

New Prague 7th and 8th Grade Students Interested in Playing Softball at the Varsity Level

With regard to the participation of middle school athletes on high school teams, the New Prague High School Athletics Handbook states:

Use of seventh (7th) and eighth (8th) graders on varsity teams should be discouraged whenever possible. This is especially true when there is a good program in that particular sport on the seventh and eighth grade level. However, if a coach on the varsity level feels there is an athlete in the seventh or eighth grade program that **could participate on his/her team**, each case shall be handled individually" (2).

As varsity coaches we are not looking to use middle school athletes in the Varsity program, but if an athlete is qualified to participate at that level, they should be evaluated on a case by case basis. If we evaluate them as unlikely to contribute actively at the varsity level, they will be directed to the appropriate other programs. So we welcome stronger seventh and eighth grade students to try out for the Varsity team March 10-12, and we will advise them individually at the end of that tryout period as to where their best course lies.

Addendum: If, after high school age players have signed up, it looks like we are unable to fill a roster at the B-squad level, we may need to add middle school athletes at this level simply to fill this roster with a minimum of 12 players. If that is the case, we will invite any interested middle school age softball players to try out at this level on Monday, March 17th.

Participant Selection Process:

With regard to high school team selection, the handbook states:

After a one week tryout period (or minimum 6 practices/3 days during two- a-day practices), the coaching staff shall determine team membership. Any **individual(s) who are not selected for the team will be notified and given rationale (if requested) why they were not selected**. Coaches will also inform those athletes of any other options that might exist in their sport outside of the high school setting . . . Coaches should not cut participants because of ability when this maximum range is not met. (3)

We will run three tryout days – two sessions per day from March 10-12, at the end of which we will hold individual meetings with each athlete whereby we will notify athletes as to where we think they would find the best fit within the high school softball program. The tryout structure and selection process will be forecast and explicated in detail at the pre-tryout parent meeting.

A note on roster size and cuts:

Maximum Participant Range for Softball/Baseball:

9th Grade (9A & 9B) = 30-32 [2 teams of 16 maximum]

B-squad = 14-16 [1 team of 16 maximum]

Varsity & JV: 30-32 [2 teams of 16 maximum]

This does not guarantee that we will field five teams at the high school level. We will distribute athletes evenly across the available team and coaching resources without exceeding 78 athletes. So if 48 athletes tried out, we would strive to have 16 at 9th grade, 16 at B Squad, and 16 at Varsity/JV. We will balance roster size to best meet the competitive needs of our athletes and the program. We will only cut athletes if our numbers exceed the limits listed above.