

# 2024 BNGSA Coach's Packet

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# LETTER FROM BNGSA VP AND PRESIDENT

First and foremost, thank you for coaching a BNGSA in-town team this summer. You have an incredible opportunity to spend quality time with some truly wonderful kids (which may or may not include your own daughter), and in my four years coaching at this level, I find that I look forward to our summer nights at the ballpark more and more with every passing year. My hope is that you're just as excited as I am about the season to come!

Before we get started, I want to share a few points of emphasis for this summer. This is sports, so I understand that winning is fun and a huge part of what makes softball so enjoyable for a lot of girls and their families. However, winning is a very small part of what makes BNGSA's summer in-town league so special. As a coach, we would like you to prioritize getting your girls to do the following three things:

1. **Love the Game** – If softball is fun, the girls will want to come back and play again next summer. They may even decide they want to join a BNGSA travel team or their junior high or high school teams. If softball is *not* fun, they'll quit. It's as simple as that. So enjoy your time with these girls—play games at practice, dole out lots of high fives, crack jokes, lift them up when they do something good. We want these girls to love softball, and the adults in charge of these teams have a lot to do with making that happen.
2. **Learn to be a Good Teammate** – If you coach a younger team, you'll have dugout cheers stuck in your head for months, but if that's what it takes to get these girls working together and supporting each other, so be it! We want girls up on the fence cheering their teammates on. We want them chatting with each other out in the field. We want them encouraging the pitcher and back-slapping the teammate that made a frustrating error. We want kindness and comradery and respect and support. These are all things you can bring out in your team.
3. **Improve** – Every kid can get better at something this summer. If they say, "I'm not good at this," you tell them, "You're not good at this *yet*, but we're going to get a little bit better at it." They don't have to be Jennie Finch or Jocelyn Ayo by mid-July, but they should believe they can get better. Your job this summer is to help them make small steps toward improvement, and to make them believe that improvement is possible.

I apologize if all of this sounds a little cheesy, but this is the heart and soul of what we do at BNGSA. We're grateful for the time, energy, sweat, and tears you're about to put into these girls, and like you, we're looking forward to another great summer at the ballpark.

*Joel Brigham, BNGSA In-Town Vice President*

*Lindsay Luthe, BNGSA President*

# BNGSA Contacts

Age group coordinators are the primary point of contact for coaches. They will talk through and resolve any issues that arise, or they will refer you to the appropriate board member who can help.

If you are unable to get in touch with your age group coordinator and have an urgent need, field question, or concern, please contact the BNGSA In-Town Vice President. If you have an overall concern or need to escalate an issue further, please contact the BNGSA President.

Role	Name	Phone	Email
Instructional 6-8 Coordinators	Adam Meyer	314-304-6140	<a href="mailto:adam.m.meyer@gmail.com">adam.m.meyer@gmail.com</a>
	Ashleigh Myers	309-287-6771	<a href="mailto:aemyer2@gmail.com">aemyer2@gmail.com</a>
10U Coordinator	Joel Brigham	309-824-4422	<a href="mailto:joelbrigham@gmail.com">joelbrigham@gmail.com</a>
12U Coordinators	Katrina Fuchs	815-238-0613	<a href="mailto:katrinared@hotmail.com">katrinared@hotmail.com</a>
	Kip Hayden	309-825-3127	<a href="mailto:hayden12_2001@yahoo.com">hayden12_2001@yahoo.com</a>
15U Coordinator	Lindsey Delahunt	309-838-1517	<a href="mailto:lindseydelahunt@gmail.com">lindseydelahunt@gmail.com</a>
19U Coordinators	Dan Waller	309-660-7415	<a href="mailto:d.walr1025@gmail.com">d.walr1025@gmail.com</a>
	Randy Roser	309-825-1973	<a href="mailto:roserrg63@gmail.com">roserrg63@gmail.com</a>
Equipment Coordinators	Ron Ferris	309-846-6590	<a href="mailto:rferris@bngsa.org">rferris@bngsa.org</a>
	Randy Roser	309-825-1973	<a href="mailto:roserrg63@gmail.com">roserrg63@gmail.com</a>
Field Maintenance	George York		
Field Scheduler	Joel Brigham	309-824-4422	<a href="mailto:joelbrigham@gmail.com">joelbrigham@gmail.com</a>
Umpire Scheduler	Savanah Clifton		
Social Media	Kate Miglin	309-721-6340	<a href="mailto:kmmiglin@gmail.com">kmmiglin@gmail.com</a>
In-Town Vice President	Joel Brigham	309-824-4422	<a href="mailto:joelbrigham@gmail.com">joelbrigham@gmail.com</a>
BNGSA President	Lindsay Luthe	309-262-3007	<a href="mailto:Lynzlu12@gmail.com">Lynzlu12@gmail.com</a>

