

Dunlap Girls Softball Association

Team Handbook 2017 Season

(August 2016 – July 2017)



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1. Purpose

The Dunlap Girls Softball Association has been formed, and will exist, for the sole purpose of promoting good fellowship and developing softball players for the Dunlap School District Softball programs. This will be achieved by fostering team participation, while developing our athletes to be good leaders, students, citizens, and team players. The goal of the Dunlap Girls Softball Association is to provide a fun, recreational and competitive softball environment for girls. We seek to develop fast pitch softball players; not only in terms of their skills, but also build their self-esteem and self-confidence.

We want to ensure that our League games are fair, positive and enjoyable experiences for all of the children and adults involved. A youth travel softball game should be friendly and unifying - a spirited social and athletic occasion for players, coaches, umpires and spectators. We strive to progress every girls softball abilities, teach teamwork through positive reinforcement and prepare girls for the next level of softball.

The Dunlap Girls Softball Association will be a non-profit organization; organizing teams under the Dunlap Screamin Eagles and Eagles brand, logo and name. The Dunlap Girls Softball Association will be an exclusive girl's fast pitch program.

The membership of DGSA Softball includes the DGSA Players, the parents/guardians (Parents) of DGSA Players, and the Coaches. Membership shall begin when the parents and players accept a position on a DGSA team, complete the registration process, signing the team contract (The last page of this handbook), and payment of registration fees.

The purpose of the DGSA Softball Team Handbook (Handbook) is too clearly communicate the general philosophies of our organization, the specific policies that govern our organization, and to ensure that parents and players understand what will be expected of them as a member of DGSA Softball.

2. DGSA Softball History

DGSA Softball was established in the fall of 2012, and we fielded four teams for the 2013 season. In our inaugural season, our teams produced progressive results. Our success continued in 2016, with teams having successful seasons, and we look to expand and improve again in 2017.

While our teams will always strive to play softball at a highly competitive level, the overarching goal of DGSA Softball is to provide an opportunity for young women to play fast pitch softball in an atmosphere that encourages and promotes teamwork, friendly competition, amicable relationships, good sportsmanship, and community.

The DGSA organization's #1 priority is our players. Everything we do is driven by what is in the best interest of our girls and young women.

3. General Philosophies

DGSA Softball Vision

Become the premier fast pitch softball organization in the area; on and off the field.

General Expectations

The goal of DGSA Softball is to provide an opportunity for young women to play fast pitch softball in an atmosphere that encourages and promotes teamwork, friendly competition, amicable relationships, good sportsmanship, and community. The organization expects coaches, players, fans and parents to exhibit courtesy and proper decorum at all times.

DGSA Softball teams will strive to play softball at a highly competitive level. During the softball season, every player is expected to place DGSA Softball as their #1 sports priority. While the player is not prohibited from participating in non- DGSA softball activities, those activities must be secondary to DGSA activities. This includes playing for local recreational softball teams during the season. The exception to this rule is Middle School/High School Softball. Middle School/High School Softball always takes priority.

The DGSA season is defined as March 1st – End of National Tournaments (Approx. early August). DGSA teams will also practice and participate in fall tournaments, and will practice indoors through the winter; however, this is considered “Off-season.” Players are encouraged to play other sports, and will not be penalized if they miss activities, during the offseason.

As DGSA is a competitive softball program, there is no guarantee of playing time. Playing time is at the sole discretion of the coaching staff.

Specific Skill Outcomes 8U, 10U:

- a) Introduce basic skills of fielding, throwing, hitting, base running, and bunting
- b) Introduce basic skills of team defense
- c) Develop pitching skills; location of fastball, and introduce changeup
- d) Develop beginning to intermediate catching skills
- e) Develop a winning attitude
- f) Balance playing time with an emphasis on winning

Specific Skill Outcomes 12U:

- a) Introduce and develop intermediate skills of throwing, hitting, base running, and bunting
- b) Introduce and develop intermediate skills of team defense
- c) Develop intermediate pitching skills: advanced control of fastball and changeup, and introduce new pitches
- d) Develop intermediate to advanced catching skills
- e) Display a consistent winning attitude
- f) Balance playing time with an emphasis on winning

Specific Skill Outcomes 14U, 16U, and 18U:

- a) Introduce and develop advanced skills of fielding, throwing, hitting, base running, and bunting
- b) Introduce and develop advanced skills of team defense
- c) Develop advanced control of fastball and changeup. Continue working on location of fastball and changeup (corners)
- d) Introduce and develop advanced pitching skills; drop ball and rise ball
- e) Develop advanced catching skills
- f) Display a consistent winning attitude
- g) Balance playing time with an emphasis on winning

4. Code of Conduct

The Softball Player Code of Conduct

By being a part of the DGSA Softball organization, high expectations will be placed on you. The coaching staff will hold every athlete to a high standard and will expect all team members to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. Behavior that is deemed disruptive and detrimental to the team can bring consequences ranging from diminished playing time to dismissal from the team. The following items are in place to make you a better person and promote the image of our softball program.

- a) Always be on time for all softball related activities. Please be courteous enough to call if you cannot attend or will be late.

- b) Practice at “Game Pace.” You are expected to treat practice just like a game. Practice is the time to learn and improve. We will not coach poor attitudes, we cannot coach effort, and effort comes from the player - on the inside.
- c) Always support your teammates on and off the field. We have stepped between the lines and the season has started. We are in this together.
- d) Be Coachable. Listen to your coaches’ instruction. Ask questions if you are not sure. Be willing to try new positions, new techniques. Be willing to do whatever your team needs you to do.
- e) Accept your role on the team. If you do not like it, work harder to change it. Playing time is earned in practice and on the field.
- f) Do not transfer blame or make excuses. It is not acceptable. Learn from your mistakes and get better.
- g) Do not question the Coaches during a game, ever. We will meet 1-on-1, in a productive manner to clear up any misunderstandings. Coaches do make mistakes.
- h) Disrespect for coaches, parents, teammates, and umpires will not be tolerated.
- i) Always lead by example on and off the field.
- j) Be the good example and set the standard high for future DGSA Players to follow.
- k) Injuries will be taken seriously. It is important that players and parents have open and honest communications with coaches regarding injuries. Playing with soreness and slight pain is part of sports; however playing injured is not. Health of the player is paramount. If you are injured, you are required to visit your doctor. A doctor’s note will be required, and the doctor’s orders will be followed by the coach. Injured players are still required to attend practices and games.
- l) An athlete may use or possess alcohol or the distribute alcohol, marijuana, or any recreation or prescription drugs/tobacco.
- m) An athlete shall not engage in inappropriate conduct such as participating in a fight, cheating, physical or verbose abuse another individual.

The Softball Coach Code of Conduct

- a) Exemplify behavior that is representative of being an adult, a coach, a member of the DGSA, and a leader of young women.

- b) Demonstrate high ideals, good sportsmanship, and desirable attitudes in personal behavior and demand the same standards from his/her players.
- c) Emphasize to his/her players and support personnel the importance of proper behavior and the necessity of restraining from entering the playing field to engage in an altercation of any kind.
- d) Maintain self-control at all times.
- e) Cooperate with and assist the DGSA Executive Board in the planning, scheduling, and conduct of organization activities.
- f) Utilize positive educational methods in coaching; giving all players an opportunity to develop and use initiative, leadership, and judgment.
- g) Pay close attention to the physical condition and well-being of players; refusing to jeopardize the health of an individual for the sake of improving his/her team's chances of winning.
- h) Discourage profanity or abusive language directed toward anyone involved with the DGSA and its activities.
- i) Refuse to disparage opponent, officials, or others associated with the DGSA or its activities.
- j) Conduct himself/herself properly when raising a question about or discussing a call with an official.
- k) DGSA coaches have an obligation to participate in the building of the DGSA brand, not just their team.
- l) Coaches are expected to interact with parents, fostering an atmosphere of open communications trust and team.
- m) The coaching staff should ensure that players and parents understand what is involved in tournament play, and provide enough guidance to ensure families are properly prepared for the early and long days that often accompany tournament play.
- n) Coach should establish team rules, coaching philosophy, and properly set player and parental expectations on practice participation, playing time, in-game interaction between player and parents, etc.
- o) Coaches should conduct organized and productive practices. Practice should be conducted in a serious, "Game pace" manor. Practice is for learning and improving. Be prepared for practice and set the tone for your team.

- p) Responsible for budget.
- q) Coaches are strictly prohibited from using alcohol during all team activities, including but not limited to games and practices.
- r) Coaches must ensure that they are in compliance with all park rules.

