



# CGAA SOFTBALL STRIKE ZONE NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 19, 2009

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

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## A letter from the President

I hope this Newsletter finds you in good health and happiness! First let me thank everyone for a wonderful season and I am already looking forward to another great year.

This year we are going to be calling on more volunteers, so we can continue to keep this program a success. There are about 500 kids in this program and historically we have run this program with only about 10% of members helping. This would include coaches, board members and a handful of people stepping up during times of need. I cannot tell you the amount of work that goes into making this Softball program a success, and if it was not for these volunteers this program would struggle to even exist.

The heart of a volunteer is not only focused on their kids but on everyone's kid in this program. As an example, during the In-House Tournament last year; we had people donate 32 hours over a two day period. Scott Fodor, the former Junior League Director gave more time than anyone and did not even have a girl in the program at the time. He did this because he believed in giving kids another outlet to grow and become better people. That is what this program is about and we need your help to make that possible.

We are not going to be looking for you to give 32 hours in a weekend, but if we could get 2 to 4 hours for the whole season that would be great! One of my favorite quotes is, "**Many hands make light work!**" Nicolas Cage in the movie ConAir, and this is one of the philosophies of this program. Together we can impact these girls lives, so please when someone asks for help please be willing to stand up and help.

Thanks for everything and please know that I am always open to listening. Have a great winter and I will see you on the fields.

Justin Voerster, President

## Upcoming Events

- **Winter Pitching Clinics**
- **Winter Catching Clinics**
- **Skill Development Clinics @ Park Activity Ctr.**  
In House and Traveling Players are Welcome

**Date for all Clinics to determined soon.**

**Check out the full calendar at [www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com)**

## In House League Headlines

We are excited about the upcoming 2010 In-House season. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on some changes in our program.

First off Scott Fodor has stepped down as our Junior League Director. Scott has brought a lot of experience and excitement to our program. His focus has always been to improve the program to the betterment of the girls playing in it and I believe that he has succeeded in that. While we will greatly miss Scott and all of his contributions on behalf of CGAA Softball we will continue to move on with the same focus. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce Mike Snyder as the new Junior League Director. Mike comes in with a lot of energy and excitement for this opportunity and we know that he will do an outstanding job!

We are continuously thinking of ways to improve the quality of play in the In-House program. Our goal is to have a program that is fun and challenging. We want the girls to have fun competing and develop their skills and to have an equal opportunity to compete and win. To that extent we would like to make you aware of how teams will be selected in the upcoming year. T-Ball and Pitchball teams will be formed based on a blind draft based on age and years of experience. Peewee, Minors, Juniors, and Majors teams will be created based on pitchers and catchers and then a blind draft based on age and years of experience. Pitchers and catchers will be selected based on a clinic where they will be evaluated and then evenly distributed amongst the teams so that one team does not have a larger compliment of strong pitchers over another. Part of the girls having fun playing is being able to compete and we believe that this will help us give the girls that opportunity.

In the Junior League we will be making some changes to our age groups. Our goal is to have the girls moving through the program with an opportunity to develop and challenge themselves. Our age groups for the Junior League will be:

T-Ball Age 5  
Pitchball Age 6-7  
Peewee Age 8-10

We believe that one year of instructional play at the T-Ball level helps make the girls ready to hit a coach pitch, and realistically most of the girls already are doing that in their backyards with Mom and Dad. As we moved the 6 year olds up to Pitchball we needed to decide what to do with our 8 year olds. We decided to move them up to Peewee. This puts the ages of our Peewee program consistent with the U10 traveling ages. I personally have coached 8 year olds in the Fall Ball program and have seen them flourish and really enjoy the game at that level of play and believe that this will help them stay focused on the game and grow their skill level.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about these changes. We will continue to discuss changes in these monthly newsletters and inform you of the opportunities that are forthcoming.

Duane A Lindahl,  
Senior League Director

## Did you know...

- We had over 70 girls try out for the traveling teams for the 2010 season?
- You can help CGAA Softball earn a \$2,500 grant from Responsible Sports Sponsored by Liberty Mutual? To help, go to [www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com) and click on the Responsible Sports link. The deadline is November 30, so please help us reach the goal and win \$2,500 for our program.

