

Baseliners 14U Blue
Team Policies & Code of Conduct
2014-2015 Season

Overview

Team Charter

- The Baseliners 14u Blue are a travel fastpitch softball team that offers a competitive softball opportunity to girls primarily in eastern Loudoun County, Virginia.

Team Goals

- **Develop Players Abilities.** Our team's primary goal is to make our girl's better softball players. We want to give them the skills necessary to advance to the next level of softball should they want to play. And better players make for a better team.
- **Win Softball Games.** We want to win games. We also want to play at a level that challenges our players to reach their full potential. We will play a combination of "B" and open level competition. Our goal is to win "B" level tournament titles and be competitive in the Open tournaments that we enter.
- **Have Fun.** These are 14 year old girls playing a game. While we want to foster a competitive environment for these young ladies, playing softball should not be a miserable experience for them. If we are successful, players will develop, our team will be competitive and our players will have fun doing it.

Practice Philosophy

- **Attendance.** We expect attendance at all scheduled practices (and games). We recognize that there will be conflicts for important obligations and other activities. We trust our parents to make the appropriate decisions when conflicts arise and to let coaches know about them. However, practice is an opportunity for the girls to develop and for coaches to observe that development. So, practice attendance will impact our decisions on playing time and positions.
- **Team Development.** Softball is a thinking person's game. It requires significant coordination among players and coaches to produce the best results. Much of our time at practice will be spent on drills that help us work better as a team.
- **Individual Development.** We will also spend some time at practice working on player's individual skills (throwing, fielding, batting, pitching, etc.) However, it's sometimes difficult to give one player the dedicated instruction they need in a team practice

environment. Parents are encouraged to work with their players on their own or with the assistance of private coaches to get better in all areas of their game.

Game Philosophy

- **Playing Time.** We will give playing time to all players during pool and exhibition games. During championship play and 'must-win' pool games, we will play the line-up that gives us the best chance to win. As a result, some players will get less game playing time than others, but they will be just as valuable to the team as any player.
- **Positions.** Players will have a primary position that best suits their strengths and the team's needs. This may not be the player's preferred position, but the player will be expected to embrace it and work to get better. Players will have opportunity during practice to develop at preferred positions, but will not play games in that position until it makes the team better.
- **Batting.** Batting lineups will be designed to score the most runs we can in any game. This means that players will not get equal game at-bats over the course of our season.

Commitment

- **Full Year.** Joining our team is a full year commitment. Our roster spots are limited, so we expect that those who accept our invitation are committing to us for the entire year.
- **Fall Season.** We expect to play every weekend from after Labor Day until the Baseliners Halloween tournament in late October. We will schedule 5 tournaments during those weeks and we will fill the remaining weekends with Sunday double headers.
- **Winter Conditioning.** We will have a required winter conditioning program that allows players to throw, hit and train during the off season. In past years, we were lucky enough to have a dedicated Baseliners facility. This year we may have to use one of the commercial baseball/softball training facilities like DST. The time requirement for this program will be 1-2 days per week (depending facility availability) beginning in early December and ending in late March.
- **Spring/Summer Season.** Scheduling in Spring/Summer is challenging due to the weather and players playing with their high school teams. While we will schedule 2-3 tournaments in April/May, most of our tournaments will be played in June and July. We require that players be available to play tournaments into late July. We will not play the weekends of Easter, Memorial Day and July 4th. We also will not play on Mother's Day. We will schedule at least one tournament that will require overnight travel during Spring/Summer. We also will try to qualify for one of the National/World Series tournaments in late July that may also require travel within driving distance.

- **Financial.** The exact cost per player will be determined based on the number of players we carry, the tournaments we schedule and the uniforms/equipment we purchase. However, each returning player's family can expect that the cost will be between \$1,000 and \$1,200 for the full season. New player families can expect to pay an additional \$200 - \$300 for uniforms and/or equipment (helmet/bat bag).

