



SUMMER 2017 COACHES HANDBOOK



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Bartlett Park District

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www.bartlettparks.org

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Dear Coaches,

Thank you for volunteering to coach at the Bartlett Park District. Your time and effort is invaluable and the reason we are able to provide such an awesome experience for so many kids!

The information in this handbook will give you a good start to your season and will answer many questions, especially if you are new to coaching. Please read it carefully and if you have further questions you can follow up with the Park District for clarification or ask questions at the coaches meeting.

Thanks again, have a great season and have fun.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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For more softball information, including game schedules and all season specific documents please visit us online at www.bartlettparks.org

MISSION STATEMENT

“The Bartlett Park District provides the Girl’s Softball Program to offer youth the opportunity to learn about softball, sportsmanship, team work, and responsibility through the course of the season. We ask that staff, parents, coaches, spectators and youth help us in our effort to provide a positive and safe atmosphere for all those associated with the program.”

COACHING AND TEAM FORMATION

With between 100-150 participants in the summer softball season, we rely on approximately 15-20 volunteer coaches. A head coach can request an assistant coach and those players are assigned to the team. If you don’t have a coaching request, the Park District will work to recruit and assign 2 volunteers to each team including a head coach and an assistant. In 8U softball, the rest of the team is randomly assigned using computer software, balancing age where possible. We cannot guarantee that each team will be balanced in terms of ability, but the nature of recreational softball is that you take the team you are assigned, focus on fun and learning and enjoy your season, no matter what the results.

New teams are always formed in the summer season using an evaluation for 10U, 12U, 14U and High School. For those players returning to play fall softball, they are assigned to the same team as the summer with new players making up the remainder of the team.

Unfortunately, due to the size and nature of the program we **cannot** honor volunteers requests beyond the 2 assigned. We also **do not** honor requests from parents for coaches, friendships, car pools, practice locations etc.

VOLUNTEER ROLES

The following responsibilities are suggestions of how the 2 volunteers can work together. However, depending on your relationship, friendships with each other and experience the 2 volunteers can work together and decide who does what. Every team does it differently!

HEAD COACH

The head coach is responsible for:

- Selecting practice day/s, time/s and location and communicating that to the team.
- Communicating information to the team about practices and games.
- Planning and leading the practices.
- Coaching the games.
- Communicating with parents about their child and the team.
- Handling concerns with the team, opposing coaches, parents etc.

ASSISTANT COACH

The assistant coach is responsible for:

- Assisting the head coach in practices and on game days.
- Standing in when the head coach is absent or unavailable.
- Helping the head coach perform his/her duties.

ROSTERS

Coaches will receive their team rosters at the Coaches Meeting. They are not available before. **Coaches are not allowed to trade players** and anyone found doing so will jeopardize their coaching position.

Please contact everyone on your roster before the deadline (the Park District will provide this date at the coaches meeting). Contacting players before the deadline eliminates a lot of phone calls for the Park District as parents call in a panic that they haven't been contacted. Do not rely on e-mail as your only means of initial communication as we cannot guarantee that the e-mail addresses on the roster are accurate and up to date. Please follow up with a phone call if you don't receive a response. Make your own e-mail distribution list to add second e-mails, work e-mails, both parents, etc. and then use that for the season.

If you cannot reach a family and it appears that the contact information is incorrect please contact the Park District so we can look for and provide you with alternate phone numbers/e-mails.

If you contact a family and get no response (after trying multiple numbers/e-mails) please let the Park District know. A player who does not return calls/e-mails and does not show up at all needs to be reported.

If a parent indicates their child might not play please let the Park District know so we can follow up immediately. **Do not** imply they will be refunded. Players only receive a refund if there is a player on the waitlist to replace them and there is an administrative charge. The best case scenario for everyone is if we can

replace dropping players with waitlisted players and the sooner we can do this the better.

