

Coaches Guide for the Season

Listed below are steps that need to be taken by a coach or several coaches from each team, along with general guidelines to help throughout the season. The sections are broken out by 8U and 10U/12U/14U combined.

Big West League Coaches Meeting for 10U/12U/14U coaches:

The Big West league has a coaches meeting at the beginning of the year where they discuss the upcoming season and also create the game schedules. The head coach of each team should attend but if they cannot, one other coach from the team must be there.

Date: April 9th

Time: 10U/12U – 6:30pm

14U and up – 8:30pm

Where: Medina Entertainment Center

Additional information for coaches can be found under “Coaches Training Documents” within the “NPGFA Coaching” tab on the website.

Nights of play by age group:

- 8U – Wednesday
- 10U – Tuesday
- 12U – Monday/Wednesday
- 14U – Tuesday/Thursday

Coach Ejection Policy

Coaches, Minnesota Softball is initiating a coach ejection rule in support of umpire with bad behavior by either parents or coaches.

- Coach Ejection Rule a. The coach ejection rule as written below is how it will be applied. Coaches are responsible for their parent’s behavior. There will be an online form for umpires to fill out the ejection report. Once the report is filled out the state office will handle contacting directors and umpires as quickly as we can.
 - First offense – A verbal warning to the offending coach.

- Second offense – An out will be assessed to the team but not to an individual player.
- Third offense – The coach will be ejected from the game and asked to leave the park.
- An ejection results in a three (3) game or seven (7) day suspension, whichever is longer.
- A second ejection results in a thirty (30) day suspension.
- A third ejection results in a lifetime ban from coaching.

During the pregame meeting with the umpire, coaches and captains this rule will be discussed. Additionally, Minnesota Softball is currently working with Youth 1st and will incorporate their pregame philosophy as well.

8U Coaches:

Before the season:

- All Assistant and Head coaches must complete the A.C.E. training, SafeSport training, a criminal background check and concussion protocol training.
 - For more information on each of these, please see the “[NPGFA Coaching](#)” section on the website.
- Review 8U rules. Click [HERE](#) for rules.
- After coaches have been determined for each team it’s not a bad idea for the head coach and assistant coach(es) to get together and discuss the upcoming season. Topics to talk about might include the following:
 - Coaches/player/parent expectations
 - Practice times/days
 - Role of each coach and give ownership of that role
- Send an e-mail to the parents introducing yourself and the other coaches.
 - Schedule Player/Parent meeting. This can be done at the first practice or earlier.
 - Include practice days/time when they have been determined.
- Find a parent to be the Team Volunteer Coordinator.
 - Try to get this done before or at the Player/Parent meeting.
 - Team Volunteer Coordinator will receive 10 volunteer hours for the position.
 - This person will be responsible for setting up all of the Dibs volunteer items related to your team that parents will use to fulfill the 15 volunteer hours per family.
 - Dibs items can include practice helpers, raking fields after practice, field prep before and after games, scorebook for games, etc.
 - They should contact the NPGFA Volunteer Coordinator, who will show them how to use Dibs.
 - **DIBS MUST BE USED TO TRACK ALL VOLUNTEER HOURS!!**
 - Everyone will need to use Dibs to “claim” or sign up for the various volunteer opportunities. It is not the coaches or team volunteer coordinators responsibility to keep track of and enter volunteer hours into Dibs.
- NPGFA only pays for the State Tournament. If your team would like to play in any other tournament, the cost will have to be covered by the team.

