



www.wfsc.org

Jeff Hodgson
President

Cindy Suess
Vice President, Clinic Director

Greg Lampe
Awards Committee Chairperson

Tammy Rademacher
Secretary

Jane Briehl
Treasurer

Tom Drohner
*All Star Game Umpires
District-North Central*

Sue Stoltenberg
*Academic All-State Coordinator
District-North East*

Tim Whitford
District-Valley/Lakeshore

John Ruffolo
*Clinic Vendor Coordinator
District-South East*

Jeff Pross
District-South West

Kevin Colburn
District-West

Brad Ceranski
District-North West

Jeff Agnew
District-South Central

Roger Schlieve
All-Star Game Coordinator

Jared Faherty
All-Star Game Coordinator



Greetings from the WFSCA,



We are excited for this year's clinic held at the Chula Vista Resort in the Wisconsin Dells On February 21st and 22nd. Cindy has once again put together a great clinic featuring Bill Hillhouse who was very popular with our coaches several years ago. We as a board would like to thank Cindy for all she does to make our clinic the very best it can be.

Once again we will be polling the varsity coaches on several issues during the clinic. We want to hear your concerns about our game. Several issues went forward to the WIAA executive board for consideration. If you have concerns about our game please use the clinic as a time to voice those concerns to your district representative or myself. The WIAA is taking forward a success factor proposal to the membership to be voted on in April. I suggest you talk to your athletic director about this proposal.

Finally I would like to thank all of our board members for the hard work they do to make Wisconsin High School softball great. We have made great strides as an organization in the past few years. We are excited about what the future holds for our organization and softball in our state.

Once again if you have suggestions we want to hear from you. Contact your district representative or myself with any suggestions on how we can grow as an organization. I look forward to seeing you at the clinic.

Jeff Hodgson

WFSCA President

WFSCA Coaches Clinic

Sat. Feb. 21 & Sun. Feb. 22

Chula Vista Resort—Wisconsin Dells

The WFSCA Coaches Clinic and membership registration is ONLINE. Go to www.wfsc.org to register and pay. Additional information is available on the registration form.



Speakers

- Bill Hillhouse—owner and pitching instructor, House of Pitching Softball Academy
www.houseofpitching.com
- John Tschida—head softball coach, St. Thomas University
www.tommiesports.com/sports/sball/coaches/John_Tschida
- Bill Edwards—previous head softball (retired May 2014), Hofstra University
http://www.nmnathletics.com/ViewArticle.dbml?DB_OEM_ID=22200&ATCLID=3715484

Hotel Information

Chula Vista Resort—Wisconsin Dells

Room Reservation #888-239-4236

Refer to booking ID #D12323 when making a reservation.

Room block held until January 21. Indoor Waterpark passes are included free with all rooms.

See WFSCA website for detailed hotel information.



Head coaches **MUST** be a current member of the WFSCA for their players to be eligible for All-District and All-State recognition. Seniors are also eligible to be selected for the Senior All-Star games, Team Wisconsin and Academic All-State. Member coaches are awarded Conference Champion, State Tournament and other achievement awards. Please forward this information regarding the clinic and membership to other coaches on your staff. Assistant, youth, summer, and travel coaches are welcome to attend.

WFSCA Clothing Order

New this year coaches can order WFSCA clothing items. A list of items and prices is available on the WFSCA website. Samples will also be available at the clinic and may be ordered at that time.



On Deck with a Board member.....



WFSCA Restructures All-District and All-State Selection Process

by Brad Ceranski, North West District Rep. & Thorpe Coach

During the November 2, WFSCA meeting, the Board restructured the process for selecting the All-District and All-State teams starting with the 2015 season. The most notable change is the creation of at-large positions at both the District and State level.

District Level

The *previous* twenty-four (24) player selection model called for each District to select:

- 6 pitchers
- 5 catchers
- 7 infielders
- 5 outfielders
- 1 utility player

Under the *new selection model*, each 24-member All-District Teams will consist of:

- 2 pitchers
- 2 catchers
- 5 infielders
- 3 outfielders
- 12 “at-large” positions

The “at-large” selections will be players from any position.