## Equipment and Uniform Pick-up

Equipment was distributed at the Coach's Clinic on April \_\_\_\_\_. Please report any problems with equipment to your age group coordinator.

1. Depending on age group, each team received a bag of equipment containing much of the following:
  - a. 1-2 Softball Bats
  - b. 7-8 Game Balls to be used when home team
  - c. Several practice balls
  - d. Batting Helmets (1 per each player that indicated they didn't have one)
  - e. Catcher's equipment (1 set)
  - f. One Facemask
  - g. One Tanner hitting tee
  - h. One bow-net
2. Each team received one equipment box key. This key will open all the equipment boxes at your league's fields. Report any missing or depleted items to your age-group coordinator.
3. Each team will receive uniform jerseys [before the last practice in late May/early June](#). You have been provided a copy of each player's contact information along with their requested shirt size. Use this information to distribute the [correct jersey sizes](#) to your players.
4. All equipment and keys should be returned to a BNGSA board member at the end of the season. [Equipment return will take place once you are eliminated from the in-town tournament and should be returned at the BNGSA equipment shed at the southwest corner of the Champion Fields complex.](#)

[A few notes about uniform distribution:](#)

- [We order a precise number of jerseys for each team, so please make sure each child receives the size they ordered. Your league coordinator should have emailed you a spreadsheet with that information at the start of the season, so if you're missing this information, please contact them ASAP.](#)
- [Please distribute the jerseys as soon as possible and encourage them to try them on right away.](#)
- [We will do one re-order of jerseys in the spring to accommodate any issues or mistakes, but it will be imperative that you communicate any sizing issues/missing uniforms/new players as quickly as possible!](#)

# Player Registration Forms

Each coach must carry the player's registration forms with you to all BNGSA practices and games. It gives you permission to seek medical treatment for the player in the absence of a parent or guardian.

## Safety

1. Helmets and NOCSAE-approved face masks MUST be worn by all base runners and batters (at the plate or warming-up). Chinstraps are encouraged but not required by USA Softball Rules. Shiny chrome helmets are not allowed.
2. A player must wear a helmet with a facemask when she:
  - a. Retrieves a bat from the field of play (must be a registered BNGSA player from your team).
  - b. Coaches first or third base
  - c. Warms up a pitcher on or off the field
3. Tennis shoes or softball shoes with soft or hard RUBBER cleats are acceptable. *Metal cleats are prohibited.*
4. Exposed jewelry should not be worn. Medical alert necklaces or bracelets are not considered jewelry. If worn, they should be taped to the body, leaving the medical information visible.
5. All players must be on the bench, inside the dugout, or behind the fence while not playing during a game. This includes conforming to any specific rules in place at the park limiting access to dugouts and/or designating specific areas for players.
6. Players should be instructed to not throw their bats after they have hit the ball. This could cause harm to themselves or others.
  - a. First offense: the batter should receive a warning from the umpire
  - b. Second offense: Umpire discretion of automatic out or ejection from game.
7. 10U League: The coach retrieving balls that get past the catcher must be an adult registered with USA Softball. A minor should never be used in this role.
8. CELL PHONES ARE PROHIBITED in the dugouts or on the field during a game or practice.

