



CGAA SOFTBALL STRIKE ZONE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 30, 2009

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

Board of Directors

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In House Junior League Director

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Brad Strom

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Verna Witzany

Director of Program Development

Darcie Young

Equipment Manager

Eric Anderson

Fall Ball Director

Janet Lasso

Member at Large

Kristie Schulz

A letter from the President

My name is Justin Voerster and I am the current president of CGAA Softball. My love for this game and for kids is what drives me every day to do this. My vision is to make this organization a place where all girls can come and play, learn, enjoy softball, but mostly help girls grow in every aspect of their life. Kids are what make this program work and they are always the top priority of the board and myself. I can't thank the parents of this great community enough for letting your girls be part of softball in Cottage Grove.

I am always open to hearing new ideas and listening to your concerns, so if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me via e-mail at justin.voerster@cgaasoftball.org.

Thanks again and let's keep this program about the kids.

Justin Voerster, President

"Children are one third of our population and all of our future."

~Select Panel for the Promotion of Child Health, 1981

"While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about."
~Angela Schwindt

Traveling News

We had around 80 girls try out for the traveling teams this year.

Our goal is to have teams for all the players that want to play traveling softball. You don't have to be a superstar player to play on a traveling team. There are different skill levels for the teams. The teams play double-headers twice a week. Games have a time limit of 65 minutes per game. 10U games are once a week until school is out. There are different levels at tournaments also.

I will be recommending a change in the Principles of Traveling Softball where coaches will be required to teach the fundamentals of fast pitch softball, develop all players to their fullest potential and support the entire CGAA program.

This will stress that the development of players, particularly at the younger age levels and lower tiers, is valued over a winning record. Each girl is to learn and play several positions. Balanced (not necessarily equal) playing time, particularly at the younger age levels and lower tiers, is to be dictated as much by commitment and attendance as skill level.

Our coaches work with the players on developing and improving their skills through winter gym practices and in-season practices. So, if you think you might be interested in joining the traveling program, check out some games this coming season. Schedules will be posted on the team's site on the CGAA web site. You can also try fall ball to see if traveling is for you!

Kathy Strauch, Traveling Director

Upcoming Events

Fridays in February

6:00 – 7:30 PM

Pitching Practice
In House Juniors

7:30 – 9:00 PM

Pitching Practice
In House Seniors

2/6 at Hillside

2/13 No School

2/20 at Crestview

2/27 at Crestview

February 8

**Pitching, Batting
and Fielding Clinic
@ Park Activity Ctr.**

In House and
Traveling Players are
Welcome

6:00 – 7:00 PM

Age 10 and under

7:00 – 8:00 PM

Age 11 & 12

8:00 – 9:00 PM

Age 13 & 14

February 22

**Pitching, Batting
and Fielding Clinic
@ Park Activity Ctr.**

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Welcome

6:00 – 7:00 PM

Age 10 and under

7:00 – 8:00 PM

Age 11 & 12

8:00 – 9:00 PM

Age 13 & 14

Coming in March...

FREE In House
Clinics @ Cottage
Grove Armory –
Watch for more
details!

**Check out the full
calendar at
www.cgaasoftball.com**

In House League Headlines

It's hard to believe that softball registrations begin in just a few weeks. Where did the time go?? The official dates for the registrations are: February 7 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM and Sunday, February 22nd from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the Youth Service Bureau 7064 S. West Pt. Douglas Road. There is also a registration opportunity at the Youth Expo on Thursday, February 25th from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at River Oaks Golf Course. Online registration is now available at www.cgaasoftball.com/registration

There are some changes this year that you should be aware of. The most important change is that ALL of our girls will be representing the Wolfpack. All of our schools represent the Wolfpack; why shouldn't we. Another change involves the Peewee, Minor, Junior and Major levels in that the same system for deciding teams will be utilized: 1. Pitchers, 2. Catchers, 3. Ages. In the past it made absolutely no sense to allow a team to have several good pitchers and catchers and other teams have none. Or some teams from having all younger players. This system will provide equal and fair teams for all. Also, there will no longer be teams formed in those leagues by neighborhoods. Those players will now be placed on teams according to the schools they attend or would attend. In 2010, T-ball and Pitchball will follow suit in having their teams formed by their schools. The reason for these changes is that one great benefit of America's pastime is that it teaches children how to make new friends and get along with each other and, hopefully, realize that they are all part of a TEAM.

Folks, every one of us is an integral part of this program and that is why it is imperative that you find a way to help mentor our youth in volunteering. Volunteering is what keeps this program afloat. I am NOT suggesting that you put the amount of time in that this board does, JUST 1 hour. I promise you that we don't want your volunteer fee we just want and need your help.

As always, my phone number is 651 210-7015 if you need to get a hold of me. See you at registration!!!

