

March 21, 2008

All Star Applicants and Parents,

Thank you for your interest in the Poway Girls Softball League (PGSL) All Star program.

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. As a league that is categorized by ASA (Amateur Softball Association) in the "B" class, we have several District Champions and have sent a number of teams to the ASA State and National Championships. Last year, we sent our 10U, 12U and 14U teams to State, with the 10U achieving 7th at Nationals and the 12U coming in 10th at Nationals.

We are considered to have one of the elite programs in Southern California and are looking forward to another great 2008 All Star season.

Our All Star selection process, unlike other leagues, is open to everyone. Each and every girl has the opportunity to be evaluated by the people who can assess their skills the most objectively; the coaches.

It takes a great deal of courage for the girls to come out and compete for a spot on an All Star team. So please pass on to your daughters my personal thanks and admiration for their efforts at tryouts.

The All Star Program is completely separate 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 environment, while 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, the All Star experience can be stressful and filled with anxiety. Playing 7 weekend tournaments between mid-May and mid-July is very demanding on the entire family; but the experience can be one of the most rewarding.

In order to make the transition from recreational to competitive play, keep the following in mind:

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 all 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 coach's 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 cohesive team and competitive players. It is important that parents support all 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 after the tryouts on May 4th.

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. Should you have questions regarding the selection process please feel free to contact David White, PGSL Vice President, or Laura Atkinson, PGSL 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. Players 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 PGSL. Each player's financial responsibility will be for ½ of all tournament fees. This equates to approx \$90-100 per player; depending upon each tournament entry fee.
- Teams will participate in six to eight tournaments between mid-May and mid-July.
- Parents are required to work 10 hours per player during our Poway Summer Heat Classic All Star Tournament held June 12-15th. 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 overnigher 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.

Finally, PGSL 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.

It is expected that our parents and players to act in a way that brings respect and dignity to Poway Girls Softball.

Good Luck at tryouts and thank you for your support of Poway Girls Softball.

Laura Atkinson
President, Poway Girls Softball