## Upcoming Events

- **Winter Pitching Clinics**

- December 6
- December 13
- December 20

- **Future Winter Clinics**

- Hitting
- Catching
- Coaching

- **All Skill Development Clinics**

**6:00 – 8:00 PM**  
**Park Activity Ctr.**  
[In House and Traveling Players are Welcome](#)

Dates for 2010 Clinics coming soon.

Check out the full calendar at [www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com)

## Registration Dates for In House:

Watch for In Person registration dates in February 2010 to be announced soon.

Register Online at [www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com) beginning in January 2010.

Watch for details about registration in coming editions of **Strike Zone**

## Program Development Points

Let's not allow the cold weather to keep you from getting better at softball! This winter we are going to offer several opportunities to practice your pitching, catching and hitting. We are going to start off the winter with **open** pitching clinics. Clinics are open to pitchers of all ability levels and experience. Bring a catcher along and work hard on your pitching form. [The first one is November 22, from 6-8 at the Park High Activity Center.](#) I will be there along with others to help make sure you are on the right track.

**\* Remember, to sign in when you get there. I want to know who is out there working hard!**

The other dates for the open pitching clinics at the Activity Center are as follows:

- December 6
- December 13
- December 20

All clinics will be from 6:00 – 8:00 PM.

Keep checking our website for other dates and opportunities later this Winter.

[www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com)

Future Clinic topics will be:

- **January** – Pitching and Hitting
- **February** – Pitching and Catching
- **March** – Coaches Clinics

This next softball season we are still going to emphasize the fact that hard work pays off. If you want to get better you must be willing to work hard for it. We are going to continue to push this with our pitchers but are also going to incorporate this philosophy with the catchers. I can't wait to see you all this winter!

Darcie Dietz-Young,  
Director of Program Development

## Secretary Synopsis

Becoming A Part of Your Community – Through Volunteering.

Volunteering is an integral part of any non-profit organization. I'm sure this isn't anything new to anyone. But I want to write about the benefits to the volunteer. Sure, volunteering makes a person feel good, gives a sense of accomplishment. But there are more benefits than that.

I didn't grow up in Cottage Grove. I have lived here for 12 years now and it wasn't until the past few years that I began to feel like a member of the community. The more I involved myself in my children's activities, the more people I met and befriended. With their sports, I had sat on the sidelines watching for the first couple of years and met some of the parents on the sidelines with me. But it wasn't until I started volunteering with their sports that I started to meet many more people and feel that I belonged here. Now it seems there isn't a shopping trip to Target or the grocery store where I don't see someone I know. I'm no longer just a resident of Cottage Grove, I'm a member of a wonderful community. I feel like I belong to a family with CGAA Softball. Through volunteering I have made lasting friendships and have gotten to know people I wouldn't have really known, sitting on the sidelines. This is a wonderful bonus to me. Not only can I give back to my community's organizations, help and encourage the children involved, I also show my children the benefits of volunteering and I'm getting something in return – lasting friendships.

I hope this encourages you to volunteer at your next opportunity. Of course I would like to push you in the direction of CGAA Softball, but volunteering for any organization in our community is a wonderful gift of your time.

Jodi Dahler,  
Secretary

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Watch for details about registration in coming editions of **Strike Zone** or at [www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com)

## Photo Contest Details:

Contest runs November 23, 2009 to December 24, 2009

Email your photos to [photos@cgaasoftball.com](mailto:photos@cgaasoftball.com)

Include your name and phone number with your entry.

Winners will be notified after January 1, 2010

Watch for winning entries in coming editions of **Strike Zone** and at [www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com)

## Communications Comments

I hope you are enjoying receiving your monthly newsletters. As the clinics start to ramp up and the season approaches, these newsletters will be chock full of information for parents, players and coaches. If you know someone that is interested in the Softball program, tell them to sign up for our newsletter.

As I said last month, we are in the process of making further updates to our website. We are looking for a re-launch sometime between now and the start of the registration season. We do need your help however. Please consider submitting entries for the Photo Contest to help us accumulate some new photos for our website.