- Information on selecting tournaments along with a link to the list of tournaments can be found [HERE](#). It's best to register for tournaments early as some fill up faster than others.
- It's a good idea to e-mail or call the contact for the tournament to verify there are spots available and to let them know that you will be sending the registration and payment.
- After selecting the tournaments, E-mail the NPGFA Treasurer (Contact information can be found in the NPGFA Board section of the website) with the following information:
 - Team name
 - Name of tournament along with who the check should be made to and the amount of the check.
 - Make arrangements to pick up the check(s) from the Treasurer
- Mail completed registration form along with the check to the address listed on the form.
- If you have not heard from the contact person for the tournament for a reasonable amount of time, call or send them an e-mail to make sure they received the form and payment.
- Create team roster on JO softball website. Get this done by early April.
 - Directions can be found [HERE](#).
 - After the roster is approved by the league, click on each of the players on your team and see if the Verified column shows "VERIFIED" in red letters. This means that the players birth certificate is on file with Minnesota Softball from a previous year and no further action is needed. If "VERIFIED" is missing, please contact the NPGFA Registration Coordinator and let them know to send a copy of the players birth certificate to Minnesota Softball.
- Set up an App to use for communicating with parents.
 - It is recommended to use some type of team communication app rather than having to always send e-mails or text messages to parents.
 - Feel free to use any app. Some suggestions are SportsEngine TeamCenter, InstaTeam and TeamSnap.
- If you use SportsEngine TeamCenter, please see the section below with instructions.
 - Team pages will be set up on the Minnesota Softball website in early-mid April. There will be an update on the 8U page of the Minnesota Softball website when team pages are ready to access.
 - The head coach of each team will be assigned as the Team Page Administrator when Minnesota Softball sets up the page.
 - Directions on how to set up your team can be found [HERE](#). There is a separate set of directions specific to 8U teams.
 - Send an e-mail to the parents and request that they download the SportsEngine App on their phones. The following links may be helpful to send to them:
 - [Installing the SportsEngine Mobile](https://help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/2577376) - <https://help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/2577376>
 - [Finding and Following Teams](https://help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/1581021) - <https://help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/1581021>

- [Sync Calendar to a Smart Phone](https://athlete.help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/1708772-add-an-ical-feed-to-a-smart-phone?topic-guide=team-tools) - <https://athlete.help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/1708772-add-an-ical-feed-to-a-smart-phone?topic-guide=team-tools>
- Add Field Locations for all home games on your team page from the Minnesota Softball website.
 - Directions can be found [HERE](#) in the “Adding Field Locations for Home Games” section.
- Obtain softball gear from the NPGFA Equipment Coordinator. The coordinator will contact coaches with details on how to get the equipment.

During the season:

- Parent meeting at the beginning of the first practice (if it has not been done already).
 - Go over parent/coach/player expectations
- Have practice plans ready for each practice.
 - Example plans can be found on the NPGFA website under [Coaches Training Documents](#).
- Have lineups done before games.
 - Position rotation/batting lineup
 - Review the NPGFA guidelines by clicking [HERE](#) or find it on the NPGFA website under Coaches Training Documents.
 - Lineup templates can be found on the NPGFA website under [Coaches Training Documents](#).
- Fields need to be raked and cleaned up after each practice.
- Home games – Fields must be set up for all home games. Please have the field ready to go at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the game. After the game, the field needs to be raked and cleaned up. Click [HERE](#) for instructions on chalking the fields.
- Enter scores on Minnesota Softball site after home games. There will be a section on the site for all 8U teams. Each team will have their own team page that will be created for you.
 - The home team coach is responsible for entering the box score within 24 hours of the completion of a game.
 - Click [HERE](#) for directions.
- If home games need to be cancelled or rescheduled:
 - Contact the coach from the opposing team at least 2 hours prior to the start of the game.
 - Update the game status on your team page from the Minnesota Softball site. Click [HERE](#) for directions.
 - If the game is being rescheduled, change the date of the original game to the new date. DO NOT create a new set of games.
 - Mark the game status as cancelled if it will not be made up.
- Return equipment at the end of the season.