State Level

The All-State level will also have “at-large” selections for each team broken down in the

following manner:

- 4 pitchers
- 4 catchers
- 6 infielders
- 4 outfielders
- 6 at-large selections

These new models will allow for increased flexibility in the selection process and not “lock” slots based on specific positions. Another benefit of the change is the ability to recognize those pitchers that may not have dominant pitching statistics, but do have hitting statistics that warrant recognition. It also eliminates the qualification criteria for the utility position that was needed to define that slot on each team.

Another change that will take place this season is allowing nominations of 2nd Team All-Conference for the All-District Teams. Several conferences select All-Conference players based on performance in conference games which may make up less than half of the season total.

Overall, these changes make for a less restrictive model that will hopefully allow for the recognition of the top all-around players in our State.

Rule 8-2-8, Batter-Runner Steps Back Toward Home

by John Peterson, NFHS Softball Rules Committee Member & WIAA Official



Batter bunts the ball in order to advance runner(s). As she runs to first base she stops and takes a step back to avoid tag by 1st baseplayer who fielded the bunt. What is the call?



According to Rule 8-2-8: The batter-runner is out if she “...steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder”.

PENALTY: The ball is dead and runner(s) must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

The time of the interference is when she steps back. For umpires, this may involve a discussion to determine if any runners had obtained the next base at the time of the interference (step backward).

Example #1

Batter bunts ball, sees the 1st baseplayer is going to field the ball, so instead of running to first she stops and makes the player run to her to make the tag and allow runners to advance. This is legal.

Example #2

If she bunts, stops and waits but when the defensive player goes to apply the tag she then bolts passed the fielder toward first base. Umpire must determine if she ran outside the base line to avoid the tag (Rule 8-6-1).

Example #3

She bunts the ball sees the 1st baseplayer will field the ball, gives up and runs to dug-out located on 1st base side of the field. Umpire must determine if she stepped back to home plate, if not, the runner is called out when:

1. Defense with the ball tags first base, or
2. Ball is dead when she enters dead ball territory and runners must return to bases occupied at the time of the infraction (she entered dead ball territory) Rule 8-2-4.

On Deck with a Board member.....



The Best Practice Ever

by Jeff Agnew, South Central District Rep. & Fort Atkinson Coach

You know the old saying that athletic success is ninety percent mental. That may be an understatement.

For me the 2000 softball season was a reason to be excited. We were returning a talented veteran team and we had a slow, accurate, ground ball, extremely effective pitcher. We were the favorites to repeat as conference champions and go deep into the tournament season. Our first conference game was on the road and the girls just did not perform, and we lost 1-0. On the bus ride home it became evident that a few of the girls were taking the loss hard and most of the team simply didn't appear to care. The problem was not physical at all the problem was that the team was divided.

The next day the girls came to practice and waited in the bleachers for my assessment of the game and our daily practice plan. I told them that we had eight more weeks to be a team, fifty-six days to work together, and accomplish our goals. The practice plan was for every player to talk one on one to each other for five minutes on how we were going to work together and reach our goals. After an hour and a half of individual meetings the team gathered back in the bleachers now eagerly awaiting instructions

for the remainder of the practice. I asked them "are you ready?" And they gave me the most enthusiastic "yes" that I had ever heard. And I sent them home. We never picked up a bat or threw a ball that practice. That team went on to win the next sixteen games and conference, regional, and sectional titles.

I'm a true believer that team chemistry is the key to accomplishing your full potential.



On Deck with a Board member.....



Sign Stealing

by John Ruffolo, South East District Rep. & Kenosha Bradford Coach

Sign stealing has become an accepted part of the culture of fastpitch softball.

In the WIAA state tournament last June, I watched an assistant coach from “Team A” stare at the opening of the opposing dugout on Goodman Field. There, a coach from “Team B” was signaling pitches to his catcher. About midway through the game, the coach from Team A had apparently “picked” Team B’s change-up sign. Whenever the coach signaled the change-up to his catcher, the Team A coach leaned over the top railing and screamed to his batter “Arizona! Arizona! ARIZOOONA!!!”

I discussed this with a high school coaching colleague who played college baseball. I asked, “What would happen if someone did that in a college baseball game?” He replied, “Someone would get one in the earhole.”