LEAGUE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

| | 8U | 10U | 12U | 14U |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| # of Rostered Players | 7-10 | 10-12 | 10-12 | 10-12 |
| # of Players on Field | 7 | 10 | 9 | 9 |
| Base Distance | 60' | 60' | 60' | 60' |
| Pitching Distance | 27',30' | 35' | 40' | 40' |
| Duration of Game | 6 innings or 90 minutes | 6 innings or 2.25 hours | 7 innings or 2.25 hours | 7 innings or 2.25 hours |
| Softball Size | 11" Incrediball | 11" | 12" | 12" |
| Umpire | One | One | One | One |

LEAGUE NAMES

Each grade/league is named after a college team. We encourage coaches to learn more about the league, team and players to educate, motivate and inspire their own players. There are many softball web-sites where you can learn all you need to know. Between league play, tournaments, college games, professional games, there is always softball on TV. You would be surprised how much you can learn from watching!

8U DIVISION College Teams

10U DIVISION College Teams

12U DIVISION College Teams

14U DIVISION College Teams

WHO PLAYS WHO?

8U-14U divisions will be playing some away games at the West Chicago, Batavia, and Geneva Park Districts. Depending on the number of teams, teams can play 6 away games at the other towns. All leagues will play a 12 game season. There is an end-of-season playoff for 10U, 12U, and 14U divisions.

ADMINISTRATION

There are certain administrative tasks that need to be prioritized at the start of the season. These include the following four documents:

- ***Coaches Code of Conduct and Volunteer Waiver***

- All coaches (head and assistant) are required to read and sign a code of conduct and volunteer waiver. The code of conduct basically outlines our expectations of you as a coach. This will be discussed in detail at the coaches meeting. The Volunteer Waiver is a release of all claims and assumption of risk. This is a new form this year.
- This form can be downloaded online, completed and returned: at the coaches meeting, by fax, scan/e-mail, dropped off at BCC.

- ***Volunteer Criminal Background Check***

- All coaches (head and assistant) are required to complete and sign a Criminal Background Check. This is a requirement and the form must be submitted prior to your first practice/meeting with your team.
- Background checks are valid for 2 years so you will be required to complete one if you are new to coaching here or if yours has expired. You may have one on file from coaching another youth sport here at the Park District but other non-park district sport background checks (eg. football or baseball) are not valid.
- This form is not available online and will be e-mailed to you prior to the coaches meeting.
- This form can be returned: at the coaches meeting, by fax, scan/e-mail, dropped off at BCC.

- ***Parent Code Of Conduct***

- All parents are required to print, read and sign a code of conduct and the Disciplinary Action Guidelines for Parents & Spectators. The code of conduct basically outlines our expectations of parents with children in youth sports. The Disciplinary Action explains the consequences of inappropriate behavior.
- Collect them and keep them with you at all times you are working with the team. Please turn these forms in along with the coaches' bag at the end of the season.

- ***Emergency Treatment Release***

- All parents are required to print, complete and submit an Emergency Treatment Release. This form provides you with emergency contact information and is a release if a parent cannot be reached and a child needs emergency medical care.
- Do not turn these forms in to the Park District. Collect them and keep them with you at all times you are working with the team.

There are other documents available online that I would encourage you to review including Concussion Facts, Important Dates etc. Continue to check for new updates and documents throughout the season.

EQUIPMENT BAGS

Coaches are provided with an equipment bag that contains; 4-5 batting helmets, practice softballs, 3-4 bats, catcher's gear, first aid kit, and 2 infielder's masks. This is available for pick up at the coaches meeting and must be returned at the conclusion of the season. Coaches cannot keep bags from Fall to Summer even if they coach both seasons. The equipment must be inventoried, cleaned, and then the bags are re-stocked and re-issued each season. We expect to lose equipment and there is obvious wear and tear, but the value of the equipment bag and its contents is approximately \$400 so please take good care of it. Please do not write your team name on the softballs or helmets. Not returning it, or returning it late, means we have less equipment for the following season, so please drop it off at the Community Center at your earliest convenience.

FIELDS

Practice fields are not assigned to teams/coaches so pick a convenient location for you and your team. You don't need to be on an actual softball field to practice, you can choose any open space that is big enough for your team. Actual softball fields are not a necessity. It is beneficial to be able to take grounders on an infield, but don't make it the sole reason you pick a location. Please also choose a space that is appropriate for your team. For example, an 8U team should not be practicing on AO #7 since this is our biggest field. Fields are on a first come, first served basis so be flexible, share and work with other teams and coaches.

