



## **Player & Parent Handbook**

### **General Information:**

In an effort to clearly define what is expected, the following guidelines have been developed. Steam Softball requires a greater level of commitment from everyone- players, parents and coaches. In order for each team to reach their full potential, the entire team & program must be well coordinated and moving in the same directions (Sauk Valley Steam Academy SVSA reserves the right to modify any and all guidelines, rules, regulations and procedures as necessary.)

Upon reviewing and understanding the player & parent handbook, both player and parent need to sign, date and return the team agreement (last page) to your team parent rep or Head Coach before the 1<sup>st</sup> official practice. In addition to the team agreement, please submit a copy of your birth certificate, medical authorization and photo release.

### **Mission:**

Our mission as Sauk Valley Steam Academy (SVSA) and Steam Softball is to promote a positive competitive attitude; instilling self-confidence, and nurturing the principle of teamwork, character, respect (for both our teammates and opponents) and integrity in both victory and defeat. The emphasis is on developing the fundamentals of softball knowledge and skill, teamwork, self-confidence, and having fun!

### **Explanation of Fastpitch Softball:**

Fastpitch refers to the throwing style used to pitch the softball. Fastpitch softball, characterized by a hard, flat pitch delivered with a windmill throwing motion, differs from slow-pitch softball (slow looping throwing motion) which is common to adult softball leagues and recreational softball. Fastpitch is generally the most competitive form of the game and is the style of softball played at the High School level and College Level. All Steam Softball is fastpitch softball with the exception of 8U where a coach pitches (Our staff tries to replicate the fastpitch motion to the highest level.)

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Goals:**

It is a core goal of our program is to help prepare each player with knowledge and skill set to be an effective offensive contributor, and to play multiple defensive positions, in order to provide them the greatest opportunity to earn a position on their High School softball team. While playing time may vary at different positions, players are expected to exhibit a 100% effort wherever they are asked to play.

### **Birthdate Cutoff:**

The birthdate cutoff is December 31, 20XX (of the current year.) The team (age level) for which a player is tied to the player's age on that date (example: if the player is 12 on that date and turns 13 in January, she would play at 12U level for the following summer season.) A player cannot "play down" to a younger age group for any reason. A player may only play up to fill a roster spot. A copy of the child's birth certificate MUST be supplied to the head coach.

## **Commitment:**

Traveling softball requires a significant time commitment from players, coaches and parents throughout the season. Every player is important to the team and is expected to attend all practices, league games, scrimmages, and tournament games. Unexcused absences may result in a reduction of playing time.

Players are expected to be committed to Steam Softball, their teammates, and the coaches. The player must be willing to attempt to reach new levels of physical, social and mental excellence in the sport of softball. Players, parents/legal guardians, and coaches must remember that individual softball experiences are varied, and that each player will be exposed to different coaching styles and personalities.

We expect softball to take priority over other sports during the season, and absences due to participation in other sports will be considered unexcused. Ultimately, decisions regarding reduction in playing time are made by the coach.

## **Season Definition:**

Steam Softball runs from Mid-August of the current year and concludes in July of the next year (this can vary & subject to change.) We define our Fall season as August through November 1<sup>st</sup>, Winter season is November 1<sup>st</sup> to mid-March, and Spring/Summer season as April 1<sup>st</sup> through July.

## **GENERAL POLICES:**

### **Blood Policy:**

A player or coach who is bleeding or who has an open wound shall be prohibited from participating in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered. If medical care or treatment cannot be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual will have to leave the game. (The length of time considered reasonable shall be in the coach and umpire's judgment.) Once the bleeding has been stopped, the player or coach can reenter the game. If there is a substantial amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before the individual may participate.

### **Drug & Alcohol Policy:**

Sauk Valley Steam Academy/Steam Softball mandates that all players, coaches and parents participating in an SVSA/Steam Softball activity (practice, scrimmage, league, game, tournament) should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or a controlled substance.

It shall be a violation of this policy for a player or coach while participating in an SVSA/Steam Softball activity, to use a beverage containing alcohol, or use or consume, have in possession, buy, sell, or give away a controlled substance.

Once a violation has been brought to the Sauk Valley Steam Academy Executive Board attention and a decision has been made, the player or coach will be informed of his/her ineligibility by a written letter from the SVSA Executive Board.