State Tournament:

- All teams play in the State Tournament. If your team is not able to participate please let the SBDC chair person know asap. You will also need to e-mail Tom Bye (tbye@josoftball.com) by July 8th so your team is not included on the tournament schedule.
- The State Tournament is July 13-14.
- Coaches should arrive at least 1 hour prior to the first game to check in and provide the following: (The list can also be found on the [Minnesota Softball](#) website under the “State” tab.)
 - Turn in a signed copy of your approved roster found on the JO softball site. This is the same roster as described above in the “Before the Season” section that can be printed out ahead of time.
 - Gate fee check for \$100 written out to the tournament host prior to the first game.
 - The check should be collected from the NPGFA Treasurer prior to the State Tournament. Contact the Treasurer to request the check.
- State Tournament Rules can be found on the [Minnesota Softball](#) website. Hover over the “State” tab and click 8U.
- The tournament schedule will be posted on the [Minnesota Softball](#) website about a week prior to the tournament. Hover over the “State” tab and click 8U.

10U/12U/14U Coaches:

Before the season:

- All Assistant and Head coaches must complete the A.C.E. training, SafeSport training, a criminal background check and concussion protocol training.
 - For more information on each of these, please see the “[NPGFA Coaching](#)” section on the website.
- Review Big West League rules. Click [HERE](#) for rules.
- Attend Big West coaches meeting on April 9th, 2019. For more information go to the Big West League website by clicking [HERE](#).
 - One coach from each team should attend.
 - Game schedules are determined at the meeting.
 - Meeting is held at the Medina Entertainment Center in Medina. Enter on the west end and go upstairs to the ballroom.
 - 10U/12U – 6:30PM
 - 14U - 8:30PM
- After coaches have been determined for each team it’s not a bad idea for the head coach and assistant coach(es) to get together and discuss the upcoming season. Topics to talk about might include the following:
 - Coaches/player/parent expectations
 - Practice times/days
 - Tournaments to play in

- Role of each coach and give ownership of that role
- Send an e-mail to the parents introducing yourself and the other coaches.
 - Schedule Player/Parent meeting. This can be done at the first practice or earlier.
 - Include practice days/time when they have been determined.
- Find a parent to be the Team Volunteer Coordinator.
 - Try to get this done before or at the Player/Parent meeting.
 - Team Volunteer Coordinator will receive 10 volunteer hours for the position.
 - This person will be responsible for setting up all of the Dibs volunteer items related to your team that parents will use to fulfill the 15 volunteer hours per family.
 - Dibs items can include practice helpers, raking fields after practice, field prep before and after games, scorebook for games, etc.
 - They should contact the NPGFA Volunteer Coordinator, who will show them how to use Dibs.
 - **DIBS MUST BE USED TO TRACK ALL VOLUNTEER HOURS!!**
 - Everyone will need to use Dibs to “claim” or sign up for the various volunteer opportunities. It is not the coaches or team volunteer coordinators responsibility to keep track of and enter volunteer hours into Dibs.
- Create team roster on JO softball website. Get this done by early April.
 - Directions can be found [HERE](#).
 - After the roster is approved by the league, click on each of the players on your team and see if the Verified column shows “VERIFIED” in red letters. This means that the players birth certificate is on file with Minnesota Softball from a previous year and no further action is needed. If “VERIFIED” is missing, please contact the NPGFA Registration Coordinator and let them know to send a copy of the players birth certificate to Minnesota Softball.
- Select tournaments that you team will play in.
 - This can be done as soon as you have your team.
 - Every team will play in the State Qualifier Tournament. If your team wins at least one game in the State Qualifier, you will play in the State Tournament.
 - NPGFA will pay for 2 additional tournaments and anything beyond that will have to be paid for by your team.
 - Information on selecting tournaments along with a link to the list of tournaments can be found [HERE](#). It’s best to register for tournaments early as some fill up faster than others.
 - It’s a good idea to e-mail or call the contact for the tournament to verify there are spots available and to let them know that you will be sending the registration and payment.
 - After selecting the tournaments, E-mail the NPGFA Treasurer (Contact information can be found in the NPGFA Board section of the website) with the following information:
 - Team name
 - Name of tournament along with who the check should be made to and the amount of the check.
 - Make arrangements to pick up the check(s) from the Treasurer
 - Mail completed registration form along with the check to the address listed on the form.