This summer, I was coaching a 14U team at a national tournament. My catcher signaled pitches to our pitcher, and when she started her delivery, our catcher glided to the location of the pitch. The on-deck batters of the opposing team, standing very close to home plate, watched for this movement. They shouted “Watch IN!” or “Watch OUT!” or “Watch UP!”

After the game, I walked with my pitcher and her dad, a high-level fastpitch softball player

himself. I asked him, “What would happen if someone did that in a men’s fastpitch game?” He replied, “Someone would get one in the earhole.”

A few months earlier during my own high school season, I had a similar experience. As I signaled pitches to my catcher, the first-base coach (who had walked up the baseline to see my pitch calls more clearly) began calling out pitch types and locations to his batters. Between innings, the head coach, the home plate umpire, and I “discussed” the situation. I explained, “He’s putting players in danger. Because when I change the signs next inning to make the down-and-away change-up the up-and-in screwball, someone’s going to get one in the earhole.”

Sadly, I have had that conflict with opposing coaches three times in the last two seasons.

Any of us who have played or even watched baseball know that there are “unwritten rules” of the game, and those unwritten rules are enforced through the fear of a “message pitch” thrown at or near a batter, countered by the possibility of the batter “paying a visit” to the pitcher’s mound. Yet, in girl’s and women’s fastpitch softball, stealing signs occurs with shocking regularity. Why?

There seem to be many reasons. First, few

On Deck with a Board member.....



Sign Stealing (cont'd)

by John Ruffolo, South East District Rep. & Kenosha Bradford Coach

youth coaches are going to order the “bean ball.” It’s dangerous and unsportsmanlike. Knowing that, there are many coaches then who steal signs or encourage their players to steal them because they can do so with impunity. Second, protective batting equipment such as facemasks and elbow guards reduce the risk of injury. So a coach who gives his batter a tip to lean out over the plate to reach the outside pitch can do so with less risk of getting his own player seriously injured. Finally, sign stealing is encouraged in college softball, with bench players assigned to “chart” opposing team’s signs. I’ve even heard a NCAA Division I coach brag about how she rewards her bench players for a successful “pick.”

Not surprisingly, an entire industry has arisen to exploit the sign-stealing era. The advertisement on the back of my NFCA newspaper boasts “Pick-Proof Signs.” The company website shows that their product, which includes computer software and wrist coaches for the players, costs \$250-\$450. These wrist coaches are worn so prevalently in our sport that no one even questions why girls softball players look like NFL quar-



terbacks. Yet, no Major League Baseball player ever needs to wear a wrist coach, despite the fact that wins and losses equate to millions of dollars.

To be sure, sign stealing has been a part of baseball and softball since they started keeping score. No coach - including myself - can say that he hasn’t looked for that covert edge that will tell him when the base stealer is going or when the pitcher is throwing that change of speed. These days, though, fastpitch coaches and players are brazen enough to overtly steal a signal and shout it out under the light of the sun. No subtly. No gamesmanship. No apologies. No fear.

Where should the line be drawn on sign stealing? What can be done to encourage better sportsmanship? I wish had fewer questions and more answers.

As I left the ballpark with that 14U player and her dad, we talked about how she could respond in the future to on-deck batters who call out pitch locations. We talked about how the catcher can cover locations or even fool the batters. We talked about varying signs to keep teams guessing. And we talked about how to bean a batter - always below the waist and never “in the earhole.” That, too, is an unwritten rule...

FINAL INNING.....

IMPORTANT DATES

-  **February 21-22 (Sat-Sun): Coaches Clinic**
-  **March 16: First Day of Practice**
-  **May 24: Earliest Game**
-  **May 27, 29: D-1 Regionals**
-  **May 26, 27, 29: D-2, D-3, D-4 Regionals**
-  **June 2, 4: Sectionals**
-  **June 11-13: State Tournament**
-  **June 14-16: Senior All Star Games**



2015

January							February							March							April										
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S				
			1	2	3		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4				
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11				
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18				
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25				
25	26	27	28	29	30	31								29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30						
May							June							July							August										
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S				
					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	30	31					1					
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8				
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15				
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22				
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28	29					
September							October							November							December										
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S				
					1	2						1	2							1	2	3	4	5						1	2
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26				
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31						