- a. **First Violation:** Upon notification, be the SVSA Executive Board, the player or coach shall lose eligibility for the next two consecutive games or two weeks of a sport season in which the player or coach is participating, whichever is greater. No exceptions are permitted.
- b. **Second Violation:** The player or coach shall lose eligibility in the SVSA/ Steam Softball program for that sports season. No exception permitted.
- c. **Accumulative Penalties:** Penalties shall be accumulative beginning with and continuing throughout the player's or coach's participation in any and all SVSA/Steam Softball activities.

### **Tobacco Policy:**

SVSA/Steam Softball does not permit the use of tobacco by players under the legal tobacco age.

It shall be a violation of this policy for a player participating in the SVSA/Steam Softball program to use tobacco.

Once a violation has been brought to the Sauk Valley Steam Academy Executive Board's attention, the player will be informed of her ineligibility. Ineligibility will be the same as for drug and alcohol policy.

SVSA mandates that coaches refrain from the use of tobacco in any form during a softball event (practice, scrimmage, league, tournament.)

### **Social Media:**

In our constant attempt to maintain the integrity of our organization, the manner in which we conduct ourselves away from the diamond can directly affect our players, the team, and organization. As more and more teams join the ever-growing world of technology, it is noted that the way we conduct ourselves on social media plays a key role in the example we are setting for all young athletes across the country.

It is asked that all players, coaches and parents show the same professionalism and integrity to all teams and individual players on all social media be it public or private. If undesirable conduct is observed or reported, the individual(s) may be asked to disassociate with the organization.

### **Inclement Weather:**

In case of inclement weather, the Head Coach will determine if there will be practice or not.

At games, the UIC's (umpire in chief) are responsible for determining whether the game will be started. Once play begins, the umpire is responsible for determining whether play should be halted.

In all cases, unless you receive a call/text/email from your team's Head Coach, you should appear at the site of game or practice as scheduled.

If you (parent/legal guardian) are not able to be present during an event, be sure that your child knows another parent who will be present and with whom she can take shelter with if bad weather suddenly threatens.

### **Multi-Sport Players/Second Sport Policy:**

SVSA/ Steam Softball welcomes multi-sport players and works to develop schedules and policies that are amenable to those with additional athletic commitments. With the decision to participate in multiple sports come the responsibilities of added time management and priority setting.

What is expected however, is that the player will do everything possible to fulfill her commitment to her Steam Softball team. The consequences for missing a practice or tournament due to additional sport activities are no different than for other excused absences.

These consequences go beyond having to sit a game. When players miss the opportunities to practice, they miss opportunities to improve. This affects team continuity and performance, which in turn, affects playing time.

Nonetheless, the softball season is long. There have been numerous multi-sport athletes that have missed some training. We have found when they become fully committed; they are in great shape and catch up quickly.

### **Player Subbing/ Player Loyalty:**

When a fellow Steam Softball team TEMPORARILY needs a player, we encourage the head coach to give the opportunity to a player from within our organization. Players are allowed to play up if needed, but never allowed to play down an age division.

If a player wants to sub for another travel team/organization besides Steam Softball at any point in time in the season the following actions must take place:

1. The Player & Parent need to ask for approval from their Steam Softball head coach.
2. The Steam Softball Head Coach has the right to contact the head coach of the subbing team.
3. The Steam Softball Head Coach has the finale approval of the player subbing. This is due to making sure the Steam player is not missing prior obligations to their steam team. Subbing can not interfere with ANY Steam Softball Event (Tournaments, team practices.)

In the case where we are seeking a sub for one of our own Steam Softball teams from an outside player. Here are how things will be handled or labeled. A parent from the team is NOT to make the arrangement the head coach of the Steam Team will set up the sub. A parent can provide sub information to the coach, but the coach will take it from there.

- A. A Permanent Sub- will be required to cover the players portion of the tournament fees in which they compete in for the remaining of the current season; a permanent sub is practicing on a full time basis with the team and is participating in any and all team functions i.e. league games, tournaments, scrimmages.
- B. A Traditional Sub- will NOT be required to pay for any of the players portion of the tournament fees in which they compete in for the current season; a traditional sub is subbing for a day only or a weekend only; as they are needed temporarily to allow the team to play.

## **PROGRAM FEES & FUNDRAISING**

### **Cost:**

The program fees associated with playing for any Steam Softball team are determined by the SVSA Board. The board based off past years budgets & expenses to forecast the upcoming season's overall cost & budget. Players and parents will be provided fundraising opportunities to help offset these players fees by choice (see Fundraising).

