



## MBSA MANALAPAN BELLES TRAVEL HANDBOOK

UPDATED SUMMER 2016

*This document can only be modified by the Manalapan Baseball & Softball Association (MBSA) Executive Travel Committee with approval by the MBSA Board of Directors. It is intended that the principles and procedures of the MBSA Recreation divisions also apply to the MBSA Travel Softball program.*

### **MBSA Mission Statement**

The mission of the Manalapan Baseball and Softball Association is to lead the youth of Manalapan in developing the fundamental skills of baseball and softball, understand and appreciate the rules of the game and to instill qualities such as teamwork, sportsmanship and fair play. We are committed to providing the very best educational and sports experience possible and believe that every child with a desire to play baseball and softball be afforded that opportunity.

#### **MBSA Manalapan Belles Travel Softball (Belles)**

In furtherance of the MBSA Mission Statement, MBSA has undertaken the development of a softball travel program for ages 7-14 with the purpose of compiling teams of players in these ages, who demonstrate the aptitude to compete at a more competitive level and further their potential to compete at Middle School and High School levels.

## BELLES TRAVEL MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS

- To provide an opportunity for all players who exhibit the skills, attitude and desire to play competitive softball
- To accelerate player development through player commitment, instruction, practice, preparation, teamwork and discipline
- To instil in our players to work hard toward excellence, not perfection
- To prepare our travel players to be successful at the middle school and high school levels
- To maintain the integrity, character, and commitment of our in house travel program
- To remember that softball is a fun and challenging game that requires players to develop the ability to overcome mistakes and to look forward to their next opportunity
- To develop a players good sportsmanship and respect for all players on all teams
- The development of skills and team focused play will be the guideline for our program
- Managers should always keep in mind that the winning of games is secondary to the objectives herein

## BELLES TRAVEL COMMITTEE

The Belles travel committee will be formed and voted on annually by the newly appointed MBSA Board of Directors (MBSA BOD). The MBSA BOD will vote and approve the new Travel Committee as soon as practical but no later than the second Tuesday of every October.

The Travel Committee will be comprised of one committee chair and up to four but no less than two additional members from the newly elected MBSA BOD. It is preferred that the total number on the Travel Committee be an odd number.

The Travel Committee will form sub-committees, which will be chaired by the VP of Travel or MBSA Braves Travel coaches, managers or parents. These sub-committees will be responsible for the daily running of the program as well as the organizing of the fundraising and training activities of the program.

The Travel Committee retains the right to review and change any proposals of the sub-committees.

## PLAYER'S AGE REQUIREMENT

The Belles are organized by age, with a cutoff date of December 31st.

## FEES, PROCEDURES & GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

The Belles are self supported financially; MBSA funds collected for the recreation divisions are not available for the Belles travel teams. The MBSA Travel Treasurer will collect all funds and keep a ledger for all Belles travel divisions and teams sponsored by the MBSA.

- 1) A \$100 tryout/application fee will be required prior to a player participating in the tryout. The tryout is your commitment to the Belles program and there will NO refunds unless your daughter is not offered a spot on a team.
- 2) Each player is only required to attend 1 of the tryouts.
- 3) All players trying out for the Belles will be required to play Spring Rec softball.
- 4) The teams will be announced after August 15th
- 5) Selection of Managers and Coaches will be made after the teams have been announced, invitations accepted and rosters finalized.
- 6) Once selections are made, ONLY players not offered a spot on a Belles Team will receive a full refund of the Application fee, which will be made within ten (10) days of player selections. All players who are selected and play for the Belles will have the \$100 applied towards their player registration fee.
- 7) The balance of the registration fee will be split into two (2) equal payments with due dates of October 15th and November 15th.
- 8) Once the initial player selections are made, any player who declines the invitation to play for the Belles will be ineligible to try out for the Belles for the following Travel year and will be ineligible for Rec All-Stars for subsequent season.

