

Program Overview

North Branch Fastpitch Association (NBFA) is a 501c nonprofit organization that was established to provide an opportunity for girls in the North Branch area to play the game of Fastpitch softball, with emphasis on sportsmanship and teamwork, in an atmosphere that is positive and constructive.

This handbook covers the policies and procedures of the program, as well as the players, parents, and coaches that participate in them.

NBFA is governed by a volunteer board. For additional details see the NBAAA website at www.northbranchsports.org. Click on “Sports” and then “Fastpitch”.

Mission Statement:

North Branch Fastpitch is dedicated to developing student-athletes in the elements of competition, dedication, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the North Branch Fastpitch Program is to allow each participant of the program an opportunity to improve basic Fastpitch skills (catch, throw, bat, pitch and base running).

- **Competition** – A successful team is defined by the improvements a team will make day to day, week to week, and game to game. We hope to teach our athletes to be humble winners and gracious losers.
- **Dedication** – Each athlete will be expected to attend each practice and competition. They will also be expected to perform in the classroom and follow the NBHS rules.
- **Sportsmanship** – Is exemplified in the individual who recognizes the talents of others, both teammates and opponents, and applauds the efforts of both.
- **Teamwork** – Requires each person to understand that they are a part of the whole group and each member must work together to accomplish a goal. It also involves recognizing our skills, our limitations, and contributing as best we can.

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS / PLAYERS

Player Eligibility: NBFA is currently offered for girls from the ages of 8-19 as of January of that year, who either resides or attends school in North Branch Independent School District 138. Deviation from the eligibility guidelines requires approval by the Board of Directors.

Players are expected to:

1. Provide proper equipment. (glove, helmet, bat, shoes)
2. Attend practices and development events on a regular basis. Fastpitch is a team sport teams only get better when they practice together.
 - a. Arrive 15 minutes early to practices. (prep field, dress, warm-up)
 - b. Notify coach at least one day in advance when you cannot attend. (Excessive absences will affect play time.)
3. Work hard, learn, and HAVE FUN.
4. Demonstrate team concept – recognize and value everyone’s contribution.
5. Be coachable: Learn to accept criticism without alibi, and do your best to improve. Talk to your coach if you have questions or concerns.
6. Show respect towards coach decisions in playing players in positions based on there skill with the top priority being safety. Playing time is based on coach’s discretion.
7. Be supportive of teammates, coaches, and officials.
8. Remain mentally “into” the game whether playing or not.
9. Motivate yourself and teammates, strive for excellence, and work for the success of the team.
10. Participate in fundraising events.
11. Players are asked to remain on the team bench at all times during a game. Conversations with non-players and parents should be avoided during the game. The job of all players is to watch the game, learn from watching other players, and be engaged during the game so they are prepared when asked to go into a game.

Players’ Code of Ethics:

- I will make every effort to attend every practices and games.
- I will do my best at all practices and during all games.
- I will listen to my coaches while at practices and at games and make every effort to try to do what they are asking of me.
- I will practice good sportsmanship by treating all players, coaches, parents, and umpires with respect.
- I will not use profanity. I understand that I will be warned for the first offense and, at the discretion of the coach, can be suspended from play for the remainder of the current practice, current game or for the following game.
- I will do my best to help my parents get me to games and practices on time.
- I understand that playing on a team is a privilege and that if my actions are detrimental to the team or the association I can be removed.
- I understand that improvement comes from practice.

Player Time Commitment:

The NBFA strives to have 2 practices a week at 2 hours per practice in the beginning of the year. Once games begin, the coaches may decide to drop it to one practice a week. There will also be league games twice a week with 2 or more tournaments on the weekends throughout the season.

Absences:

Players or their parents are expected to notify the coach directly (please do not ask another player or parent to give the coach a message, except in the case of an emergency) as far in advance as possible if they are unable to attend a practice or a game. A player who misses a practice or a game without an authorized excuse, or without notifying your coach, may be excluded from playing in the next game at the discretion of the coach. If excluded, the player is expected to dress for the game.

Student Athletes:

NBFA believes it is very important for our players to be the very best student athletes they can, with the student coming first. That said, players who do not meet the schools minimum grade guidelines are expected to sit out of games until the grades meet the minimum standards. NBFA expects players to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at school, so players who receive SLC, detention, or in school suspension, may be benched for a game. The burden for informing your child's coach of these matters rests with the player and parents. No participants will be penalized or have disciplinary action taken against them for legitimate religious absences from practice or games.

Substance Abuse:

Regardless of the quantity, a player shall not:

1. Use or have a beverage containing alcohol;
2. Use tobacco;
3. Use or consume, have in possession, buy, sell, or give away, any other controlled substance (including steroids).

This rule applies to any portion of an activity season. It is not a violation for a player to be in possession of a controlled substance specifically prescribed for the player's own use by his/her doctor. If a player is found abusing this policy, the player will be dismissed, with no refund.

Opt out of playing/Drop out:

After tryouts, the teams will be selected. After being notified of making a team you have 24 hours to notify the North Branch Fastpitch Association Director if you are no longer going to play, in order to receive any refund. Any player leaving the program or deciding not to play after the 24 hour period will not be eligible for a refund without approval from the board.