Current Season:

1. \$600 for the following Age Divisions – 8U
2. \$800 for the following Age Divisions- 9U, 10U, 11U, 12U, 13U, 14U, etc.

### **Accepted Offered Position:**

Upon the acceptance of an offered position, a \$200 Non-refundable deposit is required. The program fee consists of an upstart/commitment fee for each new season. The deposit is to help teams order new player helmets, bat bags, fall jerseys and book any fall leagues/tournaments. The deposit fee is to also discourage "team hopping" to the many travel teams which draw from multiple areas and ensures that we can field a team.

### **Refund Policy:**

Should a player/parent quit, withdraw or leave the team/program at any point, for ANY reason once the team roster has been accepted YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A REFUND OR ANY KIND. Player fees/team budgets are set based on the number of players that originally join the team and monthly dues are based on these figures. Should a player decide to leave the team & still have a balance- they will not be held liable for the remaining balance owed. If a player account is not current or in good standing at the time of departure the past due amount will need to be paid in full to cover expenses already incurred. Furthermore, no refund of a players or player's expenses shall occur in extenuating circumstances that do not exist. Extenuating circumstances are defined as a season ending injury, medical condition, or player(s) family transfer out of the Sauk Valley Area.

### **Monthly Payments:**

Our payment schedule is set up over several months. Fees are due the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month in accordance with the payment schedule, this applies even if the team is not playing. The fees are calculated on a 6- month

payment schedule. Please understand this schedule must be adhered to, in order that the team/organization may, in turn meet our financial responsibilities and deadlines.

Payment options are the following: SportsEngine (and transaction fees are responsible for the paying party), cash or check. If using the cash or check method means payments must be turned into the SVSA Treasure or the Team Parent Rep. Team Parent Reps will work the treasure collecting team payments each month.

Monthly payments are the following for each Age Division:

8U- Monthly Payment of \$67.00

9U/10U/11U/12U/13U/14U, etc.- Monthly Payment of \$100

### **Past Due Accounts/ Delinquent Accounts:**

If your daughter's account becomes delinquent by more than 2 weeks and you have NOT contacted the SVSA Treasure to address the issue, your daughter will not be allowed to practice or participate in any tournaments until the account is up to date. Also, if the players fees are not paid, your daughter will not be permitted to play for another steam team and will not be able to play the following year until all fees are paid. If the family chooses not to meet the payment agreement with Sauk Valley Steam Academy/Steam Softball, legal actions will be taken. Families are aware that any outstanding amount may be turned over to a collection agency. In the event of this occurrence, all collection agency fees incurred as well as the amount due the clubs are the players family's responsibilities.

We understand financial hardships as long as they are properly communicated in a timely manner. We are willing to personalize payment plans, in advance if needed.

### **Multiple Player Family Discount:**

Families with multiple children playing for Steam Softball will be eligible for a discount. First child is full price, any child after that will receive a 1 time \$100 discount off the other child's player account.

This discount will be evaluated at the beginning of each new season by the SVSA board to determine if they will offer the discount for the new season. The SVSA board reserves the right to offer or not offer this discount each season. The organization will cover this cost with fundraising. If at any point in time the organization can no longer offer this discount to multiplayer families it will be communicated at the beginning of the new season.

### **Organizational Fundraising:**

Sauk Valley Steam Academy sponsored fundraising events are designed to cover expenses to improve the Steam Softball program and your players experiences. All players, coaches and parents are required to participate in our SVSA Organization fundraising events. Fundraising is a vital part of any program.

SVSA/Steam Softball will host an annual softball tournament that is an outstanding experience for our players. Along with hosting a tournament we will host other events that will require many hands to create a successful outcome for all. All families are required to provide volunteer assistance in helping to plan, coordinate, or work at these events. A little help from many volunteers makes for easier work for all!

Funds raised during these SVSA/Steam Softball Organization events will go towards the following (but not limited to):

- Indoor Facility Rental & Expenses
- Team Equipment
- Team Insurance
- Association Dues for teams such as ASSA, USSSA, etc.
- Organizational Status Dues for our 501 c 3 Status
- Diamond Upkeep
- Coaches Attire

- Multi- player Discounts
- SportsEngine Program fees
- Banking fees
- Administrative cost- paper, stamps, printing materials for fundraising, ect.

