



# CGAA SOFTBALL STRIKE ZONE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 21, 2010

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

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## A letter from the President

I hope this Newsletter finds you all in good health and a positive outlook to the New Year ahead. We are looking forward to the Spring when the Softball season gets under way. We have put together some exciting changes that will make this season a great experience for the girls. The Traveling teams have been formed and I know that all of the traveling teams will represent Cottage Grove in a positive manner.

In house registration is right around the corner and we will be offering both online and face to face registration. We encourage all of those that are interested to register early so we can prepare effectively for another successful year. We are joining forces on a few dates of the face to face dates with CGAA Baseball to allow you to do your "one stop shopping" to register your children. Our face to face registration dates are:

- Saturday, February 6, 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM (with Baseball)
- Saturday, February 20, 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM (with Baseball)
- Thursday, March 4, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM (Youth Expo at River Oaks)
- Saturday, March 13 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

The location for the Saturday dates is the Youth Service Bureau. The Youth Service Bureau is located at 7064 S. West Point Douglas Road, near the former Rodeo Nightclub. Thursday, March 4 is part of the annual Youth Expo at River Oaks.

This year our main goal is to give your kids a positive outlet and develop them into better kids. Thanks for having your kids be involved and we cannot thank you enough for letting your kids play softball for Cottage Grove.

Have a great year and we will see you on the field soon!

Justin Voerster, President

## Did you know...

- FREE Winter Clinics are on Sunday nights at the Activity Center?
- You can register online or in person for the SAME LOW PRICE?

## New Age Groups in Junior League

- **Wee Tees**  
Age 4
- **T-Ball**  
Age 5
- **Pitchball**  
Age 6 – 7
- **Peewees**  
Age 8, 9 & 10

## New Age Cutoff for all Leagues

Players grouped by ages  
as of  
January 1, 2010

Check out all  
registration  
information at  
[www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com)

## In House League Headlines

Happy 2010 to everyone! As we have been living through another frozen Minnesota winter the thoughts of spring and summer have often found a way into the picture. I am truly looking forward to the upcoming softball season, my first as a board member. The amount of work and the discussions that have taken place, so far, have been remarkable. This will be only my third year involved in CGAA softball. I spent one year as a parent/umpire and last year I coached both of my daughters' teams (one Pitchball and one Pee Wee). Over the past two years I have witnessed several people committed to making the CGAA softball program a success and creating the best opportunity in offering the children a safe place to grow, learn, stay active, and most important have fun!

Although the softball season seems to be months away, it will be here before we know it. It is time to start thinking about registration. In this age of advanced technology we have a goal of making registrations solely online. This goal will not happen this year but the opportunity to register on-line will be available. **We hope to have online registration up and running during the week of January 18<sup>th</sup>. Face-to-face registrations will start in February**; there will be three days in February and one day in March. Please recall the Junior League changes that were mentioned in the previous newsletter:

*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*

I would also like to remind you that for the girls that are or think they might be interested in pitching this upcoming season, we offer **FREE pitching clinics** at the Park High School Activity Center. This clinic will be taught by former Park High School pitching standout Darcie (Dietz) Young. Please check the CGAA Softball web site for more information and dates.

Finally, I strongly encourage you to consider volunteering in some way this season. This program will run better with more volunteers. Like President Justin Voerster quoted in the last newsletter, **"Many hands make light work!"**

I look forward to meeting many new faces this winter and throughout the upcoming season!

Mike Snyder  
Junior League Director

## Coaches Needed

We are looking for coaches for the 2010 season. If you are interested in coaching, please email [coach@cgaasoftball.com](mailto:coach@cgaasoftball.com) with the following information:

- Name
- Phone number
- Level interested in coaching
- List any coaching experience

You will be notified by the end of March if you have been selected to coach.

## Upcoming Events

- **Winter Hitting & Fielding Clinics**  
6:00 – 8:00 PM
  - January 24  
(12-under)
- **Winter Pitching Clinics**
  - **January 31**  
12-Under  
6:00 – 7:00 PM  
13-Up  
7:00 – 8:00 PM
  - **February 7**  
12-Under  
6:00 – 7:00 PM  
13-Up  
7:00 – 8:00 PM
- **Traveling Skills Clinics**
  - February 6  
5:30 – 7:30
- **Winter Catching Clinics**
  - March 21
  - March 28
- **Coaching Clinics**
  - February 6
  - March 20
- **All Skill Development Clinics**  
6:00 – 8:00 PM  
Park Activity Ctr.

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

## Program Development Points

I am very excited to say that just because there is snow on the ground we can still play softball. This winter we are offering several opportunities to practice your pitching, catching and hitting. Pitchers must bring a catcher along for the Pitching Clinics.

