



# Parent Meeting

Spring 2023

Eastview High School Room C250

March 13, 2023 @ 6PM

# Who is Apple Valley Fusion?

- Joint fastpitch softball program serving the Apple Valley High School and Eastview High School Community draw areas
- Operated through EVAA, but was created through a joint agreement between EVAA and VAA
- Aligned to Minnesota Softball; 10U-High School (HS) play within the Tri-County League
- Run by volunteer parents who serve on the board

# **Welcome to 2023!**

## **Tips for a successful season**

- Commit to practice times, game times and tournament weekends – or let your coach know early that there is a conflict
- Attend parent meetings at the start of the season
- Participate in your daughter's team: manager, field prep, coach, etc.
- Plan for DIBS (volunteer hours) – all 8U-HS families
- Participate in fundraising – all 8U-HS families

# Important In-Season Dates



- 3/19 Tryouts 10U/12U
- 4/3 Indoor practices start
- 4/6 8U-16U Fundraiser Order End Date
- Late April Outdoor practices start
- 4/29 Fundraiser pick-up for delivery
- 5/3 12U starts games; league games end June 19
- 5/4 8U starts games; league games end July 8
- 5/4 10U starts games; league games end June 20
- 5/20-21 Lightning Strike Tournament  
*Volunteer Time (DIBS) Opportunity*
- 5/22-23 Picture evenings
- 5/23 14U starts games; league games end July 13
- 6/1 HS starts games; league games end July 12

# Important In-Season Dates

6/21	In-house celebration; all participate as able <i>Volunteer Time (DIBS) Opportunity</i>
6/23-6/25	10U-12U State Qualifiers (tournament)
7/3-7/7	<b>No league games this week</b>
7/8-7/9	8U, 10U & 12U State Tournaments
7/14-7/16	14U & HS State Qualifiers (tournament)
7/22-7/23	14U & HS State Tournaments
7/27	Fusion Day at CHS Field

# Don't forget about fall ball!

- Registration open in July
- Short season – starts Aug. 14 and ends on Sept. 24
- Practices held 2x a week
- Double-headers played on weekends only (4 weekends)
- End season with State Tournament
- Focused heavily on development
- Play at the level you will be eligible for the next spring

## **Probable dates (not confirmed yet)**

Early August Practices start

8/19-8/20 First games (weekly games, skip Labor Day)

9/23-9/24 Fall Ball State Tournament

# New Age Rules Coming

USA Softball is adopting new age rules. **Starting this fall**, the age cutoff date will move from January 1 to September 1.

Start	End	Age*	Grade*	Division
9/1/2004	8/31/2005	18	Grad	HS
9/1/2005	8/31/2006	17	12th	(18U)
9/1/2006	8/31/2007	16	11th	HS
9/1/2007	8/31/2008	15	10th	(16U)
9/1/2008	8/31/2009	14	9th	14U
9/1/2009	8/31/2010	13	8th	
9/1/2010	8/31/2011	12	7th	12U
9/1/2011	8/31/2012	11	6th	
9/1/2012	8/31/2013	10	5th	10U
9/1/2013	8/31/2014	9	4th	
9/1/2014	8/31/2015	8	3rd	8U
9/1/2015	8/31/2016	7	2nd	
9/1/2016	8/31/2017	6	1st	6U
9/1/2017	8/31/2018	5	K	

*\*Age as of 9/1/2023, likely grade*

# Tryouts

- 10U/12U Tryouts to be held on March 19
- Pitching Only: From 11:30AM-2:30PM at Truplayerz Facility in Rosemount
  - You will be emailed a 30-minute time window to attend, warm-ups will be 15 minutes and assessments will take place once the player is ready to go
- Hitting, Fielding & Catching: From 3PM-7PM at Irish Dome
  - Catcher-specific evaluations will also be held at this time



# Evaluation Process



- Players are rated on hitting, fielding and throwing skills from 0 to 200. These ratings are determined by external evaluators with no conflicts of interest.
  - 2023 evaluators come from Rosemount, Bloomington, Prior Lake, Apple Valley High School and Midwest Speed.
- There are three different batting cages/evaluator stations, an infield station and an outfield station. Total hitting counts for 50% of the score and infield and outfield stations count for 25% each.
- After all of the stations are complete (around 5:30) we will use the remaining time at the dome to have a continuous batting order scrimmage to get an idea of how the girls respond to game-like situations.
- Scores will be the primary basis used to select the players for each traveling team.