SVSA will offer an Organizational Opt-Out Fundraising option for anyone who chooses or needs that option for \$100.00. The family would need to contact the SVSA Treasure and submit a request for the organizational opt-out fundraising. The SVSA Treasurer will then notify the SVSA Fundraising Chair of any families that have chosen to opt-out of organizational fundraising events & activities.

### **Player Fundraising:**

SVSA will provide Player fundraising opportunities as well for the purpose to help offset player's account fees/players statements. These fundraising opportunities are 100 % OPTIONAL to every player and family. The SVSA Board /Fundraising Chair will announce all fundraising opportunities to players, coaches and parents. The fundraising chair will provide the guidelines, deadlines pertaining to all fundraising events.

**All fundraising money will be payable to: Steam Softball when collection payments for items that are being sold.** If any payments are returned back due to insufficient funds the players account will be charged back for those funds.

It is the player & family's responsibility to collect the money, double check their orders and turn them in on time to the teams fundraising rep. It is also the responsibility of the player and family to pick up and deliver any and all sold goods to their customers. SVSA will not be responsible for taking home orders, holding orders or delivering any orders for any fundraising activities.

## **TEAM GENERAL INFORMATION:**

### **Player Growth & Success:**

We recognize that there are a number of important lessons that come from playing team sports. The ability to recognize working hard as an immediate goal will be stressed throughout the season. A desire to win is a significant motivating force behind hard work. We believe in winning and having an enjoyable experience, but these are recognized as by-products of the immediate goal of hard work. We focus on creating an environment where hard work, fun and winning can take place. Within these three concepts lies the foundation for player growth and success.

### **Playing Time:**

Playing time will not be equal for all players. Players earn playing time through game situations and practice. Every player will get the same opportunities in practice to earn playing time. Players that are absent from practice (whether excused or unexcused) will miss out on opportunities to earn playing time. It is the responsibility of the coach to identify the strongest line-up and implement a strategy that puts the team in the best position to be successful. Every player has a role. Understanding the role and the expectations of it are a joint responsibility of both player and coach. When a player is disgruntled over her role on the team, the appropriate response is to clarify her role with the coach and work as hard as possible to effectuate a change. Parents can best help their player by helping her set goals to achieve more opportunities for play.

Teams playing in the most highly competitive situations (bracket day, state tournament, nationals) will need to be at their best. In situations such as these, it is the judgement of the coach to identify the strongest line-up and implement a strategy that puts the team in the best position to be successful. At State or Nationals tournaments the best players will undoubtedly play more.

If a player has a concern about positions or playing time, we highly encourage them to ask the coach; "What can I work on to earn an opportunity at the XX position" or "What can I do to earn more playing time". Teaching

players to ask questions is an important part of character building. We want players to learn to speak for themselves and understand that positions and playing time is earned through practice, attitude and effort.

### **Academics, Family & Social Life:**

A significant element of our teaching involves training our players to manage their time and achieve balance in their busy lives. Our program acknowledges the significance of academics and understands the demands that most of our student-athletes are subjected to. The skills we teach involve planning, time management, and goal setting. In doing so, we expect that players will not miss practices due to a lack of foresight.

Family and social engagements frequently conflict with travel season. Involvement with our program is not convenient. All our players, coaches, and families will be called upon at times, to sacrifice personal and family plans for the common interest of the team. Personal sacrifice is only a portion of the price required of participation in high-level athletics that Sauk Valley Steam Academy/Steam Softball pursues.

### **Team Practice:**

All team practices, unless otherwise stated, are mandatory. If a player can not attend a practice session, the player must give advance notice of the absence or tardiness. You can do this through Sports Engine in the RSVP section. Player participation during games can be affected by attendance.

Each player should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to practice start time. Players must be on the field, ready to practice at the start of practice. **A positive attitude and effort is expected at all times during practices;** negative comments and behavior contrary to a positive learning environment are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. **Each player is expected to hustle throughout the practice session.** While on the playing field, each player shall run to and from each station as well as in their retrieval of missed balls and collecting of equipment at the end.

Every player shall do their part to make the practice run smoothly, give their undivided attention to the coaching staff and follow directions. If a player is unsure of a direction given to them or a drill being conducted- the player is encouraged to speak up and ask for coach clarification. Practices are designed to develop new skills and sharpen existing skills. Only the coaching staff is allowed to give the instructions and directions during the practice and/or games. Parents should reserve comments or observations for the coaching staff until after the practice session has ended.