Players of all ability levels and experience; either Traveling or In House are welcome at any and all clinics (except Traveling Clinic on 2/6)

**\* Remember, to sign in at each clinic. I want to know who is out there working hard!**

Starting Monday, January 25, we are offering open pitching time at the Alternative Learning Center. Pitchers must have their own Softie softball and their own catcher. All catchers under age 18 must wear a mask. These sessions will have no instructor, but they are just an opportunity to come in and get some throwing in. Pitchers 12 and under are from 6:00 – 7:30 PM and pitchers 13 and up are from 7:30 – 9:00 PM

Keep checking our website for additional dates and opportunities later this Winter. [www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com)

We are working closely with Park high school and the new high school coach Bob Loshek. He is hosting many of these winter clinics and we are very excited to learn how the high school does things. We are really emphasizing this year that CGAA is a true feeder program for Park Wolfpack.

Look for many opportunities this spring to be a meet and cheer on the Park Wolfpack Varsity team.

Darcie Dietz-Young,  
Director of Program Development

## Communications Comments

It hardly seems possible that the 2010 season is already looming on the horizon. We have some exciting changes that we think will make the program even more fun and exciting for your girls.

Although there are still subzero temps and there is plenty of snow on the ground, registration season is upon us. For the 2010 season, we are proud to offer the same low price as last season. Even better than that, we are able to offer the **same great price for both online and in person registration.** Also, to make registration more convenient for you, we will be accepting Visa, Master Card and Discover at the In Person Registration dates at no additional charge to you.

Our website redesign is nearly complete. One of the pieces to that redesign is a new online registration provider, [sportssignup.com](http://sportssignup.com). Not only are there added features, but they are also at a much lower cost than our previous provider and we are passing that savings on to you.

Look for the new and improved [CGAASoftball.com](http://CGAASoftball.com) to provide player and coach tips, parent links, where to buy quality softball equipment at a reasonable price and streaming videos to help teach and train your young athletes. Keep checking back for constantly changing content.

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

## Registration Dates for In House:

**Saturday, February 6**  
Youth Service Bureau  
12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

**Saturday, February 20**  
Youth Service Bureau  
12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

**Thursday, March 4**  
Youth Expo  
River Oaks Golf Club  
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

**Saturday, March 13**  
Youth Service Bureau  
12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Register Online at  
[www.cgaasoftball.com](http://www.cgaasoftball.com)  
beginning the week of  
January 18.

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

## PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Thank you for taking the time to submit your photos. You made the selections very difficult.

Congratulations to our photo contest winners:

- Best Action Photo – Jacki Mallot
- Best Individual Photo - Amelia LaCasse
- Best Team Photo – Gina Tester
- Most Creative Photo – Gina Garcia

To see the winning photos, go to [www.cgaasoftball.com/contest\\_winners](http://www.cgaasoftball.com/contest_winners)

## Secretary Synopsis

**Being part of a Team** By Richard Stratton, Ph.D.

What does it mean to be part of a team? It means you are part of a group who have come together to achieve the same goals. You are a piece of a puzzle. All of the pieces -- you, your teammates, your coaches, and maybe even the parents of the team members -- must fit together to make the whole puzzle which is the team.

While some coaches try to emphasize teamwork with the slogan, "There is no 'I' in Team", you should understand what they are trying to say. It is important that each member of the team have their own individual goals that they hope to achieve while playing the sport. But there are also goals the team as a group want to achieve.

All team members must be willing to adjust their personal goals to fit in with the team goals. Not everyone can be the leading scorer. There are starters and there are substitutes.

Being part of a team means helping your teammates whenever you can. Cooperation among all members of the team is very important. Jealousy of teammates has no place in sports. No matter how good you are there will always be someone who is better than you. You should admire those who are better than you and work even harder to bring your skills up to their level. You should see this as a challenge rather than something to be angry about. Being angry at a teammate will hurt your performance and will hurt the team's performance. Finally, being part of a team means giving 100% all of the time. When people are part of a group they sometimes do what is called social loafing. This is where you give 100% when you play alone but less than 100% when you are of a group. In essence, you slack off and expect others in the group to pick up part of your responsibilities. What would happen if everyone on the team did this? The team probably would not do too well. You are an equal partner on the team and must contribute your fair share of the effort, take your fair share of the credit for team successes, and your fair share of the blame for team failures. This is what it means to be part of a team.

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Richard Stratton, Ph.D., is the Associate Professor of Health and Physical Education at the College of Human Resources and Education, Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. Dr. Stratton is the editor of the monthly online newsletter Coaching Youth Sports.