# Team Formation Process



All of the following is from the Fusion bylaws

- The top six girls by score are automatically assigned to the first team, regardless of if they are a pitcher or catcher.
- The rest of the team is assigned by score provisionally as well, and then coach assigned to this team has the option to change with a valid softball argument that must be agreed to by the tryout coordinator and director.
  - No changes of this nature were made in the spring 2022 team formation process
- The process is then repeated for the next team, and so on until all teams have been created.
- If Fusion will be fielding multiple teams in the same class (two B teams at 10U, for example) we will use the scores to create even teams with coaches involved in that process.

# Team Formation Process



- Pitcher-and-catcher-specific team formation considerations
  - Fusion understands the major time and financial commitments required to get specialized pitching or catching training and wants to give families an opportunity to play on a team where they will get playing time at those positions to build their skills.
  - If a player tried out to be a pitcher and is placed on a team as the fourth or lower rated pitcher, then we will reach out to the parents to see if they would like to move to a lower-level team to be guaranteed pitching time (if an appropriate team exists).
  - The same applies for a player who tried out to be a catcher and is placed on a team as the third or lower rated catcher. We will reach out to the parents to see if they would like to move to a lower-level team to be guaranteed catching time.
  - In either case, if the parents decline the option to move down, they understand that they will not be guaranteed any pitching or catching time the entire season.
  - Players who do not specifically try out for pitching or catching are not guaranteed any playing time at those positions.

# Team Formation

- 12U will be completed first, then 10U
- This will take place in the following days after the evaluations, aiming for website release of all teams by Wednesday evening on the website
- Please be available via phone in the evening Sunday through Wednesday in case questions as previously discussed in the Team Formation Process slides need to be answered
- Don't forget your tryout number!
- **Everyone is required to observe the 24-hour waiting period before calling/emailing**

# Spring Fundraiser: Gerten's

- Very successful year over year
- Requirements (8U - HS)
  - All orders should be entered online
  - If you sell less than the minimum of \$300 per family, you will be invoiced up to \$150
  - Gift cards count half as much as flowers towards the \$300 total
  - For every \$25 in flowers sold over \$500, you will earn \$5 cash back (no gift cards can be applied here)
- Sales period is now through April 6
  - Product pickup on Saturday April 29 at Apple Valley Aquatic Center parking lot (near Eastview High School)
  - You can obtain your current family sales total or get questions answered by contacting Derek Lusk at [dlusk18@gmail.com](mailto:dlusk18@gmail.com)

# Spring Fundraiser: Gerten's

- IMPORTANT: Don't hold your orders until the end! Enter them when you receive them. See below from Gerten's:
- *Quantities are limited on fundraiser items. If an item sells out, it will be marked sold out on your website and customers will not be able to continue to order that item. Encourage your sellers to promote and have their end customers get their orders in early to avoid limited item availability!*
- All orders are entered online here:
  - <https://www.gertensfundraising.com/departments/apple-valley-fusion-fastpitch-softball-150.html>
  - Our store ID code for Apple Valley Fusion Fastpitch Softball: 150
  - Remember to enter the softball player's name in the "Seller's Name" box
  - Gerten's cannot accept any orders past the deadline

# Softball Volunteer Hours (8U+)

- 8U-16U families are required to volunteer up to 4 hours (max 8 per family)
  - Families with board members and head coaches are exempt
- Hours vary based on # of families participating
  - Actual volunteer hours have historically ranged around 3 hours per player
- Two DIBS opportunities exist for spring season
  - **May 20-21:** Lightning Strike Tournament (Eastview/JCRP)
  - **June 21:** In-House Celebration (*limited spots available*)
- If volunteer hours are not fulfilled, sportsengine account is invoiced \$400.