## **PLAYER EQUIPMENT INFORMATION:**

### **Provided Equipment:**

SVSA/Steam Softball supplies 1 set of catcher gear with a catcher bag for it to be stored in for the following teams (8U, 9U, 10U only). We feel at 11U/12U/13U or high at that point in time a catcher should be identified and set to allow that player to be properly fitted for the correct gear. We will provide an option, but the player will be responsible for the cost of the gear. At the end of the season all team catcher gear and bags MUST be turned back into the head coach.

Practice balls, hitting nets, tees and other equipment necessary for practices are provided by the organization. Any negligent or intentional damage to SVSA/Steam equipment or facilities will be reimbursed by the player, coach and/or parents. Failure to do so may result in denial of any further sport participation in any SVSA/Steam programs by the player, coach or any other member of his/her family.

### **Player Mandatory Equipment:**

Each player must provide her own bat, glove and face mask. Players are responsible for providing and additional safety equipment that they choose to use. Properly fitted and correctly sized gloves and bats are important to a player's success. Bats must be fitted to the individual player. Parents should consult coaches and/or specific rules before purchasing bats.

## **Team Uniforms:**

The SVSA board will design uniforms for all the Steam teams. Uniforms will match across all teams to show a united look for our entire organization. Players participating in Steam Softball will be required to wear the designed approved uniforms. Main uniform will consist of the following:

- 2 Jerseys
- 2 pairs of softball pants
- 2 pairs of socks
- A belt
- 1 warm-up item

Uniforms will not be issued if a player's account is Not current. Uniforms items will belong to the player after the year is complete. Players will have a mandatory fitting to attend to ensure proper fitting of uniforms. Parents will need to sign off on the sizes selected at their player fitting. Orders can not be submitted to the vendor until all players have been fitted. Once uniforms have arrived players will have 1 week to try on their ordered uniform to ensure correct sizes have been given to the player. Any changes, issues, manufacturing defaults must be brought to the SVSA board within this 1-week period. The SVSA board will work with the vendor directly to correct the issue to the best of their ability. Players or parents will NOT directly contact the vendor to figure out their uniform issue unless the SVSA board has given them permission to do so.

## **GAME/TOURNAMENT EXPECTATIONS:**

### **Arrival:**

Each player should arrive 1 hour prior to game time, as designated by the coaches and ready to begin warm ups. Each player should be attentive, ready to play, wearing the required uniform and have all required equipment at all times.

- Uniforms will be clean
- Jerseys will be tucked in at all times
- All jewelry will be removed
- The team will warm-up, stretch and run together

### **Games:**

Cheers and positive comments are encouraged! Only positive comments and cheers are permitted to both opponents and teammates. Respect your fellow teammates. There are no exceptions for misconduct or inappropriate behavior

- Never laugh or make fun of an opponent
- No foul or inappropriate language will be tolerated
- Sportsmanship is paramount for this organization
- Proper field decorum is required by all players at all times

All players are to be engaged in the game supporting their team. Players should be watching the game, if not warming up, so they are prepared to go into the game at any time. During games, gear bags should be hung properly on the fence. Helmets, defensive masks and gloves shall be stored in bat bags and not on the player's bench. Each player must have their own water bottle for games.

**Gear and helmets are not to be thrown, nor shall any player display unsportsmanlike conduct.** Such conduct may remove the player from the game and the line-up. Players should wait until after the game is completed to visit with family, friends or spectators. **The coaching staff will handle any disputes with the umpire. Parents and players shall NOT be involved.**

### **Between Games:**

- Rest and prepare for the next game
- Stay out of the sun
- Eat a light healthy snack or meal (if time permits)

### **After Game:**

Do not remove any of your equipment until the game is over and a handshake with the opposing team has taken place. Pick up all trash in the dugout and leave it in better shape than you found it. After the game go directly to the area designated by the coaches for a team breakdown meeting. Parents are to wait in the spectator area until the team meeting is complete, unless the coaches' staff has asked you to join.

### **Sportsmanship:**

Players, coaches, parents and family are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as a positive role model, in order for our players to learn good sportsmanship.

## **CODES OF CONDUCT:**

### **Player Safety & Coaches Boundaries:**

SVSA is committed to keeping all players and coaches free of unnecessary risk exposure. All coaches must undergo background checks from USSSA prior to becoming registered members with USSSA. In assuming these responsibilities, each coach is held to a strict professional code of ethics and conduct by SVSA.