## Injury & Insurance

If there is an injury of any kind, please contact your age group coordinator and email details of the incident within 24 hours of the injury. Your age group coordinator will help you and the player's family get in touch with the BNGSA insurance coordinator who will then help the family with insurance questions and filing the medical claim.

# PARTICIPATION & SUBBING GUIDELINES

## HIGH SCHOOL PLAYERS ON BNGSA TEAMS

According to IHSA by-laws, a girl playing high school softball CANNOT participate in BNGSA practices or games until her high school season is over:

### 3.100 INDEPENDENT TEAM PARTICIPATION

3.101 During the school season for a given sport, in a school which maintains a school team in that sport, a student shall not participate on any non-school team, nor as an individual unattached in non-school competition, in that given sport or in any competition that involves the skill of the sport in question. Violation shall cause ineligibility for a period not to exceed 365 days. An exception may be made by the Executive Director under the guidelines adopted by the Board of Directors for competitions sanctioned directly by the National Governing Body or its official Illinois affiliate for the sport.

## IN-TOWN PLAYERS SUBBING ON TRAVEL TEAMS

1. Players from any age group can sub on a travel team if requested by the travel coach
2. Players can sub up to eight games during the in-town season (one inning played counts as one game subbed).

## TRAVEL PLAYERS SUBBING ON IN-TOWN TEAMS IS NOT ALLOWED

## IN-TOWN PLAYERS SUBBING ON OTHER IN-TOWN TEAMS

1. Teams may use a substitute player if they have fewer than nine players for a given game (though teams can play with as few as seven players, including subs).
2. Subs can only be used to get to **10 players, as this covers a potential "no-show."**
3. Sub players in 8U, 10U, 12U, and 19U may only sub at their own age level. Sub players in 15U can sub for either 15U or 19U.
4. Sub players must be registered as BNGSA in-town player for the summer of 2024.
5. Subs must bat last in the line-up.
6. Subs cannot play the positions of Pitcher or Catcher.
7. Multiple players from another team are allowed to sub together. This "buddy system" approach may help in cases where girls may be hesitant to sub with a group of girls they don't know.
8. Subs are only allowed during the regular season; NO subs for Tournament games.
9. Players cannot sub on other teams if it is going to leave their team short players.
10. When you have your coaches/umpire meeting before the game, be sure to make the opposing team and umpires aware that you will be using subs

## SUBSTITUTION RULES

1. Coaches should follow specific participation guidelines for innings played and pitched per their age-group-specific rules.
2. Otherwise, [defensive](#) players may be substituted freely.
3. [To keep the game moving, a substitution baserunner can be used for your catcher only. We want all players to get experience running the bases, so please only substitute catchers if the inning is drawing to a close \(as in, you're approaching three outs or four runs scored\).](#)
4. Players arriving late to the game should be added to the end of the batting order at any time, but the opposing coach should be notified of the additional player.
5. Players who are injured during play or who have to leave the game early can be taken out of the lineup. If this happens, their position in the lineup is ignored. It does not create an automatic out in the lineup.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT FOLLOWING GUIDELINES

- [For honest mistakes, teams may be asked by the umpire to immediately correct the problem \(for example, replacing a pitcher who's pitched too many innings or replacing an incorrect substitution runner\). If opposing coaches notice a mistake, they should bring it to the umpire's attention immediately and respectfully.](#)
- Forfeits, suspensions, or other disciplinary action also are possible on a case-by-case basis.

## BEFORE PRACTICES START

Hopefully, you have already been in touch to inform players and parents that you are their coach. If you haven't, please do that as soon as possible.

### PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

1. Give parents your contact information
2. Provide links to practice and game schedules
3. [Set a time for a parents' meeting, where you can introduce yourself and set expectations for the season.](#)

### PARENTS' MEETING

1. Introduce yourself and your assistant coaches to the players and parents.
2. Communicate the philosophy of the League:
  - a. Developing good sportsmanship
  - b. Teaching basic softball skills and how the game is played
  - c. Providing all girls equal opportunities to practice and play
  - d. Concentrating on having fun for both players and parents
  - e. Discussing emphasis on respect and appreciation of/for our umpires
3. Explain the BNGSA experience is for players AND parents. Recognize those parents who have volunteered to help as team parents. Invite others to become actively involved.
4. Other important points to emphasize:
  - a. Parents are expected to pick-up players promptly from practices and games.
  - b. Parents and coaches should **NEVER** leave a player alone at a field with no adult.
  - c. Coaches, players, and parents should keep comments and fan behavior positive.
  - d. Criticizing umpires will **NOT** be tolerated by coaches, players or parents.
  - e. Our goal is to have a positive recreational experience.
5. Encourage parents to use [quickscores.com/bngsa](http://quickscores.com/bngsa) to view schedules, standings, and results.
6. Discuss your practice schedule.
7. Give parents and players a chance to ask questions.



# PRACTICES

We schedule every available field for practice throughout the spring, leaving no dates for rain makeups. If a practice is canceled, you will not make it up. Coaches are welcome to work together to trade practice dates and time, but please inform your league coordinator if you decide to change anything so they can update the schedule on QuickScores.

## Practice Plans & Drills

For each practice, be prepared with a plan of skills and drills to cover with players. There is a "Coaching" page at the [BNGSA.org](http://BNGSA.org) with a wealth of resources to help with this, [or you can speak with your league coordinator for ideas and/or suggestions.](#)

# GAMES

1. Coaches are NOT allowed to change the rules approved by BNGSA.
2. Please observe and obey all parking signs and laws.
3. Games:
  - a. Most teams hold a warm-up session (approximately 30-45 minutes) before the game. [Because early games start at 5:30 and many parents work, try to avoid asking them to show up much earlier than that.](#)
  - b. The two teams should share the infield for fielding practice
    - i. Home team gets the infield from :30 - :15 before the game
    - ii. Visiting team gets the infield from :15 - :00 before the game
  - c. Soft toss or tee work into the bow nets will help get hitters warmed up. Younger teams can use the outfield and surrounding areas for hitting practice.
  - d. DO NOT HIT [OR PITCH](#) INTO THE FENCES
4. Before the game:
  - a. BNGSA contractors and Parks & Rec staff drag and line most of the fields
  - b. Home team (listed second in the scorebook and on QuickScores) should occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup>-base dugout, provide a new game ball, and set up bases for each game
  - c. [Head coaches should meet at home plate with the umpire a few minutes before gametime. You can briefly discuss basic ground rules and any points of emphasis that the umpire has been asked to make. Please don't put the umpire on the spot by asking for a specific strike zone, but rather encourage your hitters to be aggressive and look for a pitch to hit.](#)
  - d. Write down the umpire's name, as you'll need it for the score report (and BNGSA needs it to make sure our umps get paid).
5. After the game:
  - a. Home team takes up bases and returns base plugs to the storage box.

- b. Both teams are responsible for replacing the equipment and locking storage box
  - c. Both teams are responsible for raking the field to fill in low spots around pitching area, batters' boxes, and bases. Use water when available to compact dirt around the pitching area and batters' boxes.
  - d. Both teams are responsible for picking up trash in dugouts and around fields. Bring a plastic trash bag for use if the trashcan is full.
  - e. Last coach to leave is responsible for turning off the lights at Maxwell and O'Neil. The keys are located in the equipment box and must be returned once you're done. Please do NOT take light keys home. (You do not have to worry about the lights at Champion, and no other fields use lights).
  - f. NCHS Only - Last coach to leave keeps bases in ground and locks up main gate.
6. Report scores:
- Winning coach reports the game score to Age Group Coordinator, including:
- a. Age Group, Team Sponsor Names & Numbers with Final Score
  - b. Umpire's First & Last Name
  - c. Report immediately following your game, [no later than one hour after the conclusion of the game.](#)
  - d. Age Group Coordinators will enter in [www.quickscores.com/bngsa](http://www.quickscores.com/bngsa)

