

USCAA
GIRLS' SOFTBALL PROGRAM
RULES AND REGULATIONS
(Revised September, 2010)

Purpose

The purpose of the USCAA Girls' Softball Program is to provide an opportunity for children of township residents to learn to play softball. The program emphasis is to create a "recreational," yet competitive environment in which the participants can learn the sportsmanship and skills necessary to play at a more advanced level while enjoying the fun of a team sport.

General

Slow pitch softball is a sport that is available to women at all levels of life. It is usually offered as a recreational sport. Fast pitch softball is a more competitive sport that is also available to women at higher levels, including high school, college and beyond. It requires dedication to acquire skill development and game experience for fast pitch. The USCAA will make every effort to provide the opportunity to all girls in the USC community to participate in slow pitch and fast pitch games and to improve their skills to enable those who wish to compete at higher levels, including high school and college, to do so.

Eligibility

Children of current residents of Upper St. Clair are eligible to participate. In addition, children of families who can substantiate they are moving into the township during the season are eligible to participate.

A registration form, signed by a parent or legal guardian, must be completed and submitted to the USCAA Softball Commissioner. The information required for registration includes the following:

1. Player's full name
2. Address of USC residence and telephone number
3. Date of Birth
4. Waiver of Liability
5. Signature of parent or legal guardian as to the truth of the above information
6. Signature of parent or legal guardian as to having read and accepting the USCAA Parent Code of Conduct

Any false or misleading information contained in the Softball registration form, particularly regarding the residence or the birth date of the participant, will affect the child's eligibility to participate in USCAA programs. Birth Certificates may be required for any registrant during the course of the season, as some age groups will play in the traditional "in house" format (for all or part of the season) and others will play in leagues comprised of other local communities. This is based on numbers of players and teams, as well as other criteria/availability.

A fee per participant will be established by the USCAA and payment must accompany the registration form submitted to the Commissioner.

All registration forms and fees must be received by the Softball Commissioner no later than the deadline stipulated on the form to guarantee participation in the program. Any registration received after that date will be subject to placement on a waiting list if there are no openings at the time the registration is received.

Age Groups

January 1st is the cutoff date for all age groups. Players will be grouped in the following divisions based upon the player's age on January 1st of the year of the same seasonal year (e.g. age on January 1, 2011 for the season):

1. Under 8 year olds (Slow Pitch)
2. Under 10 years old (Slow Pitch)
3. Under 10 year olds (Fast Pitch)
4. Under 12 years old (Slow Pitch)
5. Under 12 year olds (Fast Pitch)
6. Under 15 years old (Slow Pitch)
7. Under 15 year olds (Fast Pitch)
8. Under 18 years old (Slow Pitch)
9. Under 18 year olds (Fast Pitch)

Players can NOT play in a younger age group than their age would dictate but MAY play "up" one division level, if approved by the Softball Commissioner.

Program Administration

The USCAA Board of Directors appoints a Softball Commissioner, who is responsible for the overall administration of the Girls' Softball Program. The responsibilities of the Commissioner include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Conducting registration of eligible participants
2. Setting the guidelines for eligibility
3. Controlling revenues and expenditures
4. Maintaining Equipment requirements, including uniforms, balls, etc.
5. Procuring field permits for practices and games
6. Defining league structure and age groupings
7. Enforcing Coach, Manager, and Parent Codes of Conduct
8. Coordinating umpires
9. Enforcing compliance with rules and disciplinary procedures
10. Enforcing disciplinary actions
11. Providing clinics for coaches and/or players
12. Defining Travel and post-season team policies
13. Ensuring compliance of the softball program with the policies of the USCAA

To assist in this effort, the Commissioner will select, on an annual basis, individuals to act as League Directors for the various age groups. League Directors are permitted to coach in the age group in which they are Director because the League Director does not select the teams. The Commissioner may also appoint an Assistant Commissioner from the USCAA Board to assist in the administration of the program. **THE LEAGUE DIRECTORS AND THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MUST BE APPROVED BY THE USCAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**

Formation of Teams

The League Directors are assigned the following responsibilities within their respective age group, with the guidance and assistance of the Softball Commissioner:

1. Formation of teams as determined by the size of the league
 - a. The Commissioner will determine the appropriate number of participants per team in each age division based upon registrations received and projected late registrants. Every player must be assigned to a team. Late registrations will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which the registrations are

received and then will be placed on teams by the Softball Commissioner, if and when space becomes available in the appropriate age group. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Commissioner to make sure that all players are as evenly distributed throughout their respective age groups/divisions as player ability allows. This will enable each team to remain competitive while continuing to uphold the recreational aspect of the Association.