### **Coaches:**

Coaches responsibilities as a coaching staff is to develop the fundamental skills of each player on the team. Their main objective is to develop, train, and teach each player to maximize their ability as an athlete. The demands on each player will be rigorous, but the success of each player is contingent upon individual desire and effort. It is the coaches' job to promote excellent performance of each of their players and to help them realize their full potential.

All players will be given an equal opportunity for training and development during practices. When we compete at tournaments, the team will be playing to its strengths- each player will have a role that contributes to the success of the team. It is the coach's commitment that each player on their roster plays and helps the team succeed. The coaching staff shall be responsible to:

- Coaches will place the emotional and physical well-being of their players ahead of their personal desire to win.
- Coaches will treat each player as an individual, remembering there is a large range of emotional and physical development with the same age group/team.
- Coaches will do their best to organize practices that are engaging and challenging for all players.
- Coaches will lead by example.
- Coaches will make sure safety and the player's welfare comes first.
- Coaches will determine the style and philosophy of play.

### **Players:**

**As a team and as individuals' players, each player will get out this year what they put into it.** Growth and development are a continuing challenge. Each year we will face stronger, faster, and more capable opponents. How we compete will be measured by how we prepare as individuals at practice and outside of practice, and as a team. Coaches will have high expectations and place and emphasis on the details of the game. **At times, you may be asked to make changes, or approach the game differently.** Learning new

*mechanics may feel awkward or uncomfortable at first, but trust that our intentions are to make you the best player that you can possibly be. Allow the coaches to help you become a stronger player on a stronger team.*

### **Parents:**

We are a team- players, coaches, and parents. Parents need to support their player by allowing them to experience their frustrations and successes on and off the field. We want you to know that we always have the best interest of your player in mind. Our intentions are to get the best out of our players collectively as a TEAM and help them grow individually. This is a process, and by the end of the year your child will have improved tremendously. How much she improves depends upon her openness to instruction, effort to be the best version of themselves, and how she is encouraged to grow. Parents are responsible for the conduct of all guests that are watching their player at any Steam Softball function. Failure to do so can lead to disciplinary actions if needed.

The parents are very important to their team success. The coaches depend on the parent's support and adhere to the team/player policies and codes of conduct. **Parents shall not slander any player, coach(s), board member, or other player's parent(s) on any team and any opposing teams.**

## **GRIEVANCE/SUSPENSION/REMOVAL:**

### **24 Hour Rule:**

Any comments or concerns that a parent may have regarding coaching decisions may be discussed with the coaching staff, after a 24-hour time period.

**In other words, if you have a complaint, we mandate that you wait 24 hours after the incident (concern) to give you time to think about your concern and to facilitate a calm discussion of the concern. If you still want to address the issue with the coaching staff, you may then call the head coach regarding your concerns. This rule is designed to help prevent all parties involved from saying something out of haste that may be regretted later.**

Should a parent have a problem with the coaching staff of this team; please arrange to meet the coach outside of regular team activities. No coach shall entertain any discussion during practices and/or games.

Parents must understand that being a member of the team does not guarantee your child's position or playing time. While we would like to maximize playing time for all players while meeting team objectives, positions and playing time can be affected by:

- Ability demonstrated during practice and in games
- Attendance and punctuality at practice and games
- Level of cooperation, and effort displayed during practices and games
- Attitude and positive participations during practices, games and other team activities

### **Complaint Handling/Grievance Process/Policy:**

The enthusiasm, support, assistance, cooperation and positive reinforcement of family members and fans are always appreciated. There will be times during the course of the season with situations that arise that are not to your liking. SVSA has developed specific policies and practices for resolving such situations. We will not tolerate condemnation for any of the Steam softball staff or SVSA board members. Teaching players how to express themselves during times of concern and disagreement is a significant part of a player development. While our policies allow for communication and conflict resolution, a coach will not be required to defend his/her coaching decisions. These decisions include among other things, specific game decisions (who played, where they played, type of play, line up, defensive line up, pitching, etc.).

The goal of our organization is to earn the reputation of having competitive, well-organized, and well-trained players. We will achieve this by dedicating ourselves to our training to these values and philosophical beliefs. This system will allow us to SVSA/Steam Softball to reach great levels of success.