# Why we choose fundraising

- Keeps our fees lower than average for the area
  - Rosemount (\$375) Eagan (\$325) Lakeville (\$350) Burnsville (\$375 + jersey cost) Farmington (\$400)
- Allows us to provide:
  - Jerseys for each player (8U+ get new jerseys every two years)
  - Gate fees at all State/National Tournaments
  - Cost-effective winter training opportunities
  - In and off-season training for coaches and players
  - Equipment necessary for successful teams
  - Scholarships to AVHS and EVHS seniors



# Catcher Gear Subsidy

- **New for 2023**
- Fusion wants to help catchers go out and buy their own appropriate fitting gear
- Any catcher's gear or catching equipment bags purchased since September 30, 2022 and going forward can be 50% reimbursed up to \$200 in total paid back (i.e. up to \$400 worth of catching gear and bag was purchased, we'll reimburse half)

# Equipment:

## What you need for the season

- Matte black batting helmet with mask
- Glove that fits and is sized for softball
- Approved Softball Bat
- Fielders face mask
- Black softball pants, black belt and black socks
- Long-sleeved black undershirt for cooler weather (optional)
- Molded cleats (8U-12U; 14U & HS can have steel)
- All of the above can be found at Play It Again, Scheels, Dicks or Amazon

# Approved, Legal Bats



Must also be on the approved bat list:

<https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/Certified-Equipment/Equipment-Bats>

# Jerseys & Spirit Wear

- Players new to Fusion are provided a jersey
- If your player received a Fusion jersey last year they will continue to use that jersey this year
- Fusion then provides one new jersey every even year.
- Spirit wear and replacement jerseys are available at <https://www.cagear.com/product-category/school-gear/apple-valley-high-school/apple-valley-fastpitch/>

# How YOU can help your daughter succeed

- Set a good sportsmanship example for your child
  - Don't blame umpires
  - Don't blame other players
  - Don't criticize coach or others in the presence of your child
  - Drop off and pick up your child on time from practice
- Volunteer to help out
  - Be a Team Parent
  - Volunteer to help at practices
  - Become a Coach
  - Attend Board Meetings and get involved

# How YOU can help your daughter succeed

- Please review and adhere to the EVAA Code of Conduct which you have already signed when you registered
- If complaints arise, parents must address them in the following manner:
  - Address with coach of the team.
  - If unable to resolve issue, the coach must notify the Program Director
  - If the dispute cannot be resolved, the matter will be brought to the Fusion Softball Board who will be asked to rule on the matter.
  - If no resolution, matter will be brought to the main EVAA Board, who governs all EVAA sports.
  - ANY complaints not adhering to the above chain of events will automatically be referred back to it.

# How YOUR daughter can get the most from softball

- Arrive on time to practices and games
  - 30-60 minutes arrival before a game for warm-ups (coach determined)
- Be present and positive
  - Remain on the bench during games
  - Leave electronics in bags, at home or with parents
  - Cheer on teammates
  - Be respectful of coaches and their time

# Coaches, Assistants & Helpers

- All coaches/assistants/helpers who come in contact with players (i.e. on the field or on the bench) must have a background check and concussion awareness training on file with Tri-County Softball League before any activities – NO EXCEPTIONS
- Concussion training will transfer between sports. Save your certificate of completion.
- All coaches must have a signed Coach's Code of Conduct which we will collect once coaches and assistants have been named.



# Fusion Softball Board

Board meetings are open to the public and all meeting minutes and schedules are posted on the softball website.

Meetings are held on the first Sunday of the month at 6 p.m. at the Apple Valley Fieldhouse (near Hayes Arena).

- John Bullock, Director
- Jeril Metzger, Assistant Director & 8U Coordinator
- Mike Huray, Treasurer
- Kevin Drometer, Secretary
- Steve Weestrاند, Tryout Coordinator
- Steve Kuhn, Equipment Coordinator
- Jon Guba, Assistant Equipment Coordinator
- OPEN, Assistant Secretary
- OPEN, Assistant Treasurer
- NEED, 8U Coordinator
- Laura McDevitt, Concessions Coordinator
- Derek Lusk, Fundraising Coordinator
- Mike Simonson, Tournament Coordinator & In House (6U) Coordinator
- Rachel Schmidt, Uniform and Logo Wear Coordinator
- Derek Hunt, Webmaster & DIBS set up
- Jenny Carlson, Volunteer & Scholarship Coordinator
- Jon Chiglo, Coaching Development Coordinator
- OPEN, Assistant Concessions Coordinator
- OPEN, Field/Umpire Coordinator
- NEED, In House (6U) Coordinator

# Join the Fusion Board!

Many positions are vacating throughout 2023

**Now is the time to join for overlap and training opportunities!**

- **I don't have the time!** (None of us do!) Our current openings don't require much time. Many hands make small work!
- **I really don't know much about softball!** (You don't have to know a thing! Not knowing can actually be a **benefit** to the board.)
- **You seem to have it covered.** We do, but more hands make easy work and ensure the program continues well into the future.
- **The more you put into the program, the better for your girl and all girls involved.** Much like training, you get out of it what you put into it.

