

Chisago Lakes Fastpitch Softball Manual



**This entire manual is meant to serve as a guideline. These guidelines are subject to change and the final discretion on softball decisions is up to the Chisago Lakes Fastpitch Committee.

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1 - Chisago Lakes Fastpitch Softball's Philosophy

- Promote the growth of softball within our community by creating an environment where players have fun and develop a lifelong passion for the sport.
- Promote the growth of personal qualities including self-esteem, commitment, sportsmanship, and perseverance.
- Promote an increased understanding of the sport by all participants, including players, coaches, umpires, and parents by providing quality education and training.
- Provide a level of competition for players commensurate with their skill level and commitment level while challenging players to develop their abilities to a higher level.

2 - Eligibility

Any girl living within the Chisago Lakes Area will be eligible to participate in age groups of 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U, 18U. Girls living outside the Chisago Lakes Area need obtain approval by the Chisago Lakes Fastpitch Committee (CLFC) to participate.

3 - Age Qualifications

- a. The age classifications are:
 - 10 & Under: Players are 10 or younger as of December 31st of the prior year.
 - 12 & Under: Players are 12 or younger as of December 31st of the prior year.
 - 14 & Under: Players are 14 or younger as of December 31st of the prior year.
 - 16 & Under: Players are 16 or younger as of December 31st of the prior year.
 - 18 & Under: Players are 18 or younger as of December 31st of the prior year.
- b. A player of an older classification may not play in a younger classification, as per National Softball rules. Any player being considered to move up a level must be approved by the CLFC.

4 - Registrations

- Participants must register prior to the start of each season during the published dates as established by the CLFC.
- No Late registration will be accepted after tryouts with exception given to new residents moving into the area or as approved by the CLFC.
- Any person who registers under an assumed name, or gives an incorrect age will become ineligible and will be suspended for the remainder of the current sports playing season.

5 - Fees

- Fees will be established annually. All girls wishing to try out for traveling softball must be registered and paid in full (with exception of girls qualifying for the scholarship program) prior to trying out
- Fees cover the costs of participation including but not limited to league fees, regular, and state gate fees, tryouts, tournaments, umpires, uniforms and field maintenance. Fees will not be used to cover/subsidize travel expenses incurred by teams during regular or post season play.
- Registration fees are fully refundable up to the date of tryouts. A \$50 tryout fee will be charged to players who are placed on a team and decide within 7 days not to participate. If a player decides not to play after the 7 days the full registration fee will be forfeited to pay for uniform, tournaments and league fees. A full refund will be given to all girls that were not placed on a team or extreme circumstances.
- All players are required to purchase their own batting helmet with approved face guard and chin strap.

6 - Placements on Team (Team Selection)

- Every effort is made to place every registrant on a team if possible.
- There will be no more than 12 players placed on a team unless approved by the CLFC prior to the team selection process.
- Participants will be placed on a team according to their ability in accordance with Appendix A for summer ball. Participants for fall ball will be placed on teams so that the strength of the teams is approximately equal strength.
- Any player whose continued participation is deemed detrimental to the welfare of the association may be removed from the team temporarily by a majority vote of the CLFC.
- All players must participate in the tryout process to be selected for a position. Approved exceptions will ONLY be granted if notification is made to the Player/Coach Director PRIOR to the scheduled tryout date.
- Player evaluation will be completed by a panel of non-parent, non-coach individuals.
- Players will be evaluated according to guidelines laid out in Appendix A.
- Players will be selected based on tryout scores and player evaluations.

7 - Playing Time

The program's primary focus is for all players to have fun, continue to develop and learn all aspects of the game of fastpitch softball.

10U – 12U

The primary goal at the 10U – 12U level is to stress fundamentals and player improvement. During league games the focus is on getting girls at bats and opportunities at different positions.

Batting - Full roster is batted for all games. League - Roster for the second game should start where the first game left off to attempt to provide equal at bats for all players.

Fielding – Practice – players should be given equal time at practice working on infield and outfield fundamentals.

League Play (Double headers each game is typically 3 to 4 innings) – Players should be rotated frequently between infield and outfield. All players should be given the opportunity to play infield for at least one inning per game. No player should sit more than one inning in a row. Over the course of the season playing time should be equal for all players.