# SPEEDING UP THE GAME

The best games are those that move at a fast pace. The following are suggestions to help speed up the game:

1. Have players notify you in advance of absences.
2. Have players bring water to the games.
3. Have the batting order and defensive positions planned and written down ahead of time rather than scrambling ten minutes before first pitch. Most In-Town coaches create a spreadsheet or matrix before the game in order to ensure equal participation by all of their players.
4. Have a parent or assistant coach keep the scorebook.
5. Encourage players to hustle in and out of the dugout at the start of each half-inning. Make sure players know their defensive assignments prior to taking the field.
6. Have an assistant coach or team captain sit with the players and handle the batting order. They are charged with getting the right player up to the plate quickly (with a bat and a helmet) and getting the on-deck/in-the-hole hitters ready.
7. Have an assistant coach warm up your starting pitcher prior to the game. Sit your relief pitcher out during the inning prior to them appearing as pitcher so they can warm-up with an assistant coach.
8. Have the catcher leave on their chest protector and shin guards on if the catcher they aren't likely to bat in an inning. Assign an assistant coach or team captain to help the catcher get into her gear between innings.
9. Take advantage of the courtesy runner rule (see Age Specific Rules) to give you catcher a quick breather and time to get their gear on ahead of the next half-inning.
10. Encourage the players to swing the bats. Players drawing walks make for long counts and very long games.
11. Encourage pitchers to avoid stepping off the mound between pitches to practice their motion.

# WEATHER POLICY

## RAIN POLICY

1. Rained-out games will be announced on BNGSA.org (In-Town → Fields). *If your league coordinator is running a GroupMe, they will announce those updates there, as well.*

*NOTE: Champion Fields is not under our discretion, so it's possible that games may be canceled at Champion while the rest of our fields are deemed playable (or vice versa). Champion also may cancel on rainy days before or after the rest of the fields have been decided.*

2. Once the game is canceled, please notify your families as soon as possible. *We suggest using a group app like Remind, GroupMe, TeamReach or something similar for these types of communications, as that's easier than calling/texting parents one at a time.*
3. The decision to cancel in-progress games will be left to the umpire. *At Champion Fields, it may also be decided by facility officials.*
4. If a game is rained out, we will try to reschedule it. There are some blank dates left in the schedule purposefully to accommodate rainouts, so we'll do our best. That said, games canceled later in the season are less likely to be rescheduled, and in all cases we'll communicate with coaches about how these rescheduled games will (or will not) move forward.

## LIGHTNING POLICY

1. If lightning or thunder occurs during regular season games, the game will be canceled and will not resume that day.
2. Games are not automatically canceled just because earlier games are canceled.
3. If lightning or thunder occurs within 15 minutes of game time, the game will be canceled by the umpire. If the umpire has not yet arrived, and the coaches see lightning or hear thunder, coaches should make it their priority to keep everyone safe and cancel the game, if necessary. Do not stand under trees or by fences or bleachers if there is lightning in the area.
4. If lightning or thunder occurs during our end-of-season tournament, we will try to wait out the weather. Normal Parks and Rec will be the ones making the decisions for their fields and may ask us to leave the complex and return to our vehicles. If this happens, please keep in contact with your players and Age Group Coordinator.