# Questions?

John Bullock, Director

[fusiondirector@evaasports.org](mailto:fusiondirector@evaasports.org)

# Appendix

# Softball Thoughts - Intro



- The following three articles have been published by Sean Hall over the past couple of years and remain extremely relevant today. I highly recommend looking through them and thinking about how it applies to your own softball philosophy.
- For context, Sean Hall is probably the most recognizable name in Minnesota Softball. He has coached for over 30 years, at each the association, club, and high school level. He is the current director of Midwest Speed and runs many clinics and tournaments throughout the region.

# “Tips for Trying Out” – Part 1



## Tips for Players Trying Out by Sean Hall

This is the time of year where many people are trying out to make different teams. Here are some tips to help you put your best foot forward in the process.

#1 Control your controllable's! There are some things you can't always control in a tryout. As much as we would like to hit every ball and catch everything hit at us, it is inevitable that we will have some mistakes. That being said you can always control your attitude, effort and your coach-ability. Keep a positive attitude, make sure you are always giving 100% and listen to what the coaches or tryout coordinators may be saying to you. If you do these things you will have a leg up on the competition. Most people will not control everything they can.

#2 TALK! This is something every player chooses to do or not to do. Everyone has the ability to talk but 90% of players don't do a very good job of it. Call for the ball during the play. Talk about where the ball is going prior to the pitch. Cheer on your teammates! This says a lot about you when you are cheering for the player that could take your spot. It tells everyone you are a team player!

#3 Get Dirty! A player that is willing to dive for a ball has said a lot about themselves. Whether you catch the ball or not it says your willing to go all out!

#4 Look to use your screw-ups/mistakes as a way to look good. The coaches want to see how your respond after you make a mistake! Show them you have a quick bounce back! Like Taylor Swift says “Shake it off” and be ready to make the next play.

#5 Dress Sharp! Look good play good! If you come into tryouts looking sloppy it might carry over into your game. Try to make sure you look the part!

# “Tips for Trying Out” – Part 2



#6 Have a positive personality! Most good coaches are going to put the best players on the field regardless of their personality. If two players are tied and one player is a Positive Patty and the other player is a Debbie Downer, Patty would have a leg up.

#7 When it is time to set things up, pickup balls & put things away don't lose these opportunities to make a positive impression on the coaches. Do these things all the time (not just in tryouts) and good things will generally come your way!

#8 Understand the tryout process! Know what you are being evaluated on! Know how many reps you are going to get. Study the pitches from the drill runner. Is it inside or is it outside, how fast is it? Are the ground balls one hoppers or two hoppers? Do they do a pattern?

#9 Breathe and have fun! As hard as this can be you need to try to do this! **YOU WILL MAKE MISTAKES!** Try to turn it into a positive!

There is no guarantee that if you follow these rules you will make the team that you want. But I firmly believe these are things that every player can control. No matter what happens if you can control your controllables you can look in the mirror and know you gave it your best shot! Your best is all you can give! That should take a lot of the stress out of tryouts! Good Luck!