Tournament play including Qualifier and State – Focus is to be as competitive as possible. Coaches will make decisions on batting order and positions based on what is best for the team. 5 tournaments max per season, including state qualifier and state tournament.

Practices – There should be a maximum of 4 contact days per week excluding weekend tournaments. Contact days include, game days, team meetings or practices. Practice length should normally be 90 to 120 minutes long. Coaches should schedule practice times and stick to these times to respect the commitments of players and families.

14U – 18U

The primary goal at 14U, 16U and 18U level is to get girls ready for high school softball. Players will begin to focus on 1 or 2 positions. Fielding time may not be equal.

Batting – Batting rotation will be determined by the coach. Tournament rosters will be determined by the tournament rules. Some tournaments may require 9 player (DP/Flex) in which case all players will not bat.

Fielding – League Play – Coach will make every attempt to get everyone playing time in 1 or 2 positions. Time on the bench may not be equal for all players due to position focus.

Tournament play including Qualifier and State – Playing to win. Coaches will make decisions on batting order and positions based on what is best for the team. Due to 9 player (DP/Flex) playing time may be limited for some players and all players may not bat. 5 tournaments max per season, including state qualifier and state tournament.

Practices – There should be a maximum of 4 contact days per week excluding weekend tournaments. Contact days include, game days, team meetings or practices. Practice length should normally be 90 to 120 minutes long. Coaches should schedule practice times and stick to these times to respect the commitments of players and families.

8 - Players

Player Attendance Expectations

Once assigned to a team, a player should be allowed to remain on that team UNTIL one of the following situations exist: (Remember, players are expected to be at all practices and games)

- a) A player has 3 unexcused absences from games or practices.
- b) A player has a combination of 6 excused and unexcused absences from games or practices.
- c) A player has a combination of 9 excused, unexcused and planned absences from games or practices

Attendance at any high school/junior high softball games or practice will be exempted from this policy. However, the player/parent must notify the coach in advance if an absence is necessary for high school/junior high softball.

The Head Coach is allowed to keep a player on his team if extenuating circumstances exist but may consider removal if these conditions are met.

Definitions:

- Unexcused absence: Player is missing and the HEAD COACH is not notified by the player (or his parent/guardian) prior to the game or practice. Social events are considered unexcused; for example going to movies, waterpark and other events with friends.
- Excused absence: Player is missing and the head coach is notified by the player (or his parent/guardian) at least 1 hour prior to the game or practice
- Planned absence: Head Coach is notified of absence by the player (or his parent/guardian) at least 1 week prior to game or practice.

Player Discipline/Removal

Players may be disciplined or removed from a team following violations of the Players Code of Conduct or for violations of attendance expectations.

A player will be corrected immediately (1st warning) by the coach for:

- Throwing equipment (bat or helmet)
- Swearing
- Verbally or physically abusing an umpire, coach or any other player

Process for dealing with violations after 1st warning:

- 1st offense: the player is ejected for the remainder of the game (must remain on the bench). Coach will present a brief written report of the situation to the Traveling Softball Director or.
- 2nd offense: the player is not allowed to participate further until the player, her parents, and the coach meet with the Softball Director to discuss the player's behavior and develop a plan of correction. The Softball Director must be informed of the situation and the plan of correction.
- 3rd offense: removal from the team.

If removal from the team is warranted, the following must occur:

- 1) If a head coach determines that removal is warranted, he should discuss it with his full coaching staff before taking action.
- 2) If the full coaching staff determines that removal is the correct course of action, the head coach should discuss the circumstances of the situation with the LARA President and the Traveling Softball Director before taking any action.
- 3) If removal is still agreed to as the best course of action, the head coach should contact the parents with the details of the situation (of course, the parents should be involved in the communication along the way as the player is missing games and practices or has conduct violations).

Once removed from an LARA team, the player MAY NOT join another LARA team under any circumstances and the full registration fee will be forfeited.