## HEAT & AIR QUALITY POLICIES

- *In cases of extreme heat or poor air quality we may adjust game times and durations or cancel games.*
- *Air quality adjustments will be made using the AQI Basics website. Air quality levels between 101-150 will result in a reduction of game time. Anything over 151 will result in cancellation.*

## FIELD MAINTENANCE

PREP/MAINTENANCE	PARKING	WEATHER
<p>NPRD, BPR, or BNGSA prepares fields for all games.</p> <p>COACHES maintain fields after games.</p> <p>No throwing/hitting directly into any fence.</p> <p>NCHS: NO pitching and batting on the grass. Position batter at 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> to practice. Do not pull the bases. LOCK the main gate when exiting the facility.</p>	<p>OAKLAND: NO PARKING along the field side of the street.</p> <p>MCGRAW: Parking is at the school.</p> <p>NCHS: NO PARKING inside the complex. Handicapped or elderly spectators may be dropped off by the baseball field, but all vehicles must park in the parking lot.</p>	<p>BNGSA.org (In-Town <input type="checkbox"/> Fields)</p> <p>BNGSA will update the Field page on our website and social media platforms by <b>4:00 pm</b> when weather or field conditions are questionable.</p> <p>Rely on good judgment and decision of umpires when it comes to severe weather.</p>
CONTACT: your Age Group Coordinator or BNGSA In-Town VP, Joel Brigham (309.824.4422)		

## CHAMPION FIELDS

PREP/MAINTENANCE	PARKING	WEATHER
<p>NPRD prepares fields before and maintains fields after games.</p> <p>No throwing/hitting directly into any fence.</p>	<p>NO PARKING in grass. Once the south lot is full, overflow parking must go to the Normal West lot where there is 3X more parking.</p> <p>NO PARKING along Gregory Street. Violators are subject to tow.</p> <p>Shuttle service with a six-seat golf cart is available for those with physical challenges that prevent them from making the long walk from parking lot to fields or vice versa.</p>	<p>309-433-3434 option 4</p> <p>NPRD offers a weather information line that will be updated when weather or field conditions are questionable.</p> <p>The softball complex subscribes to a weather service. When severe weather (lightning/tornado) is in the area, warnings are received and an all-clear announcement is made by staff. Please, follow instructions and get players to safety.</p>

## MAXWELL FIELDS

PREP/MAINTENANCE	PARKING	WEATHER
<p>BNGSA prepares fields for all games.</p> <p>COACHES maintain fields after games by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>returning bases/plugs</li> <li>raking</li> <li><i>nightly</i> watering and compacting dirt in batters' boxes and pitching area</li> <li>locking restrooms and turning off lights</li> </ul> <p>No throwing/hitting directly into any fence.</p>	<p>NO PARKING or driving in grass. The land between PJHS parking lot and fields is mostly Unit 5's, and they are very determined to keep vehicles off of the grass. If you don't adhere to this, you could be ticketed or towed.</p>	<p>309-433-3434 option 4</p> <p>NPRD offers a weather information line that will be updated when weather or field conditions are questionable.</p> <p>The NPRD weather service is not intended for Maxwell Fields. Coaches must rely on their good judgment and the decision of the umpires when it comes to severe weather.</p>

# 501(c)3

## Volunteer and Employer Programs

BNGSA is qualified under the applicable IRS code sections as a 501(c)3 organization. Some companies have programs that donate money to 501(c)3 organizations on behalf of employees who donate their time to those organizations.

If you are a State Farm employee and have donated at least 40 hours of service to the BNGSA, you can direct the State Farm foundation to contribute \$500 to the BNGSA through the State Farm Good Neighbor Grant Program.

These donations have been used by the BNGSA to

- Make shed improvements to preserve equipment and contribute towards umpire shelter
- Purchase new helmets for all age groups
- Purchase new bats
- Rebuild the batting cages at Champion Fields
- Install benches at some of the fields
- Install fences at some of the fields
- Build storage facilities at Champion Fields
- Install batting cages at Champion Fields and Maxwell Park
- Purchase pitching machines
- Purchase field maintenance equipment
- Purchase new catcher's equipment
- Purchase bow-nets and tees

We hope that you keep BNGSA in mind when it comes to these programs.

PLEASE NOTE: As of 2023, State Farm has updated their State Farm Companies Foundation programs and no longer includes local athletic programs like BNGSA as eligible non-profits.