The Softball Parent Code of Conduct

Parents play a huge role in the development of a successful softball player. Your role is every bit as important as that of the coaches, and every bit as difficult. That is why we welcome your presence at every practice and every game. We try very hard to be a family-oriented organization, and your participation is a major part of our success.

- a) Encourage your daughter to communicate with the coaches. It is very important that the players build the confidence to interact with, and establish a healthy interactive relationship with their coaches.
- b) Make sure your daughter is on time to all team activities. Always know, if you cannot get your daughter to an event, we are a team and someone will help you.
- c) Communicate with the coaching staff, respond to emails or texts so we know you got information provided, we want all to be on the same page.
- d) Please come to any of your child's coaches if you have a problem or concern. Your thoughts are important to us. We will work to address your concerns. If we cannot help, we will explain why and work with you to find another way to address your concerns. Complaining to other parents cannot solve your problems, nor can we solve problems that we do not know about. If you respect our organization enough to allow us to play such big part in your child's life, please respect us enough to know that we have your child's best interest in mind.
- e) Parents play their role at home and outside the softball field. On the softball field, the coaches play their role. Please do not coach your child during practices or games. Your comments detract from what the coach is doing, they give the player another thing to think about, and it interferes with the development of the player/coach relationship.
- f) Please stay out of the bench area during games. Make every effort to ensure that your daughter has everything she needs prior to the start of the game (Water, equipment, etc.) If your daughter needs something, the coach may give her permission to leave the bench area or request a parent's assistance.
- g) Do not question the Coaches during a game, ever. We will meet 1-on-1, in a productive manner to clear up any misunderstandings. Coaches do make mistakes.

h) Be supportive of your daughter after good games and poor games, your support matters more than you realize.

i) Please tell the coach before practice or games, if you think your child has an illness or injury that will prevent her from participating. Please do not rely on the coach to make medical decisions.

j) Be prepared for tournament weekends. Tournament play often starts very early in the morning (8:00 AM), and can last all day. Sometimes games are played back-to-back, and other times the team may have to wait several hours between games. Coaches will communicate tournament schedules as soon as they get them, however, Saturday game times are usually not set until Wednesday/Thursday prior to the weekend. Tournament weekends can be a great time to interact with other DGSA families, and build an atmosphere that allows the girls to develop "Team Chemistry," which is a winning quality that cannot be coached. If you are new to tournament softball please ask the coach and other parents for advise. It can be great fun, but if not prepared, it can be a difficult experience.

k) Be an example for your daughter. They are still impressionable kids and young adults.

l) Parents are expected to comply with all park rules, including the use of alcohol while at the park. Most parks prohibit or restrict the use of alcohol without a special permit.

5. Insurance

The parents/guardian of each DGSA player is responsible for providing the proper health insurance coverage for their daughter (s). The DGSA organization is not responsible for any injuries that may occur during practices or games, and is not responsible for associated health care costs.

Parents are required to provide insurance information as part of the player registration paperwork. All team administrators will have copies of the insurance information at tournaments.

6. Registration Fees

Registrations fees cover participation on a team, the team uniform, and tournament fees. In general, each team will play in 4-6 tournaments, including fall tournaments, but not including state or national tournaments that the team may qualify for. If a coach would like to play in more tournaments, that coach is responsible for meeting with the team parents to gain agreement. That coach is also responsible for raising the additional money to pay tournament fees, either through fundraising or sponsorships. Upon acceptance of a roster position and payment of applicable registration fees, there will NO refunds.

7. Grievance Process

The grievance process will be as follows:

- a) The Head Coach of each team will try to resolve any issues arising on his/her team.
- b) If unsuccessful, the Head Coach will refer the grievance to the Vice Chairman of the Board for resolution.
- c) If unsuccessful, the Commissioner will refer the grievance to the Executive Board for resolution. The decision of the Executive Board is final.
- d) If the commissioner is the Head Coach of the team, and/or if the parent is uncomfortable speaking to the Commissioner, for any reason, the issue may be raised to any DGSA board member for resolution.

8. Equipment

Each player is responsible for providing their own equipment. At a minimum, this includes a glove, bat, batting helmet, and cleats. Optional equipment, such as sliding pads, fielding masks and catcher gear, are also the responsibility of the player to provide.