9 - Coaches

- Coaches need to apply each year for a head coaching position. Head coaches are assigned for one year at a time. There is no guaranteed right to the position in following years.
- Coaches will be selected after the tryout process based on experience, knowledge of the game, past involvement and positive attitude. Care will be taken to ensure that there is no conflict of interest during the coach's selection for a particular age group. The best qualified coach for each group will be selected.
- Head Coaches will choose their own assistants and team managers, after team selection is completed. This will be limited to two official assistants.
- Head Coaches will be responsible to make sure each team has a team parent representative. This person has various responsibilities including acting as a contact person with the Fundraising/Tournament Director and staff regarding work for any events.
- Any coach whose continued participation is deemed detrimental to the welfare of the association may be removed from the team temporarily by a majority vote of the CLFC. If the coach's behavior continues to be detrimental the coach will be removed permanently by a majority vote of the CLFC.

- If no coach is available for a given team, the Player/Coach Director and his/her committee will appoint/recruit coaches as appropriate.
- Background checks and Concussion training is mandatory for all coaches. At least one coach on the bench at all times must have ACE certification.

10 - Coaching Grievance Procedure

Even the best of coaches, and or parent will occasionally have a parent or coach who disagrees with his/her actions or decisions. Usually these can be resolved with an honest discussion between the two. However, sometimes additional steps need to be taken. LARA has developed a step by step procedure for these situations. If differences cannot be resolved between the coach and the parent, an impartial grievance committee will review the situation and decide on a course of action.

Step #1: 24 Hour Rule-Wait 24 hours before acting. This “time out” should be taken to allow emotions to cool.

Step #2: Talk to your Team’s Coach- Find an appropriate time, away from the team, to discuss the problem.

Step #3: Contact the Director of Traveling Softball-Director of traveling softball will meet with the parent and the coach to resolve the problem.

Step #4: File an Official Grievance-An official grievance form can be obtained on line at lakesarearec.org. E-mail completed form to LARA: lakesarearec@frontiernet.net where it will be reviewed by the Board of Directors. A copy of this grievance should also be sent to the Director of the Traveling Softball Program.

11 - Equipment

- Equipment is usually handed out the same day as the coaches meeting. Equipment can be obtained earlier if requested.
- All equipment is inventoried before handing out. It is the Head Coach’s responsibility to make sure all equipment is handed in at the end of the season.
- Equipment can be obtained for fall ball after turning in for inventory at the end of summer play.
- If equipment needs to be replaced or repaired, contact The Director Of Traveling Softball.
- Turn in all unused game balls at the end of the season.
- At the end of the season we would like your opinion on what new equipment is needed for the program.

12 - Fields

It is everyone's responsibility to leave the fields in better shape than you found it in. This is a team effort. Contact the Director of Traveling Softball with any field concerns.

13 - Umpires

If a home game is canceled contact the Director of Traveling softball immediately so he/she can notify the umpire.

14 - Medical Consent Form

It is advisable that team managers keep a "Consent to Treat" form on each player in the event that medical care is needed for a child when parents are not available. Forms are available at lakesarearec.org and should be filled out by parents prior to the start of play. Parents should also notify coaches of any medical information; such as allergies or medical conditions which may affect players.

15 - Birth Certificate

Team Managers should keep a file with a copy of each player's birth certificate with a current picture of player attached. These should always be taken to tournaments in the event that a player's eligibility is questioned.

16 - Appendix A

Tryout/Player Selection Process

The Chisago Lakes Fastpitch Committee, along with independent non-board, non-parent evaluators, will conduct tryouts for the summer programs. The CLFC will determine evaluation criteria for tryouts. For position players Evaluation forms will be filled out only by independent evaluators. For pitcher and catcher evaluations, board members or coaches may be asked to evaluate per expertise. There will be room on evaluation forms for notes and player development needs. Player's skills will be rated and ranked. Pitchers and catchers will have additional skill sets evaluated. Tryouts will be held during the winter at facilities determined by CLFC.

Players must tryout with their designated age groups. If the player chooses they may try out for one classification higher than their age group. The decision to move a player up or not will be based on player needs at each age group and tryout results at the higher level.

Tryout dates and times will be posted to the website at least two weeks in advance of the actual tryouts. In the event a player cannot attend her designated tryout time, the player must contact the Player/Coach Development Director so a make-up date can be scheduled.