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS / PARENTS

Parents are expected to:

1. Encourage your daughter and give positive statements about her play.
2. Show respect for players, coaches, other parents, opponents, umpires, and the program.
3. Show respect towards coach decisions in playing players in positions based on their skill with the top priority being safety. Playing time is based on coach's discretion.
4. If a problem or concern arises, notify the coach or the program director. It is recommended you wait a minimum of 24 hours "cooling down period" after an incident before contacting a coach to express concerns. **Under NO circumstances** shall a parent approach during competition or when other players or parents are present. NBFA encourages you to have the first contact with the coach themselves. The parent, player, and coach will often resolve the conflict and learn from the experience. We highly recommend you contacting the coach directly. If however, you are uncomfortable contacting the coach directly, grievance forms are available on the website, and will be reported to the Director and Asst. Director.
5. Model community values.
6. Assist with team activities: driving, fundraising, etc.
7. Assure players arrive on time (15 min. early for practice), and are picked up on time.
8. Be allowed to participate in board meetings during the initial open forum on the Agenda. Please e-mail the Director the new business info you would like to have addressed, prior to the meeting.

Parent's Code of Ethics:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and umpires at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
- I will make every effort to ensure my child is at every practice and game.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of any personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will provide support for coaches and umpires working with my child to provide a positive, enjoyable experience for all.
- I will not coach my child or any other player during practice or a game, unless asked to do so by my child's coach.
- I will demand a drug, alcohol and tobacco-free environment for my child.
- I will remember that the game is for children and not for adults.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials, with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
- I will promise to help my child enjoy the youth sports experience within my personal constraints by assisting with coaching, being a respectful fan, providing transportation, or whatever I am capable of doing.
- I understand that the NBFA reserves the right to dismiss at any time a player and/or their parents who by their conduct significantly creates problems for the team/program, or after verbal warning continues to disrupt practices or games.
- I will assign responsibility for my child to a responsible adult if I am unable to be present at a game(s).

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS / COACHES

Coaching Philosophy and Requirements:

The most vital component in accomplishing the goals stated above is **GOOD COACHING**. A successful youth coach will temper the ideal with the practical, will have a sound knowledge of Fastpitch, and will be able to teach the players of this age in an appropriate way. He or she must have ample time to devote to the program, and should have previous Fastpitch experience.

The NBFA Board has established four priorities for our coaches:

1. Teach the fundamentals of Fastpitch.
2. Build character and self-esteem.
3. Encourage team unity.
4. Enforce the policies set forth in this handbook uniformly.

Coaches should encourage team building and support team unity during practices and games. We encourage coaches to develop the talents of all the players. While coaching to win is acceptable if done properly, winning should not be overemphasized at the expense of the mission and goals of the program. All coaches selected must understand the philosophy of the NBFA program, as outlined in this document, and coach in accordance with it. It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure all coaches are aware and understand the mission and goals of the program as outlined herein.

Coaches Responsibilities:

A coach is responsible for the operation and conduct of his/her team. He/she is the teacher of skills, and the developer of the players; socially, morally, psychologically, and physically. The coach is responsible to the NBFA Board of Directors.

These responsibilities include:

- Maintaining communication with families regarding practices and game schedules, as well as changes to states times.
- Play players in positions based on there skill with the top priority being safety. Playing time is based on coach's discretion.
- Enforce common rules regarding care of equipment and facilities which include the following;
 - Restrain players from damaging the fields and grounds;
 - Maintaining clean dugouts free from debris such as water bottles, Gatorade bottles, etc.;
 - Safeguard all facilities and equipment utilized;
 - Put away all field equipment at the end of practices.
- Maintain a minimal medical supply inventory which is provided by NBFA. If no emergency medical personnel are available, the coach or assistant should follow recommended medical procedures. However, in any and all situations, the parent has the ultimate responsibility.
- Coaches will refrain from the use of tobacco products during game and practice situations. Coaches will also refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages prior to and during games and practice situations.

Coaches and Assistant Coaches are expected to:

- Attend practices, games, and tournaments events with players.
- Show concern for player safety and well-being.
- Be consistent and fair; establish trust.
- Be organized and prepared for all practices, matches, and events.
- Teach and provide Fastpitch knowledge to the best of your ability.
- Encourage open, two-way communication, with parents and players.
- Submit to and pass online concussion training and present the certificate to the Director.
- Submit to and pass a background check.

A coach who continually violates the NBFA guidelines shall have the following measures taken:

- 1) Be addressed by the program Director. If actions are still unacceptable;
- 2) Be addressed by the NBFA Board. If actions are still unacceptable;
- 3) Be dismissed by the NBFA Board and a suitable replacement named.

PLAYER / PARENT/ COACH HANDBOOK SIGN OFF SHEET

I have read the above and agree to the statements put forth by North Branch Fastpitch Association. I promise to follow these guidelines and rules to the best of my ability. I also accept any consequences put in place by North Branch Fastpitch Association for violation of the above policies.

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Player Printed Name

Player Signature

Parent Printed Name

Parent Signature

Coach Printed Name

Coach Signature