**Players who leave the program to play on outside travel teams must sit out for 1 year before re-entering the program.**

## REGISTRATION FEES

The registration fee for the upcoming travel season is between \$300-\$450 and includes both the Fall and Spring seasons. The majority of the Travel Registration Fees will be due at try outs and remaining due by October 15th and November 15th. These registration fees cover the following:

### 8U Softball

- All-Shore League (Fall & Spring)
- (3) Tournaments
  - Allocation of each tournament \$350 each (usually one day tournaments)
- Players Uniforms:
  - Jersey with players number and last name, plus 1 alternate
  - Batting helmet
  - Pants (1), and 1 pair of socks

- Parents are responsible to keep and maintain uniforms properly

### 10U and up Softball

- All-Shore League (Fall & Spring)
- (4) Tournaments
  - Allocation of each tournament (2) \$500 each and (2) \$350 each (usually one day tournaments)
- Players Uniforms:
  - Jersey with players number and last name, plus 1 alternate
  - Batting helmet
  - Pants (1), and 1 pair of socks
  - Parents are responsible to keep and maintain uniforms properly

**Note: If team decides not to participate in the All Shore league for either Fall or Spring, the team can allocate the money to additional tournaments if desired.**

- Team Requirements:
  - Priority allocation of fields allotted to the MBSA by the Manalapan Township Recreation Department
  - Field Maintenance
  - Insurance (may need MBSA Insurance Certificates when entering tournaments)
  - First Aid Kit / Ice Packs
  - Practice Softballs (can be purchased from MBSA)
  - Equipment – full catchers gear and team equipment bag
- Players Responsibility:
  - Softball glove and bat
  - Batting gloves, heart guard, safety masks or glasses (player option)
  - Cleats and personal equipment bag

Belles Travel teams may NOT purchase or use the MBSA tax exempt form to purchase equipment from MBSA's suppliers. All uniform/equipment needs that are not part of the registration fee must be approved by the Belles Travel Committee.

## TRYOUTS & ELIGIBILITY

Tryouts for all Belles Travel teams will be held on an annual basis during the Summer after the Spring MBSA recreation season. All interested players can try out for the Belles. Current Belles Travel players are not guaranteed placement on the upcoming season's travel team and must try out to be eligible. Belles Travel tryouts will be conducted by a panel established by the Travel Committee. Players will be selected by the MBSA Travel Committee based primarily upon ratings from tryouts, the previous year's travel managers and input from the division commissioner, MBSA travel committee, and ratings from MBSA recreation managers (if needed).

Tryouts will be held with a goal to build 2-teams of 12 players each. The first 12 players will be placed on Manalapan Belles Red. If there is enough qualified players to build a 2nd team the players will be placed on Manalapan Belles White.

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO TRY OUT FOR BELLES TRAVEL TEAMS?**

- Anyone meeting the age requirement that is interested in playing a high level of competitive softball.
- Player must be a resident of Manalapan or Englishtown as of the date of the Tryout, and must maintain that residency to be part of the Belles.
- Players must attend at least 1 of the available tryout dates.
- Player is not eligible if they have been ejected two (2) times from any recreation and/or travel softball game in the current calendar year, Spring, Summer, or Fall.
- Any player suspended for two (2) or more games for any reason during the current calendar year's Recreation or Travel baseball seasons will not be permitted to play on or tryout for a Belles Travel team until their suspension ends and after being reviewed by the MBSA Disciplinary Committee and approved by the MBSA Board of Directors.
- The player's parent or guardian must agree to pay the required Travel Softball registration fee and all other fees outlined herein, recommended by the Travel Committee and approved by the MBSA BOD. Players will not be eligible to play if any past MBSA Recreation or Travel softball fees have not been paid in full.
- If selected for a Travel Team, players must make their primary commitment to the MBSA Travel Softball Program. Players are forbidden from playing on outside travel teams and cannot be on a roster with another outside team. Conflicts with other sports, schedules, and other issues will not be tolerated. Only academic, religious, or serious family conflicts will be considered excusable for missing games or practices.
- Players who are not initially chosen in the first draft, can be invited back as the result of another player being unable to fulfill their player obligations.
- Only players who tried out are eligible to be called back.
- MBSA Travel Board reserves the right to consider additional information to accommodate for unique circumstances, including but not limited to injury, sickness, family emergency, or a tiebreaker to determine team selection.

## **PLAYER COMMITMENT**

The timing and number of practices are up to the team manager and may vary. Minimally managers are required to hold one practice per week and typically there is minimally one game per week during the season. All Belles Travel teams will start practicing in early January at an indoor facility negotiated by the MBSA to prepare for the upcoming spring season.

The Belles travel player is required to attend all practices and games unless they have a good reason which has been communicated to the manager. Excessive absence (>25%) of practice or games can mean the player can be removed from the team during the season. The player will be required to sit out the remainder of the existing season and one full season the following year before they can tryout again. The player and parent/guardian must appear before the MBSA Travel Committee, if they wish to appeal their suspension. No refund will be provided.