# "Softball Status"



Don't let "Softball Status" Hurt your daughters Softball Experience by Sean Hall

- As we head into tryout week there will be thousands of girls trying to make the team of their dreams. A lot of girls will make the team they are dreaming about, yet many will be left disappointed and discouraged. As parents we often want the BEST for our kids. But sometimes the top team isn't the best thing for your daughter.
- If your daughter is a "BUBBLE" player, playing on that 2nd Tier Team could just save her career ESPECIALLY with a positive attitude from herself, her coaches and most importantly her parents. Most parents will be tempted to go down the road of consoling their daughter and giving her excuses like "it's all politics" or the tryout wasn't fair. Yes, sometimes these things are true, but this doesn't help your daughter. Try to get your daughter to look in the mirror to find out what she really needs to improve on to take that next step as a player. Let her know you will be right there with her. If you can turn the frustration of not making the team into fuel to "show them", you are now on your way to making it a great year. There will be many players that make the desired team that will rest on their laurels. Now is the time to start working to pass those players up.
- My favorite example out of thousands of players was Chrissy Sward. Chrissy was on the North St. Paul "C" Team at 14U. Chrissy wasn't the most coordinated player but had all sorts of athletic ability and speed. She worked extremely hard with her father Bill to get better. Eventually Chrissy grew into her body she became very coordinated. Fast forward 4 years later and Chrissy was the Metro Player of the Year and had a scholarship to play softball at the University of Minnesota. I was lucky enough to Coach Chrissy for two years at North St. Paul.



# “Softball Status” continued



Here are benefits of a bubble player playing on a Lower Tier Team.

1. More playing time at prime positions.
  2. More at bats and being near the top of the order.
  3. More innings for pitchers and catchers.
  4. Great opportunity for working on leadership skills.
  5. Less stressful situations. Making it easier to go out and have fun playing. This makes it easier to perform.
  6. The higher the level the more teams are focused on "winning". This isn't necessarily good for skill development.
- The only downside I see is that you might not be playing against the same competition as the “A” Team. Therefore, I love it when I see teams challenge themselves and play against the best competition. I have a lot more respect for a coach/team that goes 2-3 in an “A” Tournament than a team that sandbags down and wins the “B” Tournament.
  - I also think if I am the 13th player on an A team, one year it's great to play on the team because you will learn a lot, but if that player is near the same position the following year, playing on a lower team would be a better option.
  - If your one of those players/parents that didn't make the team that you wanted take the High Road. “Look in the Mirror” and get to work. It may be the best thing that ever happened to your daughter. Good Luck!
- P.S This logic works the same for community “B” and “C” Teams.

# “The Best Softball Parents”



## TOP TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BEST SOFTBALL PARENTS!

Being a softball parent can be hard. Parents spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars on team fees, travel, lessons and more. Being a softball parent is also a huge investment of time for an entire family. Sometimes it is easy to get frustrated when things aren't going the way that you had hoped. However, these are some of the best characteristics of the Best Softball Parents.

1. The parents who get involved and offer to help with organizing team outings, tournaments and carpooling or whatever the team needs without an expectation of getting anything in return.
2. Parents who generally take the time to build up a player that maybe had a rough game or cheer loudly for ALL players on the team.
3. The best softball parents keep winning and losing in perspective. They find the positives after a tough loss and realize many times we can learn more after a tough loss than we can an easy win.
4. Always have their players at practice and games early, dressed and ready to participate. If they aren't going to be at practice, they let the coaches know early.

# “The Best Softball Parents”



5. They are friendly to parents and players that are on the other team. This helps promote a positive game experience for all involved.
6. Appreciate the hard work of the umpires and don't work the umps on every call that doesn't go their way.
7. They welcome in new families to the team and help those families feel part of the team regardless of how much they may have in common with them off the field. This really helps everyone feel like part of the team.
8. They don't make excuses for their daughters. They hold them accountable. When adversity happens, instead of giving them excuses for failure they have them look in the mirror and take accountability.
9. Support their daughters WIN or LOSE regardless of how they performed. They make sure their daughters know their value isn't related to their softball performance.
10. When communicating with the coaches they are generally positive but aren't afraid to bring up important concerns directly if it helps the team, even if it's an uncomfortable conversation.

# The Softball Box



Receive boxes filled with Softball specific related products!

- Monthly, Bi-Monthly and Every 90 Day subscriptions available.
- One time purchase boxes also available.
- Items Include: Training aids, Equipment, Sunglasses, Tee Shirt, Gum, Seeds, Softball Accessories, Journals, Bat Grips, Batting Gloves, Sunscreen etc.

Website – [www.thesoftballbox.com](http://www.thesoftballbox.com)  
Email – [contact@thesoftballbox.com](mailto:contact@thesoftballbox.com)

Facebook – The Softball Box  
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## The Softball Box

We **LOVE** everything softball! Our goal is to bring joy to your day each time you receive your softball box.

- 15% off discount code = AVFUSION