

HARRISBURG HIGH SCHOOL
BASEBALL HANDBOOK
2020 SEASON



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Introduction

Welcome to the **Harrisburg High School (HHS) Baseball Program!** Participation in the HHS Baseball Program as a player and spectator is a privilege, not a right. This privilege carries with it responsibilities to one's self, student body, school, and community. Everyone involved with our Program is expected to fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in this Handbook in addition to the South Dakota High School Baseball Association (SDHSBA) handbook and the Harrisburg High School Athletics Handbook for Parents and Students.

This handbook has been developed in an effort to communicate all things Tiger Baseball, or as much as possible, in order to provide you the most essential information for this coming season. Please review the information within as it will provide you with the basic understanding of our Program, how we expect to operate on a daily basis, and key responsibilities of players, parents and coaches.

Vision

The goal of the HHS Baseball Program is to become a well-respected and model Baseball Program in the Upper Midwest.

Mission

Challenge every player to realize their potential in developing their baseball skills and knowledge while instilling our Program values.

Program Values

A team is a group of individuals working together towards a shared goal. While each player is encouraged to be their unique self, we stress a team first mentality with emphasis on Program values. Our Program values are the foundation of the Program's culture and provide a framework for how decisions will be made. All players, parents, coaches, and anyone else associated with the Program are expected to abide by these values.

Accountability	Loyalty
Commitment	Pride
Communication	Respect
Cooperation	Responsibility
Ethics	Self Discipline
Honesty	Sportsmanship
Integrity	

Goals & Strategies

As a Program, we have established basic goals that dictate our overall strategy. It is expected that each team (Varsity, Junior Varsity-JV and Freshmen-Sophomore-FS) will have more specific long and short-term goals that will drive their daily activities. Our Program goals are:

- The Varsity, JV and FS TEAMS will work collaboratively for the overall betterment of the Program.
- Provide each individual player throughout the Program sufficient coaching in order to 1) maximize the competitiveness of the Varsity team, and 2) maximize the development of all JV and FS players.
- Be consistent in how skills are taught and practiced throughout the Program.

We will implement a variety of tactics in order to meet our Program goals. Our strategy will be to (1) always hire qualified coaches that fit our Program, (2) maximize the use of volunteer and other coaches who fit our Program, (3) be consistent with terminology and methods, (4) hold regular joint practices with Varsity and JV players, and (5) practice under game-like conditions as much as possible.



Coaching Philosophy

Our overall philosophy is to coach players in a way that best prepares them for playing baseball at the High School level. Our basic coaching philosophies are:

- Academics will always be the priority of every player.
- We will **work** in practices, prepping to the greatest of our ability, so that we may **play** in games.
- Playing time will be earned based on skill level, work in practices, and application of Program values, goals, and strategies.
- Players will respect and take care of all things that take care of them (i.e. helmets, uniforms, field, gloves, bats, etc.).
- Field set-up, take down, and maintenance will be the responsibility of every player and will be done before and after every practice and game.
- Our pitching will be managed with the long term health and development of pitchers in mind. Each pitcher's workload (e.g. number of pitches and/or innings pitched) will be handled individually and adhere to those guidelines set forth by HBA and SDHSBA.
- Winning is an objective of the Varsity team, but will never be used as a justification for abandoning Program values. Winning is a potential result of implementing skills learned, practiced, and perfected during games. Again, winning will never come at the cost of our Program values.

Teams & Playing Time

Our Program will consist of three teams: Varsity (V), Junior Varsity (JV) and Freshman-Sophomore (FS). A description of expected roster size, tryouts, cuts and selection criteria for each is detailed in the following sections.

VARSITY

The objective of the Varsity team will be to compete at the highest level in accordance with our Program values. Players on Varsity will be the highest skilled players within the Program at their respective positions, regardless of year / grade. It is expected that competition for playing time will increase and vary greatly between players depending on individual roles. Roles are determined during practice, scrimmages, and games. Coaches will utilize players according to their skill sets in a manner that best positions the team for victory and in a manner consistent with our Program values.

JUNIOR VARSITY

The objective of the JV team is to maximize the development of players in order to prepare them for possibly playing Varsity baseball. Players will earn playing time based on work put in at practice. Playing time is expected to be split more evenly on JV in order to provide all players on the roster ample opportunity to implement skills learned in practice in a game setting. Some players may see additional playing time in order to further develop a player or players in the event a foreseen and future need is expected on the Varsity team. Coaches will make significant effort to get every player into each game.

FRESHMAN-SOPHOMORE

The objective of the FS team is to maximize fundamental growth through functional, productive practices and meaningful game situations. As with other levels, players will earn playing time although, at this developmental level, playing time is expected to be split more evenly.



Roster Size

Roster sizes are the sole discretion of the coaches and are expected to vary year-to-year. Roster sizes for the Varsity, JV and FS teams will depend upon numerous factors, including: number of players trying out, position needs, depth of skill, and others. Rosters may have some movement and flexibility as the season progresses. The following is an approximation for how rosters may break down, for example, at the Varsity level.