9. Fundraising and Sponsorships

Fundraising is a very important element of the DGSA organization's success. The team fees do not cover all of the expenses required to operate 6 softball teams. Fundraising money is needed to purchase team equipment (pitching machines, balls, equipment bags, etc.), pay for indoor practice facilities, and additional tournament fees. Family participation in fundraising activities is not required, but is strongly encouraged, as it directly benefits the players.

Fundraising activities can be conducted by the DGSA organization as a whole, or by each team. The funds from organization-wide events will benefit the entire organization. The funds from team-specific fundraising events are allocated to that team's budget. Each coach is responsible for managing their team budget and the coach determines what the most beneficial way to allocate that budget.

Selling sponsorships is also a very important fundraising activity. Again, helping to sell sponsorships is not required but strongly encouraged. Proceeds from sponsorships benefit the entire organization.

Your coach will provide you the details on our current Sponsorship opportunities.

10. Travel Policy

Most of the tournaments that DGSA teams participate in are within 1-1 ½ hours' drive; however most are an hour or less away. If a tournament is more than 1 ½ away, the Head Coach is required to discuss with the team parents in advance, to determine their

willingness to travel. Overnight stays are not required for regular season tournaments. Each player is required to travel with their own family, unless permission and notice is provided to the Head Coach in advance.

If a team qualifies for a National Tournament, these tournaments are likely to be held outside of the Peoria area, and may require extended overnight travel. Before entering a National tournament outside the area, the Head Coach must discuss with parents and determine if everyone is willing to travel as required.

In all cases, families are responsible for their own travel expenses.

11. Social Networking and Photography Policy

Web sites and social media are powerful communications tools that have a significant impact on organizational and individual reputations. Because they blur the lines between personal voice and institutional voice, the DGSA organization has crafted the following policy to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and organizational reputations when posting content on our web site and participating in social media.

The www.dgsasoftball.com website will be maintained by the DGSA Webmaster. The webmaster will develop and enforce a set of guidelines that ensure consistent, effective and appropriate use of the web site, as both an informational and communications platform. These guidelines will be presented and approved by the board. The web site is the external face of the organization, and the implementation and enforcement of these guidelines are an important element of our mission as an organization.

Social media are defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible publishing techniques. Examples include but are not limited to Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat.

Both in individual and organizational roles, members need to follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in real life. The same laws, expectations, and guidelines for interacting with our student athletes, parents, sponsors, media, and other softball organizations apply online as in the real world. Members are responsible for anything they post to social media sites.

The DGSA web site and social media guidelines include the following:

- a) Protect confidential and private information: Do not post confidential or private information about DGSA players - including self, parents or coaches.
- b) Don't use DGSA logos. Do not use the DGSA name to promote a product or cause, without prior written permission from the DGSA Board.

- c) Think twice before posting: Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and the DGSA organization.
- d) Strive for accuracy: Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important if posting on behalf of the DGSA organization in any capacity.
- e) Be respectful: Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the DGSA organization.
- f) Remember your audience: Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective DGSA players, current players, other softball organizations, high school coaches, etc.
- g) Photography: Photographs posted on social media sites easily can be shared by visitors. Before posting photography to social media sites, please consider the appropriateness of those photos. Additionally, photos of players may be posted to the DGSA webpage. Players and parents are prohibited from posting any photographs without the consent of those shown in the photo.
- h) Be aware, be careful. If you have any questions or concerns, contact your coach or a DGSA board member before posting anything on social media.

Some good advice to consider:

"If you even have the slightest question or doubt that what you write or post may be a problem, or of concern to one person who sees it...then don't."

--- Anonymous

12. Handbook Violations

- a) First Violation – Suspension from activity for one-third of the season
- b) Second Violation – Expulsion from program

Thank you for taking the time to read the Team Handbook. Your acknowledgement and agreement is required. Please print and sign the signature page below, and return to your head coach.

DGSA Softball – Signature Page

DGSA Team Handbook Agreement

I, _____ (Print Parent Name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the DGSA Team Handbook, and agree to follow the policies and procedures contained in the Handbook.

Parent Signature

Date

I, _____ (Print Player Name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the DGSA Team Handbook, and agree to follow the policies and procedures contained in the Handbook.

Player Signature

Date

DGSA Social Networking and Photography Policy

I, _____ (Print Parent Name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the DGSA Social Networking and Photography Policy, and agree to follow this policy.

Parent Signature

Date

I, _____ (Print Player Name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the DGSA Social Networking and Photography Policy, and agree to follow this policy.

Player Signature

Date