At the tryouts the players will be evaluated on hitting, bunting, fielding, throwing and running. Parents are not allowed to participate (hitting or pitching) or watch their daughter's tryouts.

The number of necessary teams to be formed at each age level and the level that the teams will play at (A, B, C) will be determined by the CLFC.

Team selection

Teams will be selected in the best way to achieve the goals for each age group. (See goals).

Teams will be selected based on tryout evaluations and fall coaches evaluations by the Traveling Softball Director. Next, the head coaches will be chosen by the CLFC. Rosters will be finalized and posted on the CLFC website.

17 - Appendix B Codes of Conduct

Chisago Lakes Faspitch - LARA adheres to the following Codes of Conduct. All coaches are expected to practice the Coach's code and share the Player's and Parent's Code with their team/parents.

Code of Conduct for Coaches

1. Be a consistent role model. Maintain personal and professional integrity both on and off the field.
2. Promote the emotional, physical, academic and athletic dimensions of the athlete.
3. Place the emotional and physical wellbeing of the athlete ahead of any personal desire.
4. Win and lose with dignity and integrity.
5. Practice open communication with players and parents.
6. Keep the game and practices fun as well as challenging and provide a positive experience.
7. Practice good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all the players, coaches, and officials and fans at every game.
8. Refrain from use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco when on the playing field or when with the players.
9. Remember that I am a youth coach, and that the game is for children, not adults.
10. Use safe play situations and use coaching techniques appropriate for each player.
11. Follow the guidelines defined in the traveling team manual.
12. Schedule practices and start and end on time to respect player and family time.

Code of Conduct for Players

1. Respect all aspects of the game: yourself, coaches, officials, teammates, opponents, fans and the rules, regardless of the behavior of others.
2. Support your teammates. Be a team player.
3. Recognize that you are representing Chisago Lakes Softball and act accordingly.
4. Practice good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all the players, coaches, and officials and fans at every game.
5. Do your best to learn and listen to the coaches.
6. Treat your coaches, teammates, opponents, officials and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
7. Refrain from the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.
8. Take responsibility for your behavior.
9. Do your best in school.
10. Be humble in victory, gracious in defeat.

*Violations of these codes can result in discipline/removal from team.

Code of Conduct for Parents

1. Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.
2. Place the emotional and physical wellbeing of my child ahead of any personal desire to win.
3. Insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
4. Provide support for coaches and officials working with my child in order to provide a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
5. Discuss differences in opinion or philosophy with coaches, officials and other parents in a respectful manner and away from the field of play and players.
6. Demand a drug, tobacco, and alcohol free sports environment for my child and agree to assist by refraining from their use at all youth sports events.
7. Remember that the game is for children not for adults.
8. Do my best to make youth sports best for my child.
9. Insist that my child treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
10. Assist in providing a positive team experience by volunteering to help with tasks as needed and as I am capable of doing.

**Violations of this code may result in officials asking parent/fan to leave the ball park.

18 – Appendix C

10U Player Development Goals

Goals:

- 1) All players should be having fun and be learning. (all players should leave with a positive experience)
- 2) Promote positivity through proper coaching. (being positive with instructional help, no coach obvious)
- 3) Promote team environment.
- 4) Promote the development of pitchers and catchers.
- 5) All players at the completion of 10U should know the following:
 - Knowledge of the role of each position to all players. (Including the three B's Ball, Base, Backup)
 - Proper throwing.
 - Proper hitting including bunting.
 - Aggressive base running (including sliding, lead off, rounding, signs, etc.)
 - Proper fielding infield and outfield.

Tryouts:

- 1) Develop tryout process to determine the level of each player so that teams can be divided to achieve the goals listed above.

Team selection:

- 1) Teams are divided in the best way to achieve the goals listed above.

Coach selection:

- 1) Coaches are selected based on their ability to achieve the goals listed above.
- 2) Positive coaches that are there to improve all players on the team.
- 3) Coaches that realize that the players come first and are OK with losing as long as the goals above are achieved.

Playing time:

- 1) Playing time should be close to equal or goals above will not be achieved.
- 2) Pitchers and catchers time on the mound and behind the plate should be close to equal including tournaments. Players that tried out for these positions will get first opportunities in these positions.

