

March, 2007

## A Letter to our All Star Applicants and Parents,

Thank you, players and parents, for your interest in our All Star program. We continue to get more and more applicants each year and I'm pleased to see it. The past few years have been the best All Star seasons in PGSL history. We are gaining a well-deserved reputation as a class organization and a competitive one. In two seasons at the "C" level we had two District champions, a State Champion, and a Western Regional Champion. Since returning to "B" class a few years ago we have several District Champions and sent a number of teams to the ASA State and National Championships. We are now considered to have one of the elite programs in Southern California and are looking forward to another successful All Star season.

Our All Star tryouts, unlike other leagues, are open to everyone. And of course with more girls trying out it means more players will not be selected. We know how much courage it takes for your girls to come out and compete for a spot on an All Star team, regardless of what their chances are. To face potential failure and to try anyway is an uncommon trait among most children and one that should be valued. So please pass on to your daughters my personal thanks and admiration for their efforts at tryouts.

The All Star Program is a wholly separate one from our Recreational Program. Where the Recreational Program promoted instruction, inclusion, and fun, All Stars is about developing advanced skills, a competitive spirit, and a winning attitude. Some players thrive in this kind of environment and other players (and their parents) do not. It is important as parents to make this distinction for yourselves as well as for your daughters.

As you can imagine, in this type of environment, the All Star experience can be stressful and filled with anxiety. However, if you know what to expect and can adapt your mindset to this type of play it will be extremely rewarding and a lot of fun for everyone. In order to make the conversion from recreational to competitive play here are a few guidelines to consider.

### Players must:

- Get used to possibly sitting the bench more than they're used to or filling whatever role the coach may need.
- Be willing to play positions they are not used to or may not want to play.
- Think more about the team than themselves, and understand that one player's success is everyone's success.
- Handle personal failure with grace and composure and without bringing the rest of the team down.

### Players must NOT

- Sulk, pout, or generally be unhappy about their position or playing time on a team.
- Make negative comments about their teammates or coaches.
- Make negative or threatening comments to opposing players, coaches, parents, umpires, or anyone attending a game.

### Parents must:

- Avoid the tunnel vision focus on their own daughter and look instead at the whole team.
- Consider the team's success as a success for your daughter regardless of her role.
- Encourage their players and remind them that regardless of the circumstances, they CAN win.
- Support the coaching staff regardless of personal feelings.

Parents must NOT:

- Approach a coach before, during, or after a game to discuss issues relating to their daughter, other than to report an injury or other non-playing issue. There is far too much going on for a coach to focus on a discussion of any importance. Call the coach and set up a time before or after a practice to discuss these matters.
- Discuss playing time, positioning, batting order, or game strategy. This is a coaches prerogative and is decided amongst the coaching staff. PGSL has complete confidence in these coaches and their ability to manage an All Star team appropriately.
- Discuss other players on the team. It is simply not appropriate for a coach to discuss a player other than with that player's parents.

All Star players are good athletes who may have a difficult time adjusting to these new demands but they are essential in developing a competitive player and team. It is important that parents support their players and their coaches and never let a player think that the team cannot win or that the coach cannot coach. A player who has no confidence in her coach cannot learn from their coach. This undermines the entire program and the efforts of everyone.

The coach's job is to teach players how to improve their skills and how to win games in a competitive environment. This is achieved by setting goals, teambuilding, developing a positive, competitive attitude, and above all, teaching players that good results come from dedication and hard work. These aren't just softball lessons, these are life lessons.

If you haven't already, all parents should read the All Star rules posted on the website as soon as possible; it will answer a lot of your questions. If your daughter is selected to a team you will be notified on or after May 1<sup>st</sup> and the rosters will be posted on our bulletin board. Should your daughter not be selected, please let them know how tough the competition was and that they did a great job. Sour grapes, complaints about the process, and accusations of wrong doing all undermine your daughter's efforts. However, should you have questions regarding the decisionmaking process please feel free to contact your Division Director, League Vice President, or League President.

If your daughter is selected to a team, here are a few things to keep in mind.

- Uniforms and team names are already decided. You will receive a one-time allowance in each division of \$25 to offset the cost of your uniforms. Typically, with jacket, uniforms run \$100-120.
- Tournaments have already been selected by the coaches and the board. PGSL will pay 1/2 of all tournament fees. Tournaments run between \$250-350. Teams will participate in six to eight tournaments between mid-May and mid-July.
- Parents are required to work 10 hours during our Poway Summer Heat Classic All Star Tournament held in late June. This is how we pay for the All Star Program. An \$80 refundable deposit will be required for each player to ensure the help. We don't want your money, we need your help!
- There will be two or three practices a week, including tournaments on weekends. Tournaments generally start on Fridays and end Sundays, however, you should be available for play on Thursday evenings as well. One tournament is generally an overnighiter which the girls really love!
- Playing time and defensive positions are NOT guaranteed. Some tournaments do not allow bat-around, it is a straight substitution game per ASA rules. All of our All Stars are great players and as such, playing time and positioning are NOT appropriate subjects to discuss with coaches, before, during, or after a game.

Finally, we would like to remind our parents and players that participation in the All Star Program is a privilege. Your daughters are being exposed to a higher level of competitive play and are receiving far more instruction and participation than during the recreational season. This is a great opportunity for them and should be appreciated as such. We expect our parents and players to act in a way that brings respect and dignity to Poway Girls Softball.

Thank you all for your support of Poway Girls Softball, good luck at tryouts, and I hope you have a great season!

Rick Ferriss  
President, Poway Girls Softball