Look for the new and improved CGAASoftball.com to provide a one-stop shop for all things softball. From player and coach tips to parent links to where to buy quality softball equipment at a reasonable price, [cgaasoftball.com](http://cgaasoftball.com) will bring it to you. If there are things you think are missing or you'd like to see, please don't hesitate to drop me a note and let me know.

Brad Strom, Communications Director  
[brad.strom@cgaasoftball.com](mailto:brad.strom@cgaasoftball.com)

## PHOTO CONTEST

Attention all shutterbugs, **WE NEED YOUR PICTURES!**

With the redesign of our website we are looking for pictures of our young ladies in the field, at the plate, on the mound or just having a blast playing softball. Prizes will be awarded for the following categories:

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Best Action Photo     | Best Team Photo     |
| Best Individual Photo | Most Creative Photo |

### How to Enter

1. Email your photo to [photos@cgaasoftball.com](mailto:photos@cgaasoftball.com).
2. All entries must be in a jpg file format. Entries submitted in any other format will be disqualified.
3. Please provide your first and last name and phone number so we may notify winners promptly.

### Contest Rules

1. **Contest begins on Monday, November 23, 2009.**
2. **All entries must be received by 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time on Thursday, December 24, 2009.** Winners will be selected by a panel of judges selected by CGAA Softball. Judges will categorize the photos and award prizes for the best photo in each category. Winners and their winning photos will be featured as part of our website re-launch and the January edition of the Strike Zone newsletter.
3. **All Entries must be submitted electronically.** All contest entries will become the property of CGAA Softball and will not be returned to contest participants. CGAA Softball is not responsible for lost, stolen, misdirected, delayed, destroyed or illegible entries.
4. **Eligibility:** This contest is open only to anyone 18 years of age or older at the time of contest entry. This contest is not open to photos previously published in any print or online publication.
5. **Rights and Permissions:** By entering this contest, participants grant CGAA Softball a non-exclusive right to use the materials submitted and the content of the entries in any marketing or promotional materials that CGAA Softball, in its sole discretion, may decide to publish, distribute or use. Participants agree to sign a release to this effect, if required.
6. By participating, you agree to these Official Rules and to the decisions of CGAA Softball being final and binding in all respects.

**For a full list of rules go to [www.cgaasoftball.com\contest.htm](http://www.cgaasoftball.com\contest.htm)**

## Sport Specific Training

### Concerns:

1. Improper muscle development
2. Overtraining can result in injury for a young athlete
3. Interference with social relationships

### What to do?

1. Develop a training program that enhances overall athletic development.
2. Include sport specific skills, but don't dwell on them.
3. Don't kill your young athletes desire by pigeon-holing them.
4. Get out the rollerblades, basketballs and other sports equipment.
5. Most of all, let them be a kid!

## Coaches Corner

Bob Loshek is the new Head Softball coach at Park Senior High. Coach Loshek's experience includes five years as Assistant Softball Coach at Woodbury High School. He has also served as an assistant at the University of St. Thomas and Winona Cotter High School. He will also be a frequent contributor to the Strike Zone to help teach players, parents and coaches the "Wolfpack Way". Park Softball Coach Bob Loshek writes...

Coaches, instructors, and parents are constantly searching for the best training programs to increase an athlete's potential. Children dream of becoming the next Derek Jeter, Michael Jordan, or Jennie Finch. It would be a mistake, however, to believe that children should be subjected to any kind of training program that a professional athlete has endured.

It is important to understand that training programs must be designed according to the athlete's stage of maturity, rather than the athlete's chronological age. While an early maturing child may show dramatic improvements to begin with, more often, a late bloomer will be the better athlete in the long run. It is important for young children to develop a variety of fundamental skills to help them become good general athletes BEFORE they start training in a specific sport. Children become extremely well coordinated by developing the fundamental skills of running, jumping, throwing, catching, tumbling, and balancing. Playing all sorts of sports will enhance their skill development as well as keep their interest at a high level.