19 Appendix D

12U Player Development Goals

Goals:

- 1) All players should be having fun and be learning. (all players should leave with a positive experience)
- 2) Promote positivity through proper coaching. (being positive with instructional help, no coach obvious)
- 3) Promote team environment.
- 4) Promote the development of pitchers and catchers.
- 5) All players at the completion of 12U should know the goals set out at 10U and also the following:
 - Knowledge of the role of each position. (Including the three B's Ball, Base, Backup)
 - How to hit an inside and outside pitch.
 - Aggressive base running (delayed steal, taking bases that are open)
 - Stealing bases sliding inside and outside based on throw.
 - Outfield - crow hopping.
 - Infield - rounding a slow rolling ball
 - Infield - turning double plays, staying out of the danger zone.
 - Infield - proper tosses to infielders.
 - Proper cutoffs. (left, right, glove hand, non-glove hand)
 - Increase speed of getting rid of the ball.
 - Pitchers should be working on hitting spots and a good change up.
 - Catchers should be working on blocking the ball and begin framing, work on strength and accuracy of throw downs.

Tryouts:

- 1) Develop tryout process to determine the level of each player so that teams can be divided to achieve the goals listed above.

Team selection:

- 1) Teams are divided in the best way to achieve the goals listed above.

Coach selection:

- 1) Coaches are selected based on their ability to achieve the goals listed above.
- 2) Positive coaches that are there to improve all players on the team.
- 3) Coaches that realize that the players come first and are OK with losing as long as the goals above are achieved.

Playing time:

- 1) Playing time should be close to equal or goals above will not be achieved.
- 2) Pitchers and catchers time on the mound and behind the plate should be close to equal throughout the season. Players that tried out for these positions will get first opportunities in these positions.

20 Appendix E

14U and above Player Development Goals

Goals:

- 1) All players should be having fun and be learning. (all players should leave with a positive experience)
- 2) Promote positivity through proper coaching. (being positive with instructional help, no coach obvious)
- 3) Promote team environment.
- 4) Pitchers and catchers should be dedicated to the position.
- 5) All players at the completion of 14U should know the goals set out at 10U and 12U and also the following:
 - How to hit rise balls, drop balls and change ups.
 - First and third plays - offense
 - Aggressive base running on the defense (how good is the catcher, how well does the infield cover bases)
 - First and third plays - defense
 - Infielders - should work more of a snap throw from their ear.
 - Infielders - increase speed of getting rid of the ball.
 - Infielders - work on proper way to perform run downs.
 - Change cutoff from 10U and 12U based on strength of arms.
 - Angle down play (Runners on 2nd and 3rd and ground ball is hit to the infield)
 - Continue to work on stealing bases sliding inside and outside based on throw.
 - Outfield - continue to work on crow-hopping.
 - Players should begin to focus on 2 maybe 3 positions.
 - Pitchers should start throwing movement pitches and speed changes (rise ball, screw ball, curve ball, drop ball)
 - Catchers should start learning what pitches to call based on pitcher and hitter.
 - Catcher should be framing pitches and able to block almost every bad pitch.

Tryouts:

- 1) Develop tryout process to determine the level of each player so that teams can be divided to achieve the goals listed above.

Team selection:

- 1) Teams should be divided based on skill level.
- 2) If enough players are not available, players may be cut to have appropriate numbers for each team.

14U and above Player Development Goals

Coach selection:

- 1) Coaches are selected based on their ability to achieve the goals listed above.
- 2) Positive coaches that are there to improve all players on the team.
- 3) Coaches that realize that the players come first and are OK with losing as long as the goals above are achieved.

Playing time:

- 1) Playing time in league should be close to equal depending on positions each girl plays.
- 2) Playing time in tournaments may not be equal but coaches should be thinking strategically to try to get each player as much playing time as possible.
(example: have number 2 and 3 pitchers, pitch in games against weaker teams)
- 3) Coaches need to determine where players play best for the player and for the team.

21 Appendix F

Document Information

2-7-16 Base document posted online
2-12-17 Revised and updated, goals added

Chisago Lakes Fastpitch Director and Committee