Jodi Dahler,  
Secretary

## Teaching Team Speed

### Truths:

1. Treat speed like any other skill
2. Speed can be taught
3. Speed is a skill that affects every position, not just for baserunning
4. Speed never goes into a "slump"

### Speed Fundamentals

1. Keep your head relaxed, not tilted back
2. Relax shoulders, don't run stiff
3. Run on the balls of your feet
4. Concentrate on explosiveness

## 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...

### Teaching Team Speed

For years, the feeling among coaches that speed is in the genes and not something that can be trained is starting to dissipate. Generally speaking, it is true that unless an athlete possesses great natural speed, she usually will feel inadequate in this department and is, therefore, of the opinion that she is slow.

The truth is that coaches should treat speed as just another skill to teach. One key to teaching team speed is to break down the skill as you would any other and find ways to drill it until old habits are broken and new ones are adopted.

When selling your players on the importance of speed, remember that it not only improves the ability to steal or cover ground in the outfield, but in fact it is a skill that affects every position and every aspect of base running. The key is to educate your players on the role of speed and how important it is to maximize their ability in that area. Not everybody is going to run a 60 yard dash in 2.7 seconds. You can however set a realistic team goal of 3.0 seconds for everyone.

Because athletes know so little about how to run, they place limitations on themselves of how fast they can run. Running has been thought of as punishment and pain, instead of a skill that can help them be the best that they can be. As a coach, you have a chance to develop a philosophy that running has a purpose or two. Those purposes include that speed is never a negative talent...and that speed never goes into a "slump."

Here are some fundamentals and common mistakes from head to toe:

- Keep the head relaxed and never run with the head tilted back
- Relax the shoulders so the arms extend down naturally. Don't run with a stiff motion
- The arms should drive down hard by the side with the hands brushing by the hips
- Never allow the arms to swing across the body from side to side
- Run with a relaxed hand with a full range of motion, so the arms are moving in front of the body (elbows bent at 90 degrees) and driving back past the hip
- Remember to run with opposite hand and leg action so that as the right knee goes up, the left hand comes up
- Run on the balls of the feet (toes) and run with high knee action bringing the heel up to the butt area
- Concentrate on explosiveness with quickness in the leg action and power in the arm action (driving the elbows back)

Happy Running!

Coach Loshek

## Avoid Staleness

### Signs of Staleness:

- Show a decrease in performance level
- Have difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Irregular eating patterns
- Prone to illness

### Tips to prevent staleness:

- Allow adequate rest time to recover from training
- Maintain a balance with training, family, school and friends
- Take at least 1 month off per year
- Quality not quantity in training
- Participate in other activities

**CGAA Softball**  
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**Visit our website**  
**www.cgaasoftball.com**

## Players Page

### “Avoid Staleness”

In an athletic career, athletes can often undergo prolonged stress because of overtraining and the volume of games. Softball players are not different. In their quest to be the best they can be, some players spend countless hours practicing. This can lead to "staleness". The term "stale" refers to a loss of vigor, initiative and successful performance.

#### SIGNS OF STALENESS IN ATHLETES

- Show a decrease in performance level
- Have difficulty falling asleep
- Be awakened from sleep for no apparent reason
- Experience loss of appetite and loss of weight or overeating
- Have indigestion
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Experience nausea for no apparent reason
- Be Prone to head colds and/or allergic reactions
- Show Behavioral signs of restlessness, irritability, anxiety, and/or depression
- Have an elevated heart rate

#### TIPS TO PREVENT STALENESS

- Allow adequate rest time to recover from training
- Monitor signs of overtraining
- Maintain a balance between softball, family, school and friends.
- Allow free time to enjoy other activities
- Every athlete should take at least one month off per year (transition period) and do no softball
- Focus on quality, not on quantity of training
- Make sure "variety" is a part of the training regimen
- Make training fun and challenging
- Maintain proper eating and sleeping habits
- Participate in other activities

Overtraining had been erroneously described as an absolute state. In actuality, overtraining or any of its related states should be viewed as a continuum; from optimally recuperated to extremely overtrained. It is conceivable that an athlete may be slightly overtrained yet still achieve only modest gains in performance. Obviously, the more desirable situation would be optimal recuperation and consequently greater gains.

What to do if you are over-training? **Do not stop training.** Enjoy some other type of training-then return refreshed to your major sport. Persistence and consistency in training are thus maintained with a modicum of will power. Persistence of training and dedication to a single sport can at times approach the incredible.

Years ago after Clarence deMar won the Boston Marathon, a friend observed him out running the next day. The friend asked Clarence why he was training. Clarence declared he was getting ready for next year's race.