When a player or parent has a concern or grievance with the coach, the player or parent has the responsibility for taking steps to remedy the situation. The following steps should be taken when a grievance arises:

**Step 1-** The player should discuss the concern with the coach to attempt to reach a resolution or agreement.

**Step 2-** If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the player and/or parent should contact the SVSA Board at [svsasoftball@gmail.com](mailto:svsasoftball@gmail.com). A board member will discuss the situation with both parties.

**Step 3-** If resolution is still not amenable to the parties, a meeting will be organized that might include the player, parent, coach, and the entire SVSA Board. It is possible that ongoing communication will be necessary to resolve certain situations.

SVSA feels that it is important that this format be adhered to in resolving problems. It is even more important to remember that we are provided these opportunities for the good of your children. When concerns do arise, we must deal with them in a positive and open manner so that all parties can be satisfied with the resolution. Again, when an issue comes up, it must be addressed.

Please be aware that it is NOT acceptable for a parent to confront a coach or SVSA Board member at practices or games where players and other adults are present. If you have a concern with a coach or board member, you should make an appointment with him/her to discuss your concerns in private.

### **Suspensions:**

The SVSA board reserves the right to suspend any coach, parent or player who violates the SVSA Player & Parent/Coaches handbook or program rules. Suspensions will be documented and communicated by the SVSA board. Suspension of a coach may lead to a progressive discipline.

If any umpire suspends any player, parent, or coach who acts in an unsportsmanlike manner. Subsequent violations may result in the player, parent, or coach being removed from the program.

### **Player/Parent Removal:**

A player may be removed at any point in time from a team for the following, but not limited to these reasons:

- Disregard of the player's responsibilities, including lack of attendance at practices and/or games.
- Continued play in such manner as to endanger others and/or self.
- Displaying any uncaring attitude and hurting the team's competitiveness and enjoyment of the sport.
- Throwing equipment (bat or helmet).
- Failure to work within a team environment (placing self-interest before the teams).
- Repeated unsportsmanlike behavior.

Process of dealing with removal will be followed in this order, but can be altered if needed due to the situation at hand with the player.

**Step 1-** 1<sup>st</sup> Offense the player is removed from the remainder of the practice or game (must remain on the bench or practice) the coach will present a brief statement to the player afterwards recapping why this removal happened.

**Step 2-** 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense the player is not allowed to participate any further in a practice or game until the player, her parents and the coach(s) meet to discuss the player's behavior and develop a plan of correction. At this point the coach will notify the SVSA board of the situation.

**Step 3-** 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense the player will be removed from the team. The coach will notify the SVSA Board of the matter, and the board will make an official statement to the player and parent of the removal of the player from the team.

If Removal from the team is warranted, the following will occur, but not limited to this manner:

1. If a head coach determines that removal is warranted, he/she should discuss it with their entire coaching staff before taking actions.
2. If the entire coaching staff determines that removal is the correct course of action, the head coach will then discuss the circumstances with the SVSA Board before taking any actions.
3. If removal is still agreed to as the best course of action, the SVSA board will contact the parent in some form of communication. The details of the situations will be laid out (of course, the parent and player should be involved or aware of the situation as the player should have prior offenses to this matter.)
4. Once removed from an SVSA/Steam Softball team, the player MAY NOT join another SVSA/Steam Softball team under any circumstances and the full player fee will be forfeited.

# **STEAM PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT:**

## **Basic Principal**

Our goal is to become competitive and the best in the Sauk Valley Area. To achieve this goal, we must all strive to be our best, the best in everything we do. The following is a guideline on how we are going to be the BEST.

## **Practice Rules**

Obtaining greatness requires a great deal of practice. The way we practice is the way that we will play. The specific purpose of practice is to prepare us for the situations that occur in competition, and to transform a group of individuals into a TEAM, thus allowing both the individual and the TEAM to achieve their maximum potential. It is important that each practice be approached as a precious opportunity to improve. You never get the time that you spend back so make it work your while.