Game field locations/directions can be found online with the game schedules. See below "Online Game Schedules"

UNIFORM INFORMATION

Uniforms are purchased from "Protime Sports", a sporting goods company based in Seattle. The uniform cost is included in the registration fee. The uniforms add a great, professional look to our leagues and the kids love them. In addition to the jersey, girls are provided matching socks and a visor.

BOTH SEASONS - If for some reason a player receives a uniform that does not fit and there's no-one to exchange with on your team please instruct parents to contact Eric immediately. Replacements can be ordered if necessary, but it will take at least 10 days. You are not responsible for resolving uniform issues. All uniform issues need to be resolved prior to the second game if possible, but definitely by Picture Day so don't delay handing them out.

UMPIRES

The majority of our umpires are experienced players: recreational, travel, high school, college (many who have played in our leagues) and they all know the game. We have a **zero tolerance policy** as far as umpire abuse and we ask that you respect the umpires, let them do their job and not shout or criticize from the sidelines. Concerns should be reported to the Recreation Manager who will handle them accordingly. Remember, it might be your son or daughter out there umping one day!

ONLINE GAME SCHEDULES

Game schedules are posted online for all divisions.

To view the schedules please visit <http://www.quickscores.com/Orgs/index.php?OrgDir=girls>.

Select the Softball tab and then scroll down to find the division. Click on the Schedule to view.

Click on your team name (ex. Panthers) to view only your team's game schedule.

Schedules will be updated throughout the season with any changes, rain outs, reschedules etc. so please continue to check and consider what is posted online to be the most accurate and up to date.

We try to avoid game conflicts for head coaches coaching more than one team so they can be at all games. We cannot guarantee it 100%, but try to make accommodations when possible.

TELEPHONE HOTLINE AND ONLINE UPDATES – WEATHER & FIELDS

Hotline: (630) 540-4891 Bartlett (331) 240-2060 West Chicago

Online: <http://www.quickscores.com/Orgs/index.php?OrgDir=girls> on the homepage

Call the hotline or visit the web-site for information on field closures and canceled games due to weather.

When the Park District closes fields **ALL** community sports groups are made aware of the closure and we expect, but can't guarantee, that everyone adheres. Official field closure means **ALL** practices, at all locations, regardless of whether it's a Park District softball field, are cancelled.

Coaches are responsible for contacting their team based on the Park District updates. If fields are open but you choose to cancel that is at your discretion. Make your team aware of the hotline/online but don't assume they see it. It's usually best to follow up with an e-mail too.

Coaches should try to "make up" practices missed due to bad weather but it is not always possible.

The Park District is responsible for canceling games due to weather, but coaches must still contact their team to confirm. In the event of bad weather please monitor the online updates regularly. Coaches are not permitted to cancel games without approval of the Park District.

The Park District will always try to reschedule games cancelled due to the weather, but depending on the severity of the rain throughout the season we cannot guarantee it.

THOR GUARD

The Bartlett Park District has the Thor Guard Lightning Prediction System installed at Koehler Field Complex and Apple Orchard Community Center to help protect participants, spectators, and staff from the potential danger of lightning strikes.

Thor-Guard is a lightning prediction system. The system consists of sensors that measure electrostatic charges at ground level and in the atmosphere. These electrostatic charges, invisible to the naked eye, build up in the atmosphere prior to lightning occurrences. When conditions indicate that a lightning occurrence is probable, a signal is sent to two alarm horns and strobe lights located at the Apple Orchard Golf Course Clubhouse and the Bartlett Aquatic Center. Apple Orchard Community Park, both east and west sides, is included within the range.

When certain parameters indicate that the likelihood of a lightning strike within the area is high, the Thor Guard system will activate a horn with a single fifteen-second blast, as well as a strobe light. At this time, all practices and games will immediately cease and players, participants, and staff will be required to clear the fields and stands. Practices and games will not be allowed to continue until an all clear signal is sounded, indicated by a series of three short blasts from the horn.

If lighting is seen but the Thor Guard Lightning Prediction System has not sounded then practices and games should cease immediately, regardless of how far away you might consider the lightning to be. In this case, the rule is: wait 20 minutes to see if the conditions improve. There must be a 20 minute period free of lighting before play can resume. Example: Lighting strikes, the clock starts, 15 minutes later lighting strikes again then the clock is reset and you wait another 20 minutes, and so on, before play can resume.