b. The following represents the preferred team size limits in order to allow each girl maximize playing time:

- i) Under 8 year olds (Slow Pitch) ----- 10 players
- ii) Under 10 years old (Slow and Fast Pitch) ----- 12 players
- iii) Under 12 year olds (Slow and Fast Pitch) ----- 12 players
- iv) Under 15 year olds (Slow and Fast Pitch) ----- 12 players
- v) Under 18 year olds (Slow and Fast Pitch) ----- 12 players

2) Team Balance

- a. For all age groups (Except for Under 8 years old slow pitch), team selection will be based on the following criteria in order to insure all teams can remain competitive in their respective leagues.
- b. Pitchers will be placed on teams as evenly as possible to ensure competitive balance
- c. Players will be placed on teams so that the age distribution will be well-balanced within each division.
- d. Every effort will be made to give each player equal playing time in multiple positions as outside league rules, weather, "run rules," etc. permit.
- e. Under 8 year old slow pitch players will be assigned to teams based on mutual requests, as well as by school/grade attended.
- f. For all other age groups, every effort will be made to accommodate mutual requests by players to be placed on the same team while still adhering to the above criteria.

3) Make up games

- a. Assist the individual coaches in rescheduling field time and umpires for any missed HOME games

4) Scheduling

Slow pitch from Under 10 to Under 18 age groups and Fast pitch scheduling will be determined by the individual league in which teams in each age group participate. Every attempt will be made to ensure that all teams have a total of 13-16 games during the course of the season (weather permitting). All coaches will be responsible for scheduling make-up games/umpires (see "umpire" section) for their HOME games based upon field availability. Field availability must be confirmed through the Softball Commissioner prior to rescheduling.

Each season will begin around mid-April and run through the end of July, based on individual age divisions (e.g. Under 18 cannot start the season until after the High School season is finished). It is possible playoff games may follow the end of the regular season based on the final record of the teams, games played, and individual league rules.

The Director of the Under 8 years old slow pitch age group determines a playing schedule so that each team will practice/play NO MORE THAN 2-3 TIMES PER WEEK. The season will start mid-April and will finish at the end of the school year.

Head Coach Selection

The Softball Commissioner will identify individuals who have noted on their child's registration form or who have otherwise indicated a desire to coach or assist in coaching a team. The Girls Softball Commissioner and the USCAA Board will review and approve ALL coaching selections prior to officially notifying each head coach.

Preference will be given to head coaches who satisfy the following criteria:

1. Have demonstrated good sportsmanship and mature behavior in handling young people
2. Have exhibited a proper understanding of the purpose and objectives of the Girls' Softball Program and the USCAA
3. Have the potential to enhance the Girls' Softball Program, in general, and to contribute to the positive development of the participants, in particular
4. Have the interpersonal skills to effectively communicate and cooperate with the commissioner, league directors, umpires, other coaches/head coaches, parents and anyone else that he/she may encounter during the course of the season so as to represent Upper St. Clair and the USCAA in a positive and sportsman-like manner.
5. Have been able to meet the minimum criteria required on appropriate background checks and Child Clearances, as determined by the Board of Directors of the USCAA.

Field Boxes/Garage

League Directors, assisted by the Softball Commissioner, will maintain the necessary supplies that are used by all the teams in the field boxes used by the USCAA and designated for Girls' Softball. The field boxes/garage will contain the following:

1. Field white
2. Field white liner
3. Bases
4. Home plate (where applicable)
5. Pitching Rubbers
6. String/tape measure to measure the bases , pitching mound, and pitching mound circle
7. Batting helmets
8. Cather's equipment
9. Pitching machine equipment

Medical Supplies

The league/USCAA will provide a first aid kit in each field box. There will also be a Primary First Aid Kit at the concession stand at Morton, Municipal, and Boyce/Mayview Fields.

Disciplinary Problems

Each League Director will provide to the Softball Commissioner a report of any dispute, game protest, game forfeiture, or violation of the USCAA Parent Code of Conduct that occurs within his/her age group. Such reports should be communicated (verbally or in writing) as soon as possible after the incident has occurred in order to resolve the problem in a timely and efficient manner.

