



Sandy Plains Softball Newsletter

Fall 2010

Sandy Plains Softball Association

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Inside this issue:

President's Letter	1
Registration Information	2
Fast Pitch Update	3
Slow Pitch Message	4
Sponsors	5
Board of Directors	5



Sandy Plains offers online registration via our website:

www.sandyplainssoftball.com

President's Letter

**"The will to win is important, but the will to prepare is vital."
-- Joe Paterno**



For the past twenty years, Sandy Plains Softball has catered to players from the Cobb, Cherokee, and Fulton county region. Many girls have entered our program at the 6-U level, developed into quality players, and continued their careers at both the high school and college level.

To prepare for the future of softball and the strong growth of fastpitch softball, we as an organization, have changed our 10-U recreational program to reflect the changes of this country-wide growth. Our 10-U program has changed to a modified fastpitch program. The pitchers learn to pitch with a fast-pitch motion and do not get penalized for not throwing strikes. The coach will finish pitching if the pitcher does not successfully strike out the player. The game is played with zero walks. This develops confidence as they grow and speeds up the play of the game by forcing the defense to work for the out.

As we continue to grow, our program offers a strong 6-U program that stresses the fundamentals for the players. Our 8-U program continues the strong path forward stressing strong fundamental for defense and hitting. SPSA works with the local high school teams to support the younger girls playing development by utilizing their talents and working with the teams on drills and techniques. We are coordinating a free fundamental clinic with Lassiter and Pope. Quality managers and assistant coaches combined with our coach-player development directors help players acquire up-to date competitive skills and techniques.

Whether you are interested in slow pitch or fast pitch, have played 1 day or 10 years, Sandy Plains is right for you! Utilizing eight fields, our growing program offer two practices and games a week to continually improve skills. **Never played before?** Fall is a great season to try softball at Sandy Plains. This is our instructional season. We strive to enhance each player's skill without the pressure of having to win. Standings are not kept for the fall season. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

See you at the park,
Greg Viland
SPSA President
404-849-4465



Fall Registration is Open!

The Fall season is upon us and there are many opportunities available to girls at Sandy Plains. The youngest players are age 5, turning 6 by December 31st. Programs serve up to high school aged girls. Please check out the website and tell your friends and neighbors who may be interested in softball this Fall.

- August 3, 5, 10, and 12th, Free Fundamentals Clinics. 6:00—8:00 p.m.
- Saturday August 7, Open Registration and **FUN DAY** at Sandy Plains Park
- Sunday August 15, Evaluations, Sandy Plains Park, 1:30 p.m.
- Sunday -Tues. August 15-17th, Draft
- Friday August 20th, Practice Begins
- Saturday September 11th, Opening Day for fall in-park games.

[The preseason and weekly Free Fundamentals 101 Clinics will be returning this fall.](#) The clinics focus on the “how-to” of throwing, catching, fielding, and hitting. We begin by breaking up the girls in groups by age and ability. We then run multiple stations to give the girls as many repetitions as possible.

The preseason clinics will be held on August 3rd, 5th, 10th and 12th from 6-8pm on Field 1 @ Sandy Plains. Parents/coaches please bring your gloves. Historically, the clinics have been well attended. We will need help running stations and keeping the girls organized and moving. Experience is **not** required as we will give you all the training you need. The preseason clinics are a great way to get the girls ready for evaluations.

In addition to the Fundamentals 101 Clinics, we are again working with Champions Fastpitch Academy to offer quality fastpitch pitching instruction. Good pitching is essential to making the fastpitch game more fun and enjoyable. The instructors from Champions are all former college pitchers and are widely recognized as the premier pitching instructors in this area. Please check the SPSA website regularly for more information on these lessons.

Coach and Player Development Coordinators

Bill Adams and Jack Cullen

Travel Ball

Sandy Plains has a long history of supporting top level travel teams out of our park. When slowpitch was still strong in Georgia, Sandy Plains had the top teams in the State year after year, and now as we are generating more Fastpitch tournament/travel teams, we have the opportunity to achieve the same level of competitiveness. Travel ball is now primarily fast-pitch driven, simply because there are no other slow-pitch travel teams out there to play against. Sandy Plains continues to offer various tier levels for play, from in-park recreational ball, to B level travel/tournament ball, and for the highly committed and talented players, A level ball either through Sandy Plains or Georgia Fire, our strategic alliance partner.

Some of the differences in Travel ball versus recreational softball include:

There are NO minimum playing times or guarantees of playing particular positions, only promises that your daughter will be part of a team that emphasizes dedication to the TEAM concept and do that which is in the best interest of the TEAM, as decided by the Manager and Coaches. Regardless of the amount of playing time, the many hours of practices and the # of games played at the various tournaments will benefit each and every player more than they could receive in the in-park program. Travel ball is more competitive, and although it should be (and will be) fun for the girls, parents, and coaches, it is not the type of ball where the girls get to play the positions they want all the time. In Travel Ball it is more critical that EVERY position on the team be fielded by an exceptional player, outfielders, infielders, catcher, etc. Only through a total team effort are Travel Teams successful in their tournament circuit.