For those fields that do not have Thor Guard we are relying on coaches/parents/staff to be aware of conditions and cease play immediately when lightning is spotted. Again, in this case, the rule is: wait 20 minutes to see if the conditions improve. There must be a 20 minute period free of lighting before play can resume. Example: Lighting strikes, the clock starts, 15 minutes later lighting strikes again then the clock is reset and you wait another 20 minutes, and so on, before play can resume.

Officials are responsible for making decisions during games – not the coaches.

Safety is our number one priority!

PICTURE DAY *TBD*

Picture Day is scheduled each season and each team is assigned a specific time. The schedule will be posted online. Coaches will receive their picture envelopes with the uniform pick-up and these should be handed out about one week prior to the date. If you hand them out earlier parents may lose them! Players should wear their full uniform (jersey, socks, and visor) and tennis shoes. Cleats are not allowed in the gym. Instruct players to arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled time. Pictures will be handed out at the end of the season along with participation medals. Players are not required to purchase pictures, but everyone should be encouraged to attend to be a part of the team picture.

Pictures are scheduled back to back where possible for head coach and assistant coaches coaching more than one team. If you cannot make the picture time you have been scheduled please let us know as soon as possible to reschedule the time. An alternative date will not be available.

MEDALS

At the end of the season all players will receive a participation medal. These will be available for pick up before your last game and you will receive an e-mail instructing you where and when you can pick them up. Typically coaches hand out the pictures and medals together at the end of the final game or at an end of season party. Please make every effort to get all players their pictures and medals if they miss the game or party.

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR SOFTBALL TEAM

While there is no one magic formula for being successful with your new softball team, these tips should make the process a little smoother for the players, their families and you, as a coach. The most important thing for you to remember is to make softball FUN for your players. This will guarantee that your players will come away with a good experience after the season is over.

In general, there are five keys to being an effective coach:

- Always be prepared – know what you want to accomplish and how you will do it in all practice and game situations.
- However, be flexible – if what you are doing is not working, do something else.
- Good words go a long way – be positive!
- Keep the energy level high – it's contagious.
- Keep your eyes open and get to know your team. They are a group of individuals with specific learning and communication styles.

Pre-season steps:

1. Choose a practice time and location. It need not be a softball field – any open space will work. One of the benefits of coaching is that you have the ability to choose a location and time that is convenient for you. There are a number of open area parks that are not routinely utilized for softball practices – be creative and find one – don't squeeze in with four other teams to use one softball field!
2. Schedule a pre-season parents meeting (this could be before your first practice or at a separate time). Call or e-mail all the parents to say "hello" and inform them of the date of the meeting. Direct them to the web-site to print the necessary forms so they can complete them ahead of time and bring them to the meeting. Things to cover at this meeting are:
 - a. Introduce yourself & assistant coach – tell them a few things about yourselves, your athletic history, your family, your coaching philosophy.
 - b. If you don't have one already, solicit a team coordinator.
 - c. Hand out uniforms and discuss equipment that players must have (cleats/gym shoes, mitt).
 - d. Discuss schedules for practices and games.
 - e. Encourage parents to check the web-site for schedules, weather, updates etc.
 - f. Discuss practice policies – why attendance and timeliness are important.
 - g. Set up phone tree and/or e-mail list.
 - h. Have the parents complete the necessary paperwork.
 - i. Review the Parent's Code of Conduct – have parents sign it!
 - j. Discuss your expectations for the season, i.e., practices and games are fun, everyone plays, what age-appropriate skills can be taught at specific age levels.

During the season:

Plan your practices. Don't try and "wing" it – do your homework and practices will be much more fun and useful. Spending 15-20 minutes planning your practice will pay off. Have REALISTIC expectations of what children can learn at different ages and don't expect too much too soon.

Practices should follow a logical, consistent pattern. A suggested sequence of activities would be:

- a. Warm up activity
- b. Skill Introduction – demonstrate – try – demonstrate – try
- c. Game/activity to reinforce skill
- d. Scrimmage – "let the game teach the game"
- e. Wrap Up

Plan more activities than you think you will need. If an activity does not seem to be working, move to the next activity.

Try to keep your instruction to a minimum. Learning will be reinforced naturally as the player masters a skill. A few comments between activities are all that most children will absorb. Again, remember to keep your directions age-appropriate.

Remember to keep it positive!