Position

Pitchers 6-8

Catchers 2

1B 1 - 2

2B 1 - 2

SS 1 - 2

3B 1 - 2

OF 4 - 6

TOTAL 14 - 16

NOTE: Most pitchers will have secondary position.

Tryouts

All players interested in playing baseball will be offered a tryout. Tryouts will begin on the first day winter practice and last for a minimum of 5 practices. Tryouts may be shortened if practices are cancelled due to poor weather. Students are only allowed to attend one (1) practice per day. Therefore, any player who is still playing a winter sport will be allowed to begin their tryout once their winter season is completed. If winter athletes miss the scheduled tryout window, the player(s) will be allowed to tryout on an individual basis as agreed upon between the coach and player.

Cuts

The Program has limited resources (e.g. field space, practice materials, playing time, etc.), which limits the number of players we can carry. Although we do not anticipate cuts, we will carry up to a total of 45 players for three teams. Coaches will inform players and parents if cuts will be made. Coaches will evaluate all players trying out in accordance with the "Selection Criteria" section of this Handbook. Any necessary cuts will be done face-to-face with the player. If a face-to-face meeting with the player is not possible, other appropriate means of communicating will be made (i.e. phone conversation, email, etc.). Regardless of how cuts are communicated, Coaches will provide reasoning as to why the player was cut and, if requested, how they could improve. Seniors that do not make Varsity may be cut from the Program.

Selection Criteria

Players will be evaluated on a number of criteria. These criteria include: 1) arm strength, 2) running speed (60 yard dash & home to first), 3) pitching ability (for pitchers only) 4) fielding ability (catcher, infield, & outfield), 5) hitting ability, 6) hitting power, and 7) hustle / work ethic. These criteria are not in any order of rank. Players may be selected for the team for any one or combination of these skills.

While selection of players is based on skill sets specific for baseball, other characteristics of players will also be considered. These include drive (strong desire to succeed), coachability, maturity, temperament, consistency, knowledge of the game, and competitiveness. These characteristics form the player's makeup and is vital to their success. Often the player with the greatest desire will develop into a better ball player than the one with better physical tools.



Schedule

The following is an outline of notable dates for the coming season. Coaches will communicate any changes and important dates as appropriate. Detailed game schedules will be distributed separately for the Varsity, JV and FS teams and will be made available by December 15. Anticipated games are as follows:

- Varsity- 30+ Games as well as the Regional Tournament
- JV- 25 to 30 Games
- FS- 25 to 30 Game as well as end of the year tournament

All players are expected to attend all practices and games. Any expected absences or tardiness should be communicated in writing / via email to their Coach with as much notice as possible.

February 3:	Pitchers and Catchers Report
February 17:	All Players Report. Tryout Period Begins.
February 17-March 20:	Indoor Practices/Training
March 23:	Team Assignments
March 23-April 1:	Team Practices
Week of March 30:	First Regular Season Games (Varsity)
Week of April 6:	First Regular Season Game (JV)
Week of March 30:	First Regular Season Game (FS)
May 10:	End of Regular Season (FS Completed)
May 12:	End of Regular Season (JV Completed)
May 16:	Super Regional Tournament (Varsity)
May 23:	SDHSBA Class A State Tournament

About Our Coaches

Our coaching staff has been assembled in order to provide the expertise necessary to (1) teach players the necessary skills of the game and (2) provide players a game plan for life while instilling our Program values. Everything we do will be done under the philosophy of team first. We will strive to be consistent in the way we do and teach things, focusing on answering the “why” questions. Answering “why” is meant to provide players with a better understanding of the benefits associated with performing a certain way (i.e. hitting mechanics, footwork of an infielder, base running, etc.) and results in an increased ‘buy-in’ from the players. Knowledge and information will always be open to those that are willing to learn. Coaches will work to have interactive relationships with players, focusing on open communication. We encourage players to openly communicate any struggles or issues with their coaches. Together we can work to develop an appropriate plan of action that will assist them in realizing their goals.

John Ratzloff – General Manager

Mark Abrahamson – Head Coach

Wesley Jones – Assistant Coach (Varsity Assistant Coach)

Austin White – Assistant Coach (Junior Varsity Head Coach)

Trevor Jutting – Assistant Coach (JV and FS Assistant)

Dalton Allen – Assistant Coach (Freshman Head Coach)

Kris Regas – Director of Player Development / Pitching Coach

Kole Zimmerman – Associate Director of Player Development / Hitting Coach



COMMUNICATION

Regular communications will be made to the Program and teams. The majority of communication will be done using email and website. We will utilize a "Sunday Night Email" that will solidify the schedule for each week, games, practices and rosters, for all three teams. In addition, it is important that we allow for various mass communications, messaging, board posts, and other ways to communicate the latest and greatest with our Program (rainouts / cancellations, schedule change, upcoming events, etc.). Our coaches will have an "open door" for communication when addressing personal issues (i.e. playing time, conflicts, and other issues), with all players. When addressing personal issues, players and parents are asked to adhere to the avenues of communication. We request that players and parents refrain from discussing playing time and game management issues with any coach immediately following a game.

