing date is located on the PAAR website provided on our website, Custom Apparel will remain open throughout the year.
- Delivery will be about 15 days after the store closes.
- All items from PAAR will be picked up by the boosters and then pickup will be arranged at PLHS.
- A second ordering window will open after tryouts and teams are made in case you miss this round!

BOOSTER CLUB

2024 PRIOR LAKE SOFTBALL BOOSTER MEMBERS		
President	Amy Holmes	pruds15@gmail.com
LABC Representative	Brian Hennen	bhennen24@gmail.com
Treasurer	Jim Erickson	jim.a.erickson1@gmail.com
Apparel Coordinator	Lisa Thurk	thurkjl@gmail.com

- We will need volunteers for all our special nights:
 - Wednesday, 4/24 vs. Farmington: Strike Out Cancer (Ovarian Cancer – Teal)
 - Friday, 5/3 vs. Burnsville – Teacher Appreciation Night
 - Monday, 5/6 vs. Rosemount – Mental Health Awareness Night
 - Friday, 5/10 vs. Apple Valley – PLAY/Youth Night
 - Monday, 5/13 vs. Eagan – Senior Night
 - Friday, 5/17 vs. Forest Lake – Battle of the Lakes @ PONDS



FINAL THOUGHTS



PLEASE REVIEW OUR 2024 PL SOFTBALL HANDBOOK LOCATED ON OUR WEBSITE FOR IN DEPTH INFORMATION ON OUR PROGRAM.

- All levels game schedules are currently up to date – changes/additions anticipated for 9th/10th.
- Spring Break practices will be announced as soon as possible.
- Please email softball.plhs@gmail.com with any questions.
- 7th Grade Pitchers & Catchers: please contact hpierson@plsas.org to get registered for tryouts. We will announce the first weekend of March if we will be opening tryouts to all 7th graders.
- **PLEASE REGISTER ASAP!** It is so important for us to know what numbers we are looking at so we can best determine our tryout planning and team planning.

Please welcome one of our PL Softball Sponsors, Northern Life Wellness, to close out our meeting!