Plan your game day:

1. Make sure that parents know to arrive to a game early. 20-30 minutes ahead of the scheduled game time.
2. Determine which responsibilities will be taken by coaches and asst. coaches.
3. Plan your line-up, but be flexible. Be sure to incorporate substitutions.
4. Keep sideline direction to a minimum. Coaching is done 95% during practice sessions. Let the players play and don't commentate.
5. Focus on small victories – "nice pitch", "great hit" rather than runs.
6. After the game, conclude with a few positive feedback points and things to think about for the next practice or game.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Bartlett Park District strives to instill sportsmanship in all of its players; it also expects good sportsmanship and appropriate conduct from its volunteers. Unfortunately, there are times when inappropriate behavior occurs. With this in mind, we have established the following guidelines for volunteers. For these guidelines, inappropriate behavior is defined as conduct that is contrary to the philosophy and goals of the program and the Bartlett Park District. If inappropriate behavior occurs, the following guidelines will be followed:

Reporting of Inappropriate Behavior:

The Park District may receive reports of inappropriate behavior in many ways. A few examples are as follows:

- 1) A full-time or designated part-time employee of the Bartlett Park District may personally observe actions taken by a volunteer.
- 2) The Park District may receive written correspondence describing actions taken by a volunteer.
- 3) A complaint may be received from an official about a volunteer's conduct during a game.
- 4) A parent whose child is involved in a program may file a written or verbal complaint about a volunteer's actions.
- 5) A complaint may be received from a member of a Park District Youth Sports Board.

Informing the Volunteer of the Situation:

The following steps will be taken to inform the volunteer of any reports of inappropriate behavior:

- 1) The volunteer in question will be notified by phone about the situation and informed about the steps that will be taken.
- 2) If deemed appropriate, the volunteer will also receive a written notice from the Bartlett Park District. This notice will include the alleged actions that occurred, the date and time of the actions and why the actions will not be tolerated.
- 3) The volunteer will further be informed that he/she will be given one week to respond to the complaint. If he/she chooses not to respond, he/she will receive the appropriate disciplinary action.
- 4) If the volunteer chooses to respond to the complaint, the volunteer will meet with the Recreation Manager responsible for the program and the Superintendent of Recreation.
- 5) Following this meeting it will be determined whether the volunteer should receive disciplinary action as well as determine which level of disciplinary action will be imposed.
- 6) The volunteer will then be notified in writing of the decision.

Levels of Discipline:

The Park District will follow a progressive form of discipline as outlined below, if deemed appropriate. However, the Park District is not required to do so and may, in its sole discretion, forego lesser forms of discipline at any time and proceed immediately with the volunteer's dismissal.

Probation: The grounds for the disciplinary action, "Probation", may include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- 1) Not following mandated playing time rules for all players.
- 2) The use of profanity or vulgar language while conducting or attending practices or games.
- 3) Failing to conduct at least one team practice every two weeks.
- 4) Conducting more practices than the allotted amount as designated in the rules.
- 5) Being ejected from a game while coaching.
- 6) Failure to develop knowledge of, or follow the rules.
- 7) Failure to treat coaches, players, fans and officials with respect.
- 8) Leaving a field or facility before a parent has picked up all players.
- 9) Failure to coach in accordance with Coaches Code of Conduct.
- 10) Causing a game to be forfeited by an official due to conduct.

- 11) Any other actions, which, in the professional opinion of the Bartlett Park District, should result in probation.

Suspension: The grounds for the disciplinary action, "Suspension", may include, but shall not be limited to the following:

(The length of the suspension will be determined by the severity of the action)

- 1) Continuing actions that originally led to the probation of a volunteer.
- 2) Intentionally threatening a fan, player, coach or official.
- 3) Being ejected from two games while coaching any park district related team within a one-year time period.
- 4) Attending a practice or game under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 5) Any other actions, which, in the professional opinion of the Bartlett Park District, should result in suspension.

Dismissal: The grounds for the disciplinary action, "Dismissal", may include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- 1) If, while suspended, a volunteer performs any actions which can result in either probation or suspension.
- 2) Intentionally striking, pushing or laying hands on a fan, player, coach or official in a harmful manner.
- 3) Any other actions, which, in the professional opinion of the Bartlett Park District, should result in dismissal.