Scott Fodor, Junior League Director

Fields Facts

It has become that part of the season for indoor practices to begin. My name is Verna Witzany and my role of Fields Director is exciting to say the least. I am always happy to be a part of CGAA Softball, from coaching and developing young players within the in-house program to, now, being part of the CGAA Softball Board. Currently, I am learning about the various aspects of running a softball league, focusing on scheduling the winter practices and clinics needed by the traveling and in-house leagues. I look forward to new challenges each season brings - but most of all, working with a great group of individuals who devote much of their free time in establishing and maintaining the softball program for Cottage Grove.

In the past, I've coached my daughter and her friends through the Tball and Pitchball levels and plan to continue with them, into the Peewee levels and beyond. I've totally enjoyed my role as a coach, mainly because each girl is so great and offers so much to the team. We have a lot of fun playing softball, and being able to experience teambuilding and establish new friends in the meantime, well, that is bonus. I enjoy instructing and observing each player develop within the path they choose, whether in-house or traveling, and excel in their skill set. It is also enjoyable to share the parents' enthusiasm and pride they take in their child's development. It's all good.

I am looking forward to a great 2009 traveling and in-house season and I hope you are as well. Although you may not find yourself in a clinic or practice at this time, it *will* begin. Starting in January, all practice times and clinics should be established and the balls will begin flying. Let's play ball!!!!

Registration Dates for In House:

February 7

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Youth Service Bureau

February 22

12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Youth Service Bureau

February 26

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Youth Expo at River
Oaks Golf Course

Anytime

Online at
cgaasoftball.com

Program Development Points

I am so excited to be a new member of the CGAA softball board. I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself and what my goals and expectations are in being the new program developer.

My name is Darcie Young, I am a graduate of Park Sr. High School. I grew up playing Cottage Grove softball and eventually played for Park High School. Softball was a very important part of my life and I am eager to use the things I learned to help other girls love the game like I do. A very important goal of mine while on the board is to bridge the gap between Cottage Grove softball and the high school softball program. I believe if the two programs come together the opportunities for success are endless. After all, we have one of the best high school coaches that ever coached the game. Charlie Whitbred is one of the very few coaches who have achieved over 500 wins. He leads a team that is rated top ten in the state every year. I feel very lucky to have played for him and to have him come on board in helping to make Cottage Grove softball the best. I am committed to doing everything I can for the CGAA softball program and welcome Coach Whitbred's knowledge and love of the game.

Treasurer Tidbits

My name is Greg Cocchiarella and I am very happy to be the new Treasurer of the Cottage Grove Softball board. I have been a resident of Cottage Grove for the past 16 years. I have two children who have participated in Cottage Grove athletics for the past ten years, including softball and baseball. I plan to bring fresh ideas and strong fiscal management to the Softball board so that we can make the necessary investments to grow and strengthen our program. It is my hope, that we can increase the number of girls who are participating in Cottage Grove Softball program at all levels and create a positive impact in their lives which will last a lifetime.

The Voice of the Membership

Hi! I am Kristie Schulz and I am the new to the CGAA softball board and the position I have is also new. I am the Member at Large. I am basically here to help wherever needed. I am here to be a one of many voices for the board and also bring back to the board feedback or just general talk that may be helpful in further developing an awesome softball program for our girls. I am really excited to be more involved in what my daughters love and also in helping in whatever way I can to make this a positive experience for all of our girls.

This program is about our children and the community and I am hoping to be a help in making this even more successful and look forward to watching this program grow even bigger. I am thankful to the board for the opportunity and I am looking forward to the new season.

Communications Comments

My name is Brad Strom and I am the first ever Director of Communications for CGAA Softball. Communication to the membership is something that has been a void for a long time with CGAA Softball and my goal is to change that. I have been a resident of Cottage Grove for over 30 years and participated in several CGAA sports as a child and coached in the program for 3 years. My goal is to leverage my knowledge of the IT world and electronic communications to bring CGAA Softball into the 21st century all while giving something back to the community and to the organization that helped shape me as an adult. Hopefully you have already seen some of the changes with the form of emails you have already received. Just the fact that we can now email the entire membership is a huge step forward. We have updated our website and have begun adding some new and fresh content. Please visit our website at www.cgaasoftball.com and let me know what you think.

Coaches Links

Josephson Institute

- Summary
- Full Report

Star Tribune Article

Positive Coaching Alliance

Coaches Corner

Character Counts: What are you teaching your players?

The sports arena has traditionally been a place where character, sportsmanship, fair play, discipline, and respect have been taught and upheld. According to a 2006 [national survey of high school student-athletes](#) by Josephson Institute, the values of young athletes are dramatically impacted by their sport experiences.

"The good news is, the majority of high school athletes trust and admire their coaches and are learning positive life skills and good values from them," said **Michael Josephson**, founder and president of the institute. "The bad news is, many coaches-particularly in the high-profile sports of boys' basketball, baseball, and football-are teaching kids how to cheat and cut corners without regard for the rules or traditional notions of fair play and sportsmanship."