Teams will play a minimum of 18 games during the year and players who play for the Belles commit to play the season from the first practice to the last game. They cannot take off for vacations, other athletic commitments or any other entity, which prohibits them from playing on their team until the season's completion. This does not include games or practices missed

due to legitimate illness, injury, prior religious commitment, or Spring Rec softball, the last of which takes priority over Travel.

If a player is unable to play for the Belles due to illness or injury, the parents may request, in writing to the MBSA Travel Committee, a refund for a portion of the fees paid to play Travel Softball (registration fee) only. The refunded fees will be prorated and fees paid to purchase equipment, any other item, tournament, or event may not be refunded.

## REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS OF MANAGERS AND COACHES

Any parent/guardian interested in managing and/or coaching should email a resume/bio to the travel committee or can fill out the coaches profile on the Manalapan Baseball website. Managers and coaches will be chosen after the teams are set.

- All prospective candidates must submit the MBSA Belles Manager-Coach Profile form.
- Members of the MBSA Travel Committee will interview all candidates for Manager, and have the right to interview any coaching candidate.
- Managing a travel team for one year does not guarantee selection as a Manager for the following year(s).
- All Managers will be consulted in the selection of Team Coaches.
- All selected Travel Managers/Coaches will be required to sign the Managers/Coaches Code of Conduct form. In addition, it will be required that every travel player sign a Player Code of Conduct form, which will be the Managers responsibility to ensure that they obtain a copy from each player.
- Any Manager and Coach must be a registered member in good standing of the Association, and must have completed the Rutgers S.A.F.E.T.Y course and have gone through the Manalapan Township fingerprinting process prior to coaching or managing any team before or during the Travel season. The Manager is responsible for renewing their “certified volunteer” badge should it expire.
- Managers and Coaches are not compensated and are volunteers.
- Managers and Coaches must have a clean record regarding conduct from the current and prior softball seasons. Travel Team Managers who have been ejected from games, and or suspended, whether Recreation or Travel related, will not be considered for a Travel Team Manager's position, unless the MBSA Travel Committee approves the application.
- Managers/Coaches must be able to demonstrate competency regarding knowledge of softball and have sufficient time to devote to coaching the travel team.
- Managers/Coaches must be able to demonstrate proficiency in their ability to:
  - Teach mechanics of softball to players; and
  - Have the proper temperament to both teach softball and serve as a role model for managing issues on the field during games and practices.
- Managers/Coaches commit to a "Softball first" philosophy. Cheer, Soccer and other sports will be secondary to softball for both practices and games during the entire year, Spring and Fall seasons included.
- Managers will address serious player issues that may arise during the course of the season with parents in person, not via email. Additionally Manager will also make MBSA Travel Committee aware of any improper emails and or complaints received from parents.

- Managers agree to communicate to MBSA Travel Committee members on a weekly basis via email to the group. These brief emails will communicate practice plans, attendance, game results, general open issues, and overall player and team development.
- There will be no sharing of players in the same age group for any reason once teams have been selected. If a manager feels that he/she may need to supplement a roster during the season, he/she must approach the MBSA Travel committee in advance for approval. Consideration will be taken into account for special circumstances however if a team can field a team, NO consideration will be given. If you need to borrow a player because you are short and don't have the minimum required, you can borrow within the same division or next age group down. You must seek approval from the Manager from whom the borrowing player is on first and not approach the player directly. You can specifically ask for a player of your choosing or have the other manager provide you with his recommendation. Either way both managers should be in agreement.
- The Travel Committee reserves the right to ask a Manager or Coach to step down from their position if the committee does not feel they meet the requirements expected of the Belles Travel Manager or Coach or does not fully support the Belles Program. The Manager or Coach has the right to appeal this decision to that Committee.
- Prior to the beginning of the Fall season, Managers will establish Team rules, which must be approved by the Travel Committee.
- During non-playoff games (including tournaments), Managers will be required to play each player a minimum of 3 innings in the field per 6 inning game. In a "Mercy" situation, it is expected that all players will play a minimum of two (2) innings in the field. Managers may, in their discretion, reduce the playing time of a player for disciplinary reasons, but in those situations, the manager should discuss it with the player and/or player's family so they understand the reasoning for it as well as sending an email to the Travel Committee with the reason(s) for the decision.
- Managers are responsible for the conduct of the Team's coaches, players and fans during practices and games.