Performing a sport specific exercise at an early age can lead to a unilateral, narrow development of the muscles in one's body. It can have a negative impact on the mental health of the children involved because of the high stress levels this type of training creates. Over time, it can result in overuse, overtraining, and even injuries. Training for one sport can interfere with a child's social relationship, such as failing to make friends away from her sport due to the extra hours of training. Stress, boredom, and lacking in fun are just some of the other reasons why young athletes quit their "one" or specialized sport.

A training program that focuses on overall athletic development, along with some sport-specific skills, will lead to more successful performances down the road. Specialization should take place only after athletes have developed a solid multilateral foundation, and I believe more importantly, when they have the DESIRE to specialize in a particular sport or position in a team sport...usually after 16 years of age.

So I encourage you to get out those roller blades, basketballs, tennis racquets, golf clubs, soccer balls, hopscotch designs and jump ropes as well as those softball bats and balls. As much as Bo Jackson, Michael Jordan, Deion Sanders, Dave Winfield, and yes, Joe Mauer were incredible multi-sport athletes, you too may be able to get back into the "swing" of things with a little multilateral fun with your children!

Coach Loshek

## Timing is Essential

- Proper mechanics are essential for making adjustments
- Get to the hitting zone in a strong, effective manner
- Stances vary, but all good hitters are similar in the hitting position

### Tips for all batters:

- If you're in the batter's box, be ready to hit
- Start your stride early, you can adjust bat speed easier
- Start by looking for an inside pitch and adjust out
- Look for a fastball and adjust to a slower pitch
- Prepare for a high pitch and adjust to a low pitch

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

## Players Page

### “Hitting is All Timing”

One of the most difficult skills in any sport is the act of hitting a moving object. Our softball players' ability to hit a round object (ball) with another round object (bat) and attempting to hit it square (contact point) can present many obstacles. You then add the elements of speed, movement, and location to the equation; it becomes obvious why the best hitters get a hit 3 out of 10 times!

If you have played the game, you know that the pitchers goal is to disturb the ability of the hitter to time a pitch perfectly. Pitchers accomplish this feat by using power, deception, and control. Hitters must have the ability to arrive at the hitting position on time and have the ability to adjust to speed, movement, and location. How can our hitters accomplish this and increase their ability to have a successful at bat?

Here are some general guidelines to help accomplish this task. Proper hitting mechanics are essential in increasing a hitters chance to make adjustments at the plate. A common flaw in most young hitters is their ability to get to the hitting position in a strong, efficient way. In addition to proper hitting, Coaches should come prepared with Key Safety Measures, which focuses on the major areas of safety, including conditioning, hydration, nutrition, equipment, injury prevention and more!

The stance in hitting is where you see the most variety. Hitters have different positioning with their feet and their hands. Watch TV and you will see that all hitters start differently but once they arrive at the hitting position, all good hitters look similar.

Every pitcher presents a different challenge to our young hitter's ability to arrive at the hitting position on time. Here are some coaching points to follow:

- **Be ready** – When the pitcher begins her motion to deliver the pitch – the hitter should begin their preparation to get to a hitting position.
- **Be early vs. late** – Hitters would rather get their front foot down early versus being late. Young hitters cannot begin their swing until their front foot gets down.
- **Look in and adjust away** – Prepare for the pitch in and a hitter can always adjust away. It is almost impossible to look away and be on time for an inside pitch. The hitter has to release the bat earlier on an inside pitch and later on an outside pitch.
- **Prepare for fast & adjust to slow** – It is very difficult to look for a change up and hit a fast ball! Always prepare for the pitchers fastest pitch and maintain a strong hitting position with pressure between the knees, which will help your hitters better adjust to the off-speed pitch.
- **Prepare for high and adjust to low** – Especially in fast pitch softball, we must prepare high and adjust to the low pitch. Good hitters prepare for up and in and adjust down to everything else.

These are just a few coaching points to begin developing the preparation phase of hitting. Having a plan every at bat is crucial to a hitter's success and hopefully these tips will help you begin to develop your base for future success.

Bunting will be more of an offensive weapon for the 2010 season. Spend some time learning this skill to become a more complete player.