- If you have not heard from the contact person for the tournament for a reasonable amount of time, call or send them an e-mail to make sure they received the form and payment.
- Set up an App to use for communicating with parents.
 - It is recommended to use some type of team communication app rather than having to always send e-mails or text messages to parents.
 - Feel free to use any app. Some suggestions are SportsEngine TeamCenter, InstaTeam and TeamSnap.
- If you use SportsEngine TeamCenter, please see the section below with instructions.
 - Team pages will be set up on the Big West League Website after the Coach/Scheduling meeting takes place in early April. There will be an update on the Big West website when team pages are ready to access.
 - The head coach of each team will be assigned as the Team Page Administrator when Big West sets up the page. Additional admins can be added by following the instructions on the Big West website.
 - Directions on how to set up your team can be found [HERE](#).
 - Find your team on the Big West website under “Teams” and use the directions in the above step to update your team information.
 - Send an e-mail to the parents and request that they download the SportsEngine App on their phones. The following links may be helpful to send to them:
 - [Installing the SportsEngine Mobile](https://help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/2577376) - <https://help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/2577376>
 - [Finding and Following Teams](https://help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/1581021) - <https://help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/1581021>
 - [Sync Calendar to a Smart Phone](https://athlete.help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/1708772-add-an-ical-feed-to-a-smart-phone?topic-guide=team-tools) - <https://athlete.help.sportsengine.com/customer/portal/articles/1708772-add-an-ical-feed-to-a-smart-phone?topic-guide=team-tools>
- Add Field Locations for all home games on your team page from the Minnesota Softball website.
 - Directions can be found [HERE](#) in the “Adding Field Locations for Home Games” section.
- Obtain softball gear from the NPGFA Equipment Coordinator. The coordinator will contact coaches with details on how to get the equipment.

During the season:

- Parent meeting at the beginning of the first practice (if it has not been done already).
 - Go over parent/coach/player expectations
- Have practice plans ready for each practice.
 - Example plans can be found on the NPGFA website under [Coaches Training Documents](#).
- Have lineups done before games.
 - Position rotation/batting lineup

- Review the NPGFA guidelines by clicking [HERE](#) or find it on the NPGFA website under Coaches Training Documents.
- Lineup templates can be found on the NPGFA website under [Coaches Training Documents](#).
- ☐ Fields need to be raked and cleaned up after each practice.
- ☐ Home games – Fields must be set up for all home games. Please have the field ready to go at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the game. After the game, the field needs to be raked and cleaned up. Click [HERE](#) for instructions on chalking the field.
- ☐ Enter scores on Big West site after home games.
 - The home team coach is responsible for entering the box score within 24 hours of the completion of a game.
 - Click [HERE](#) for directions.
- ☐ If home games need to be cancelled or rescheduled:
 - Contact the coach from the opposing team at least 2 hours prior to the start of the game.
 - Contact Pat Perkinson at (651)246-5135 so he can contact the umpire scheduled for the game.
 - Update the game status on your team page from the Big West site. Click [HERE](#) for directions.
 - If the game is being rescheduled, change the date of the original game to the new date. DO NOT create a new set of games.
 - Mark the game status as cancelled if it will not be made up.
- ☐ Tournaments – Print a copy of the team roster from the JO softball site for each tournament that your team is playing in, including the state qualifier and state tournament. You can print multiple copies right away rather than printing a new one for each tournament.
 - A parent for each player must sign the roster before turning it in at the tournament.
 - Click [HERE](#) for a link to the JO softball website. Printing directions are on page 3 under “ROSTER APPROVED”.
 - Have players arrive at least one hour prior to the first game each day to warm-up and practice.
 - There may be breaks in between games. Make sure that parents know what time the players need to be back at the field for the next game.
- ☐ Return equipment at the end of the season.

State Qualifier (Big West League Tournament):

- ☐ State Qualifiers are on the following dates at various locations:
 - 10U/12U – June 28-30
 - 14U – July 12-14
- ☐ All teams play in the State Qualifier tournament.
- ☐ All “A” teams from any age level automatically qualify for the State Tournament but still play in the State Qualifier.