The Tournament schedule for each team will be set by the individual managers, but typically most of the tournaments in the early months are 'local' with the out of town weekend tournaments starting in the early summer. Each "A" level team is required to attend a World or National tournament which may be out of state. If you haven't played in a travel program before, the one thing you will learn quickly is the girl's LOVE to travel for the 'road trips'! During the months of March, April and May most teams will play an average of 3 tournaments per month, with most of these being one day tournaments within an hour's drive of our park. It is very common for a team to play 4 or more games in a day, hence the dramatic improvement usually achieved by most travel players in a season.

The registration fees are not the same for Travel Ball as in-park play, due to the cost of tournaments, additional uniforms, other team expenses, and higher cost of insurance. Each manager is responsible for setting the player fees for each team, with oversight and direction from Sandy Plains, and is responsible for providing accurate accounting of the funds collected and expended in a given year.

Travel/tournament play is an exceptional playing and bonding experience for the girl's. The level of play they achieve is truly remarkable and the friendships created with the other players and the parents can last a lifetime. While the level of competition and commitment required may not be for everyone, most players who have played in the Sandy Plains travel program have cherished the experience and expanded their playing ability to a higher plane.



Mark Whittle
Sandy Plains Travel Director
770-518-3021
Georgia.fire.com

Message from the Coach Pitch Coordinator

My name is Steve Cutler and I am the new Coach Pitch Coordinator for 6U and 8U. I've been involved with Sandy Plains Softball for 3 years, coaching both of my daughters at the 6U and 8U levels. At 6U, we don't keep score and we use a special 10 inch 'soft' softball so the players can learn to enjoy the game without fear of a 'hard' softball. At 8U, the players continue to develop their fundamentals within a more competitive environment. As we continue to develop their skills at the 8U level, we put a high emphasis on building players confidence. Softball is a SPORT and the players are supposed to have FUN playing softball. Win or lose, the objective is to make the players feel good about themselves and make sure they are smiling at the end of the game.

Coach volunteers are always welcome. No one coach can do it alone and the more helpers the better for the players. If you are interested in Managing, Coaching or simply helping out on your child's softball team, please let us know. Three years ago I knew nothing about softball, so I offered my assistance whenever they needed it. I ended up learning a lot from my daughter's first coaches and ended up coaching with them for several seasons. Now I look forward to the Spring and Fall seasons so I can get back out there once again. With that in mind, you don't need to know the game of softball; we will do our best to pair you with a returning coach who will be more than happy to help you understand the game. Adult involvement is always our biggest concern, so please, consider stepping up to coach/help your daughter's team this season. Please feel free to contact me at steve@cutlercrew.net with any questions or to volunteer.

Sandy Plains appreciates all of our **SPONSORS and we look forward to working with them year after year ! Please check out our sign board, banners, and website links to find the local businesses that help our softball teams. These businesses supplement the Association's budget in return for advertising. Our girls benefit from this community support and we hope you'll support our sponsors.**

If you are interested in sponsoring a SPSA team, the sponsor form can be downloaded from our website. Players get registration fee rebates for obtaining sponsors, up to a full rebate for \$400 in sponsorships obtained.

For more information contact Pam Johnson, Sponsor Coordinator

Coach's Corner

One question that frequently arises is: "what is the measure of a successful season?" Well, judging by thousands of girls' reactions over the years, it is all about the snack! From the SPSA perspective, however, a successful season means the girls have fun, learn a lot about softball, and maybe even win a game or two. Notice that "winning" was last on the list. This is more so in the fall as the SPSA encourages an increased focus on player skill development. Each fall, there are no play-offs. This is done so the coaches will be free to spend practice time on developing skill sets vs. focusing on winning ball games.

Regardless of the season, coaches will have done their "job" and have had a successful season when, after the season is over, the girls want to come back and they have increased their skill levels. The players will want to come back if their time at SPSA was fun and they feel like they improved their game. The "fun" part is achieved by keeping the girls busy, being positive and keeping a smile on your face. The "increasing skills" part comes from a heavy emphasis on fundamentals. Over the years, time has taught us that being able to make the "routine play" leads to good competitive games. The routine play is made by employing good footwork, proper fielding, throwing and catching techniques.

We as coaches need to organize our practices to teach those fundamentals and then give players thousands of repetitions to perfect the skills.

At a **minimum**, properly organized practices should include:

- A written practice plan organized around teaching and repeating core fundamentals (examples can be provided to borrow from – just ask!)
- Multiple work stations ... where groups of no more 3-4 players work on a particular skill for 10-15 minutes at a time, before moving on to a different station. (Parents: if your coach has 12 girls in a queue waiting for their turn at a repetition, the coaches need your help on the field.)
- Briefly teaching a particular skill ... then giving players many, many practice repetitions.
- Working on proper throwing and catching mechanics for at least 15-20 minutes EACH practice.

Please come to the Free Fundamentals clinics to learn a little bit or to lend a hand. It will be fun, rewarding and informative. For more practice ideas please seek out Jack Cullen & Bill Adams.

Sandy Plains Softball Board of Directors

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