Consider these survey findings:

Athletes respect coaches. The vast majority of high school athletes say their coaches "consistently set a good example of ethics and character" (90%) and that their current coach "wants them to do the ethically right thing, no matter what the cost" (91%).

Coaches teach negative lessons. Despite athletes' positive views of the character and intentions of their coaches, they're often taught negative lessons about cheating and bad sportsmanship:

30% of all boys and 20% of girl softball players think it's okay for a pitcher to deliberately throw at a batter who homered the last time up.

54% of male football players, 49% of male basketball players, and 18% of females in all sports approve of trash-talking.

Some sports are worse than others. Boys engaged in baseball, football, and basketball are considerably more likely to cheat on the field and in school and to deliberately injure, intimidate, or break rules than boys involved in other sports. Likewise, girls involved in basketball and [softball](#) are more likely to engage in illegal or unsportsmanlike conduct than girls involved in other sports.

Athletes cheat more. Nearly two-thirds of the boys and girls participating in sports say they cheated on an exam in the past year compared with 60 percent of the total high school population. Based on these findings, are we dressing up sports to be something they're not?

As a coach have you thought about what your players are learning from you besides the fundamentals?

Lists offer lessons in life that sports can teach so well

Jim Thompson's top 10 and bottom 10 highlights are part of his effort to make sports an "ennobling experience."

Just like Santa Claus, Jim Thompson is constantly compiling an annual list of who's been naughty and who's been nice. Unlike Santa, he publishes his findings on a website, substituting public shame -- and public praise -- for lumps of coal and presents under the tree.

Thompson is executive director of Positive Coaching Alliance, a California-based organization dedicated to making youth sports a fun and life-enriching experience. Each year, he assembles lists of the top 10 and bottom 10 moments in sports. The bottom-10 list, typically populated by gun-toting parents and coaches who need anger-management training, tends to get more attention for its shock quotient. But the top 10 -- particularly in 2008 -- is far more valuable to a sports culture in need of reassessment.

[\[more...\]](#)

Player's Links

[Oslo Sports Trauma
Research Study](#)

[Exercises](#)

[Violence Plaques
Youth Sports](#)

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PO Box 337
651-458-6086
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Visit our website
www.cgaasoftball.com

Players Page

Injury Prevention

Protecting our young women athletes from injuries can be a full time job but a new study out of Oslo, Norway has just made that job much easier. On December 9th of this year ABC's news correspondent Sharon Alfonsi reported that simple specific exercises before playing any sport can **reduce injuries by 1/3** and can also **reduce severe injuries by 1/2** in young women athletes. (To find out more about this study or any other study conducted please click on the links at left.) These findings were determined after a study involving 2000 young girl soccer players.

Young women athletes are 5 to 8 times more likely to rupture their Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) than male athletes. Doctors don't know why but they believe that hormones or women's wider hips put more stress on the knees. If the ACL ruptures, the tear can be excruciating and complications can last a lifetime. Holly Silvers, a sports researcher, says that anywhere up to 10 years after the initial injury there are early signs of degenerative arthritis. That is why doctors are prescribing a specific 20 minute warm up for all competitive female athletes that consist of slow and speed running and exercises that **focus on balance, core stability, hip control and knee alignment**. Sixty-one Division One women soccer teams have tested the program and reported that **knee injuries dropped by more than 70%**. Currently other women's teams, from Basketball to Lacrosse are focusing on ACL prevention using everything from simple stretches to sophisticated equipment. At New York Chelsea Piers (the city's largest sports training facility), young athletes are videotaped and analyzed for position weaknesses but researchers maintain that a simple adjustment to the warm up could keep thousands of young athletes, both girls and boys, from having their goals sidelined.

This sounds more like a "Pound of Cure".
Scott Fodor

Youth Violence

Overbearing Parents Creating Dangerous Situations on the Field

Excitement suddenly turned to fear for the 49ers youth football team as players ran off the field holding their stomachs and began vomiting violently on the sideline. Parents and coaches helped the eight boys, ages 12 to 14, into cars and headed to the hospital, ending the practice for a championship game a few days later. No one knew it at the time, but the sick 49ers had been poisoned, casualties in an epidemic of parental rage sweeping through youth sports.

Coaches are being threatened; referees assaulted and kids hurt more than ever by the parents of some of the estimated 30 million young players in organized sports. From parents brawling at a T-ball game in Florida while 4- and 5-year-old children watched to a father being beaten to death at a hockey game in Massachusetts, anger is growing. Leagues are responding by banning rowdy parents from the stands, holding silent games and trying to teach coaches and parent how to behave. When that fails, authorities are putting the worst offenders in jail. "From road rage to airplane rage to cell phone rage, children in sports aren't immune to all of this. Now we have sideline rage," said Fred Engh, head of the National Alliance for Youth Sports. Violence against umpires and referees has prompted many states to get tougher. The Illinois Legislature recently passed a bill mandating penalties for people who assault sports officials, while 15 other states have similar laws.

[\[more...\]](#)