Players are encouraged to discuss concerns with coaches prior to ANY parent contact. Playing time will not be discussed with a parent unless the player has first had a discussion with the coaching staff AND that parent attends a minimum of one practice and a total combined three (3) practices/games.

Budget & Fundraising

The Program will develop an annual budget in order to obtain necessary supplies, equipment, services and inventory for the upcoming season. Players will be responsible for a \$200 fee due by at the time of registration. In addition, players will be responsible for a remaining \$200 that will be due by April 1st. Fundraising will be made available to assist players in recouping any and all of their \$400 registration fee. Fees are utilized to cover the costs of coaches salaries, uniforms and equipment, as well as umpires.

Program Rules

RULEBOOK RULES

Our Program takes a firm stance in adhering to the following two rules, which are meant to comply with SDHSBA and National Federation of High School (NFHS) rules:

- 1) No Jewelry. This means NO JEWELRY. No chains or anything around the neck. No earrings or anything on the ears. No bracelets or anything around the wrists other than sweat bands.
- 2) Wood bats are to be used (BBCOR). Per SDHSBA and NFHS if an umpire finds that a player has used an illegal bat they will be ruled out and the Head Coach will be restricted to the dugout the remainder of the game (1st Offense) or ejected (2nd or more offense). If a HHS player uses an altered bat, they will be suspended one game for the 1st offense and removed from the team for any subsequent offense.
- 3) Player fees will be refunded if a player is cut from the program at the end of the tryout period. No refunds will be given, for any reason, should a player decide to quit baseball or if a player is ejected from the program. Any appeals to this will be forwarded to the HBA Board of Directors.

PLAYER RULES/EXPECTATIONS

- 1) Parents must let the coaching staff do their job and coach the kids. During a game, parents MUST refrain from coming over to the dugout or screaming/shouting towards the field in regard to what a player or coach should or shouldn't have done. Be a parent and a positive spectator.
- 2) All players must sit in the dugout with their teammates at all times during a game and between games in a doubleheader. At no time will a player sit in the bleachers with their family members. Parents and other family members are NOT allowed in the dugout at any time during the game or congregate near the dugout entrance. Please supply your child with drinks or whatever they need before the game.



- 3) All players will be required to be in full uniform for the games. Absolutely no team attire that represents another club or program will be worn at any game or practice event. This includes team bags, pullovers, hats, etc. Uniforms will be tucked in.
- 4) BE PREPARED. Players will wear all proper equipment such as protective cups, cleats, turf shoes, etc.
- 5) Parents and players will refrain from verbal altercation with an umpire, opposing players or spectators, period.
- 6) Players are expected to carry themselves with discipline and pride. Players will refrain from throwing a bat, helmet or any equipment. This may result in a game suspension or other discipline that the coaching staff feels is appropriate.

Breaking any of these or other rules offered by the coaching staff or the HBA can result in a loss of playing time or expulsion from the team without a refund.

Miscellaneous

DRIVERS

Students are not allowed to drive themselves or others to / from games out of town games with the exception games in Sioux Falls. All transportation to / from games will be provided by coaches and parents unless a district bus is utilized. All drivers must have a current State of South Dakota driver's license, follow all applicable traffic laws and drive with caution. If a bus is going to be utilized, it will be arranged by the Coach at least one week in advance.

FORMS

A variety of forms must be completed and submitted in order for students to be cleared to play. During our preseason meeting we will remind players what must be completed. Students will not be CLEARED to play if these documents are not complete. These documents are part of the ON-LINE registration process.

SAFETY & INJURIES

Coaches take all injuries seriously and require that *all* injuries be reported, no matter how slight. This will allow for proper and immediate treatment as well as necessary precautions to be taken to prevent exacerbating the injury.

In order to prevent injuries players should report any unsafe conditions to their coach and wear proper attire (baseball pants, long socks, spikes, baseball hat, shirt - tucked in, etc.) at all times.

STUDENT ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

All players are responsible for maintaining their eligibility. Coaches will be proactive in ensuring players are eligible through regular communication with the athletic director, principal, and/or vice principal. If players are ineligible, they will not be allowed to participate in *any* TEAM activity. We will follow all academic eligibility guidelines as set forth by the Harrisburg School District. In addition, ALL PLAYERS are expected to adhere to proper behavior in the classroom and school setting. Any behavior incidences or teacher reports may result in disciplinary action. The HBA does have a *Social Media* and *Drug/Alcohol* policy that will be electronically signed at the time of registration.

GO TIGERS!!!!