## BELLES MANAGER/COACH CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Belles Travel program Manager/Coach your responsibility extends beyond teaching the fundamentals of softball to the youth of Manalapan. It is equally important that you demonstrate, by example, the importance of good sportsmanship, displaying courtesy and respect to all players and adult volunteers. Violations of this code will be brought to the attention of the MBSA Travel Committee and will be met with appropriate action, which may include, but is not limited to, suspension from participation.

All Managers and Coaches are required to do the following:

- Use appropriate language when working with participants during games or practices.
- Attempt to diffuse any conflicts and disputes that may arise.
- Resolve all conflicts and disputes through established procedures.
- Taking all appropriate actions to ensure the safety of participants during all program activities.
- Fulfilling any responsibilities assigned to them by the Travel Committee to ensure that the program runs in an appropriate and efficient manner.

- In general, behave as a role model for the girls participating in the program.
- The use of Profanity will not be tolerated.
- Report to the Travel Committee the ejection or suspension of any player, coach, manager or parent (fan).
- Supportive of the Travel Program which includes MBSA and its board.

## MANAGER, COACH, AND VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

- The Belles Travel team must be the Managers priority and not take a back seat to other sports the manager/coach may be involved in.
- Display respect and sportsmanship like conduct toward the opponents, fans/spectators and game officials.
- A minimum of one practice per week must be held starting in January at an indoor practice facility negotiated for all Belles Travel Teams by the MBSA Travel Committee.
- Additional practices may be held and are at the discretion of the Manager.
- The Belles will minimally participate in the 3 tournaments provided with your registration fee.
- Belles Travel teams may enter additional tournaments at the discretion of the Manager and team. The cost for these tournaments will be paid for by the travel team entering the tournament.
  - *For additional tournaments, please make sure that all parents are willing to participate in the tournaments, especially those that are out of state. The ones that are out of state is an additional financial expense to the parents for hotels, meals, travel, etc. For tournaments out of state, you MUST respect the opinions of parents if this is feasible. Out of State Tournaments should be discussed with Travel Committee prior to any commitments.*
- Manager/Coach is expected to work with the other Belles Manager/Coaches to coordinate fund raising activities that are for the Belles General Fund.
- Attend travel committee meetings at the request of the travel committee.

## PARENT/PLAYER VOLUNTEER, TIME & FUND RAISING REQUIREMENTS

Belles Travel Parents are required to be active in fundraising and volunteer during the year in ways including the following:

- Prepare fields during times of inclement weather.
- Holding and participating in fund raising events.
- All travel parents must work on any fundraising for the travel team and program.
- Winter Training (usually starts in January). Winter training will be paid for out of fundraising costs that the team at the beginning of the Fall season needs to determine. The usually cost for training for 10 weeks for an hour is approximately \$2400 per team.
- Attend the meet and greet held prior to the beginning of Fall season with team.
- ***If any parent does not want to participate in fund raising for the club then their child cannot be part of the Belles Travel program***



Like all travel teams, the Belles are expected to hold fundraising events to cover additional costs. Additional costs are determined by each Belles Travel team and may include:

- Additional tournaments they may want to enter and all associated travel costs (team option).
- Each Belles team is required to manager their own funds.
- Professional instruction.
- Indoor training facilities
- The VP of Travel will keep a separate ledger for each team and will hold a general meeting for travel teams to show where the funds are going.
  - MBSA is not looking to use the Belles as a fund raising tool for the association. It is to give the players a better competitive playing experience.
- Belles parents and players will be able to purchase extra or other apparel for your family. Jersey and tee shirts will all have the Manalapan Belles Travel logo