Player Responsibilities

- **Try your hardest.** This is your most important responsibility. Travel softball is difficult. You can't expect to be successful unless you give your best effort. Your teammates, coaches and parents expect it from you. You should also expect it from yourself.
- **Be open to new ways.** The competition is getting better as you get older. What may have worked when you were younger, may no longer be best for you now. Trying to play differently may be difficult at first, but it will pay off in the end to make you better player.
- **Respect your teammates.** We can only reach our goals if we play as a team. You don't have to be everyone's best friend, but you need to respect them and they need to respect you. This applies not only when we are playing softball, but off the field as well. Nothing can boost a teammate more than when her team picks her up when she is down.
- **Respect your coaches.** Give them your full attention when they are addressing you or the team. This means not only listening to them, but making eye contact with them so that they know you are listening. When they give direction on the softball field, follow it – even if you think they are wrong (which they sometimes are).
- **Respect the umpires.** Umpires are going to make bad calls. The best players and teams play through it. The best umpires know they make mistakes. Let your coaches worry about the calls. You worry about the next play.
- **Respect your parents.** They give up a lot to be sure that you can play this game. They only want you to be successful. Listen to what they say, they are usually right.
- **Focus on softball.** When we step on the field, the phones go off, the chit chat ends and we are all about softball. We will make sure there is plenty of time to interact socially with each other, but we need to be about softball once we step onto the field. Once the practice or a game starts, you need to remain in the dugout or on the field with your coaches and team.
- **Take ownership.** It is up to you to achieve your personal softball goals. Communicate to your coaches about where you want to go with your softball playing. They will listen to you and provide you guidance on how you can get there.

Coach Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities coaches have in administering and operating our team, we have also these three core responsibilities when it comes to the relationships we have with our players and parents.

- **Give everyone opportunity.** We should invest in all our players' development. We should give them opportunity to demonstrate their progress and objectively assess where they fit into our team.
- **Communicate to the team and their parents.** We should make sure our players understand where they fit into our team, listen to their goals and offer our assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. We should make sure our parents understand our coaching philosophies and our team goals.
- **Be open to constructive feedback.** Coaches don't know everything. We sometimes make mistakes. We should be open to thoughtful and appropriate feedback even if it conflicts with our own opinions.

Parent Responsibilities

No Distractions. We are all parents and we want what is best for our children. It is difficult for us to step back at times because we love to see them succeed and be happy. That said, we sometimes get emotional about our team, particularly during our games. Our number one responsibility as softball parents is it not to become a distraction to the kids. Here are some rules that must be adhered to by everyone for us to be a successful team:

- No coaching your daughter from the stands (let the coaches be the only voice they hear)
- No engaging with the umpires over perceived bad calls (it never helps)
- No negative remarks about coaching decisions when at the field (save it for the ride home; see 24 hour rule below)
- No negative remarks about your daughter and especially other players (no brainer)
- Do not enter the dugout during games (ask a coach if you need to get something to your daughter)
- Display good sportsmanship to other teams and their fans
- Get your daughter to practices and games on time (and notify coaches as soon as you can when you cannot)

24 Hour/No Email Rule. We require that parents wait 24 hours after the conclusion of any tournament before contacting coaches regarding concerns you may have about player selection or game management of a particular game/tournament. This is something that many organizations have adopted to protect parents and coaches from the emotions of the game.

Obviously it is best to have these discussions away from the field. And since these difficult topics many times do not translate well in email exchanges, coaches will only address issues raised in phone or live discussions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PLAYER

I have read and understand the Baseliners 14U Blue Team Policies & Code of Conduct and pledge to follow them. I understand that NOT abiding by them may lead to my dismissal from the team.

Player

Date

PARENT/GUARDIAN

I have read and understand the Baseliners 14U Blue Team Policies & Code of Conduct and pledge to follow them. I understand that NOT abiding by them may lead to my player's dismissal from the team.

Parent/Guardian

Date