1. Because practices are so important, they are mandatory. As a player for Steam Softball, I am responsible (not my parents) for telling the coach in advance if I am unable to attend practice for any reason. If the coach is not notified about me missing practice for any reason, it is considered an unexcused absence.
2. If a player is injured and cannot practice, we would like that the player still comes to practice. There are many things that a player may do to participate as a team member. Many times, a player may be able to practice some skills, but not all skills. Most importantly, specific information may be introduced and even if the injured player can only listen, they won't fall so far behind.
3. Our practice time is very limited so we will also start practice on time. This means that the equipment should be set up prior to the practice start time. This is the responsibility of all players!
4. Becoming the best that you can be requires a great deal of self-discipline. We cannot afford to lose emotional control during competition. You must learn to have control of yourself before you can control your performances. Any overt display of anger or frustrations will not be tolerated.
5. Abusive language, drinking or drugs will not be tolerated. Use of alcohol or drugs in grounds for immediate dismissal. This organization has a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol and/or drugs.
6. A key part of any successful team is Communication. It is the basis for how teamwork begins. We will call every ball out in practice and in competition. We must also constantly encourage our teammates in all drills, so they know that you are supporting them. No team can function without constant communication. Communication is the Key in Softball.
7. We will represent SVSA/Steam Softball as best as we can by always leaving the diamond or indoor space neater than we found it, no matter where we are.

## **Competition Rules**

1. You are responsible for knowing where and when you are to be at the diamond or practice, as well as what uniform you should be wearing.
2. We will obey all the rules of whatever facility/complex we are at. Regardless of whether anyone else is doing so. Please remember that our coaching staff is responsible for making sure our teams are following the rules. Support rules and represent SVSA/Steam Softball at all times.
3. It is the responsibility of the team to be prepared both physically and mentally for the games. This means paying attention to when a team is playing next and when to begin warming up. It also means getting plenty of rest and eating right before, during, after tournaments.
4. Please remember we are representing the organization in all of our actions (playing and traveling).

## **General Rules**

1. Be receptive to coaching
2. Be responsible for all your uniforms and equipment conditions. It is your responsibility to remember to bring all of your equipment, uniforms, and water bottle to all games and practices.

3. Show respect towards opposing players, coaches, umpires and spectators
4. Understand that you represent your team, our organization.
5. Work on improving your individual skills outside of team practices.
6. Demonstrate good sportsmanship and proper behavior.
7. Remember softball is a game and keep it in perspective with family, school, and/or church activities and responsibilities.

*I understand that being on this team and competing on a competitive travel team, I may not always receive equal playing time. I understand that I may not be able to play the position I want. I understand that the coach will do what is in best interest of each player and for our team. I have read, understand, and agree to the player's handbook & terms.*

## **STEAM PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT:**

1. I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during the games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.
2. I will respect the officials and their authority at all times and remember they are volunteers and human beings!
3. I will not confront coaches during the game or at practices, and I will take time to speak to the coaches at an agreed upon time and place if needed.
4. If I do have a concern I will follow the proper channels of communication by using the organizations grievance policy and 24 hour rule.
5. I will teach my child that doing one's best and striving to be the best teammate that she can be is more important than the bi-product of winning.
6. I will demand that my child treats other players, coaches, officials, spectators with respect.
7. I (and my guests) will be positive role models for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect, courtesy. I will demonstrate positive supports for all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice or sporting event.
8. I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the USSSA, or ASA, ect.
9. I will never yell or ridicule my child or any other participant for making a mistake or losing a competition.
10. I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my child over winning/competing.
11. I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win/compete.
12. I will abide by the rules of the facilities/complexes that we play in.
13. I understand that I am jointly responsible for the following:
  - a. Knowing where and when my child should be for competitions & practices
  - b. Proper Equipment
  - c. Prompt arrival time and pick up time as defined by the schedule and the coach.

*I have read, understand, and agree to the parent handbook and code of conduct that will be followed at all SVSA/Steam Softball events. I also agree that if I (and my guest) fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary actions that could include, but is not limited to the following:*

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Parental game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file organization involved
4. Game forfeit through official or coach
5. Parental season suspension



## PLAYER/PARENT HANDBOOK

### SIGN OFF PAGE

***Athletes will not be allowed to participate without this completion and return of this page!***

*I have received, read, understand, and agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the SVSA/Steam Softball as they now exist; and as they may from time to time be amended or supplemented without advanced notice. This agreement is not transferable or assigned by me without specific agreement by the organization.*

**By signing below, the participant and parent/legal guardian have read, acknowledge, understood, and agreed in principle to all sections of this Player/Parent Handbook, and freely and voluntarily sign the same.**

Agreed to this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

Parent/Legal Guardian's Printed Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s) : \_\_\_\_\_

Player's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Caution: This is a release, please read and review all parts before signing.*