Disciplinary problems involving an umpire's action/conduct will be reported to the Softball Commissioner. In the case of an in-house league umpire, the Softball Commissioner will resolve the problem her/himself directly with the umpire. In the case of an outside league, the Softball Commissioner will resolve the problem with the appropriate umpire coordinator.

Uniforms/Equipment

As part of the registration fee, each player will receive a uniform that will be distributed by the coaches at the start of the season. These uniforms are the player's own to keep. The League Director of each age group will be given equipment to distribute to individual Head Coached at the beginning of the season. The League Director will then collect this equipment at the end of each season and return it to the Softball Commissioner for inventory, inspection (for safety) and storage. Unexplained loss and/or excessive use of equipment and supplies by individual coaches will be addressed by the Softball Commissioner.

All-Star Game

If playing in an in-house league, an All-Star Game for Under 10 Slow and Fast pitch age groups will be scheduled based on seasonal opportunity and player availability, as determined by the League Directors and the Softball Commissioner. For teams playing in a multi-community league, the all-star game will be scheduled by the directors of that league.

Umpires

Umpires are provided by the individual "outside" leagues for each age division. In the event of cancellation, Umpires will be notified at least ONE HOUR PRIOR to game time and will be notified regarding rescheduling of that game when dates/times are available. Failure to notify the umpires of cancellations will result in unnecessary payment of the umpiring fee. Fees are paid by USCAA to the respective leagues in which individual age divisions are playing.

Player Responsibility

A reasonable degree of commitment is expected by each player. Players should keep in mind that the numbers of players per team has been structured to afford each girl optimum playing time. Failure to field an entire team may result in forfeiture of that game and, subsequently, a loss to the team as a whole. Consideration should be made to the rest of the team. It is expected that each player will notify her coach in the event of a necessary absence.

POST-SEASON TRAVEL/TOURNAMENT TEAMS

Purpose

The purpose of the post-season travel/tournament team is to provide players an opportunity to participate in more competitive games in a tournament atmosphere.

General

The post-season travel/tournament team is an opportunity for girls who have enjoyed the regular season to try out for a team that plays with higher level of competition. The tournament season will begin July 1 and end no later than the first weekend in August. Tournaments will be within a reasonable driving distance. It must be understood that tournament team funding will be separate from the regular season fees. The USCAA will pay for up to 2 tournaments per team. Participation in additional tournaments will be up to the discretion of the head coaches based upon team consensus. Any additional tournament fees (beyond the 2 per team allowance) will be funded by the participants themselves. No more than 5 tournaments per team will be allowed. Although every effort will be made to utilize the uniforms from the regular season, it may be necessary to adjust tournament team fees accordingly if new uniforms are necessary.

Player Selection/Eligibility

In general, player selection will be made after try-outs have been conducted. Only players who have participated in the regular season will be eligible to try out for the Travel/Tournament Team. Players are expected to tryout and play within their “natural” age group. However, at the discretion of the Softball Commissioner, a player who “played up” one age group during the regular season may be given permission to also “play up” for the tournament season at one age group level above her “natural” age group. A player that “played up” in the regular season but is eligible by age to play in her “natural” age group during the travel season will be permitted.

Selection will be made by the Softball Commissioner, Assistant Softball Commissioner and League Directors based on the following skills:

1. Pitching (as appropriate)
2. Fielding
3. Batting
4. Base running
5. General knowledge of game situations

A player selected for the Travel/Tournament team one year does not guarantee that player will be selected the following year.

Once a player has been selected and has made the commitment to play for a Tournament Team, FULL participation is expected. Absences (except for extreme situations) can NOT be tolerated. Coaches MUST be notified of any possible absences in advance, including practices and tournament games.

Coaching Selection

Head coaches for the travel/tournament teams will be selected by the Softball Commissioner and Assistant Softball Commissioner and approved by the USCAA Board. It is preferred the Head Coach have a daughter on the tournament team he/she is coaching. Coaches are expected to conduct themselves as follows:

1. Coach his/her players in a fair and positive manner while assisting each girl to elevate her skills and game knowledge.
2. Promote each girl in the same manner. The coach WILL NOT promote his/her daughter over and above ANY OTHER player on the team.
3. Coaches will represent the USCAA and the USC Community in a positive manner

Coaches will make every effort to give ample playing time to each girl during the balance of the season. However, it should be understood by the parents and players that EVERY POSITION is important in the game of softball. Therefore, it will be the responsibility and discretion of the Head Coach to position players as he/she feels will be in the best interest of the player AND the team as a whole in order to remain competitive and promote a satisfying experience in tournament play.