## PARENT'S CODE-OF-CONDUCT

- I will remember that children participate to have fun and the game is for youths, not adults.
- I will not contact a manager, a coach, board member or an evaluator prior to or after the tryout process.
- I will never yell, taunt, threaten or inflict physical violence upon any player, coach, manager, official or spectator at any youth Travel Softball activity.
- I will refrain from the use of abusive or vulgar language, racial, ethnic or gender related slurs at any time.
- I will leave the coaching to the coaching staff. I will encourage my child to play in a manner consistent with the team's strategy or plans.
- I will respect and show appreciation for the volunteers who give their time to Travel Softball for my child.
- I will never ridicule or yell at my child or any other players for making a mistake or losing a competition.
- I will respect the umpires and their authority during the games. I will not confront an umpire before, during, or after a game.
- I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games or practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.
- I will learn the rules of the game so that I may best support my child's development in the game.
- I will not confront coaches at the game field. I will take the time to speak with the coaches at the agreed upon time and place, and it must be at least 24 hours after the game.
- I will remember that my child plays Travel Softball for her enjoyment, not the managers and coaches.
- I will teach my child that playing by the rules, doing their very best is more important than winning, so that my child will never be defeated by the outcome of a game or her performance.
- No illegal drugs, drinking of alcoholic beverages or smoking is allowed at any games or practices. This will result in immediate removal from the Travel Program.
- I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but not limited to the following:

- Verbal warning documented by MBSA Disciplinary Board
- Written warning documented by MBSA Disciplinary Board
- Parental three game suspension with written documentation of incident that will be kept on file by MBSA Disciplinary Board
- Parental season suspension by MBSA Disciplinary Board
- If any circumstances arise during the season which I feel need to be addressed, I will discuss them in person with the manager first. If I am unhappy with the decision and I wish to pursue further action, I will submit a signed letter to a member of the travel committee requesting a meeting. I understand that the decision of MBSA Travel Committee is final.

### QUESTIONS OR INQUIRES?

- General questions during the season should be directed to your manager and/or coaches who will in-turn contact the MBSA Belles Travel Committee.
- Travel parents are encouraged to e-mail their suggestions to improve this handbook or the travel program in general.
- If an issue cannot be addressed by your manager and/or coach you can contact the Travel Committee
  - *Note: Anonymous inquires or complaints will not be responded to*

*The MBSA Manalapan Belles Travel Committee reserves the right to modify the handbook at its discretion, but subject to the approval of the MBSA Board of Directors. Also, any contradiction between the MBSA general by-laws as they may relate to Travel Baseball and this Handbook shall be decided in favor of the MBSA By-Laws. Belles Travel Parents will be notified that the handbook has been updated. Updated handbooks will be available on the MBSA website [www.manalapanbaseball.com](http://www.manalapanbaseball.com).*

### THE TRAVEL COMMITTEE IS

Al Caputo

Nicole Heckel

William Andruzzi

## MBSA MANALAPAN BELLES TRAVEL MANAGER/COACH CONSENT & AGREEMENT

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Belles Manager/Coach) have read, understand, and agree to abide by the rules, regulations and commitments for a Belles Travel Manager/Coach and Parent outlined in the MBSA Manalapan Belles Travel Handbook.

I hereby give my child (player) \_\_\_\_\_ consent to play baseball on the Belles Travel team and will fully explain the commitment she must make as a Belles Travel player.

As a Manager/Coach I fully recognize that it is my responsibility to demonstrate good sportsmanship and agree to abide by the "Code of Conduct" and understand that the Manalapan Baseball and Softball Association (MBSA) Travel Committee reserve the right to take disciplinary action as outlined in the "Belles Travel Manager/Coach" section contained within the Braves Travel Handbook.

As a travel parent, I also understand that the Manalapan Baseball and Softball Association (MBSA) Travel Committee reserve the right to take disciplinary action as outlined in the "Belles Travel Softball Parents Code-of-Conduct" section contained within the Belles Travel Handbook.

Agreed By:

\_\_\_\_\_

(Print name of Manager/Coach)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of Manager/Coach)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

\*This form must be executed and returned to the MBSA Travel Committee within 7 days of your selection as a Belles Travel Manager/Coach.

**MBSA MANALAPAN BELLES TRAVEL  
PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT & AGREEMENT**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent) have read, understand, and agree to abide by the rules, regulations and commitments for a Belles Travel Parent and Player as outlined in the MBSA Manalapan Belles Travel Handbook.

I hereby give my child (player) \_\_\_\_\_ consent to play softball on the Belles Travel team and will fully explain the commitment he/she must make as a Belles Travel player.

I understand that the Manalapan Baseball and Softball Association (MBSA) Travel Committee and/or MBSA Board of Directors reserve the right to take disciplinary action as outlined in the Belles Handbook.

Agreed By:

\_\_\_\_\_

(Print name of Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

\*This form must be executed and returned to the MBSA Travel Committee prior to your child's tryout.