- “B” and “C” teams need to win one (1) game during the State Qualifier to advance to the State Tournament.
- The schedule will be posted on the [Big West Qualifiers](#) page about a week prior to the tournament.
- Tournament rules can be found on the [Big West Qualifiers](#) page.

State Tournament:

- The State Tournament is on the following dates at various locations:
 - 10U/12U – July 13-14
 - 14U – July 20-21
- Coaches should arrive at least 1 hour prior to the first game to check in and provide the following: (The list can also be found on the [Minnesota Softball](#) website under the “State” tab.)
 - Turn in a signed copy of your approved roster found on the JO softball site. This is the same roster as described above in the “Before the Season” section that can be printed out ahead of time.
 - Gate fee check for \$100 written out to the tournament host prior to the first game.
 - The check should be collected from the NPGFA Treasurer prior to the State Tournament. Contact the Treasurer to request the check.
- State Tournament Rules can be found on the [Minnesota Softball](#) website under the “State” tab.
- The tournament schedule will be posted on the [Minnesota Softball](#) website under the “State” tab, about a week prior to the tournament.

Nationals Tournament:

- There are two different Nationals tournaments this year. Each tournament has a Tournament Fee and also a gate fee, which is paid to the association that is hosting the tournament. NPGFA is highly recommending to play in the Mall of America Nationals, since we are sanctioned by USA Softball and the tournament is sanctioned by them. If you elect to play in the NAFA Nationals, you will be required to get a NAFA sanction which has a small fee.
 - NAFA Nationals
 - 10U – Cottage Grove, July 25-28; Cost - \$750 (\$550 tournament fee, \$200 gate fee)
 - 12U – Eagan, July 18-21; Cost - \$775 (\$575 tournament fee, \$200 gate fee)
 - 14U – Eden Prairie, July 25-28; Cost - \$775 (\$575 tournament fee, \$200 gate fee)
 - Mall of America Nationals
 - 10U – Bloomington, July 31-August 3; Cost - \$650 (\$450 tournament fee, \$200 gate fee)
 - 12U A – TBD, July 31-August 3; Cost - \$650 (\$450 tournament fee, \$200 gate fee)
 - 12U B/C – TBD, July 31-August 3; Cost - \$650 (\$450 tournament fee, \$200 gate fee)
 - 14U A – TBD, July 31-August 3; Cost - \$650 (\$450 tournament fee, \$200 gate fee)
 - 14U B/C – TBD, July 31-August 3; Cost - \$650 (\$450 tournament fee, \$200 gate fee)
- Teams must qualify for Nationals.

- Qualifying is done one of two ways:
 - Receive a berth from a tournament, typically need to finish 1st or 2nd. Information about National berths for each tournament are listed in the *Details* section in the Tournaments listings on the Big West website.
 - After clicking *Details*, look for the National Berth Information. The two National Tournaments will be called *Mall of America Nationals* and *NAFA Nationals*.
 - Receive a berth by taking 1st place in your tier in the State Tournament.
- If your team qualifies for Nationals, check with all of the parents to see if they are willing/able to go. If there are enough players that will play, you will want to start asking for donations to collect enough money. Submit the registration form asap.
- NPGFA DOES NOT PAY the fee for Nationals. Each team must pay on their own but you are encouraged to seek donations/sponsorships from local businesses.
 - In the past, teams usually spend around \$1200-\$1600, which includes the entry fee, trading pins, gift for players of your first opponent, gift bag for girls on your team, etc.
 - Assign parents to help coordinate fundraising efforts and to purchase gifts.
 - When you receive funds, checks should be written out to NPGFA. Checks can be turned in to the NPGFA Treasurer who will then write a check out to someone on the team, who will then be responsible to disburse the funds to cover the expenses. The Treasurer will also write separate checks for the tournament entry fee and gate fee. For example, your team collects \$1200, that money is turned in to the Treasurer. The team will receive a check for the entry fee \$500 and the gate fee of \$200 and a third check for \$500 to cover any other expense for the tournament, trading pins, gifts, etc. If your team exceeds the amount received from donations, any remaining balance has to be covered by the team.

Have fun this season!!