NEW HAMBURG SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Player Development

Parents and Coaches,

Once again New Hamburg Minor Softball Association is pleased to provide our guide to player development. The information provided below gives a general outline of what we hope to teach players of NHSA over the coming softball season. These are guidelines and progression may vary by player. As parents of players any time you can spend encouraging and practicing with your son/daughter at home will increase their skill level and will help them better enjoy the game. We hope you will find this outline helpful in understanding what you can look forward to at each level of play.

T-ball (ages 5-6)

- Warm up techniques
- Names of defensive positions
- How to execute a throw (proper grip)
- Proper fielding position (down and ready)
- How to hold a bat properly
- What to do after the ball is hit (as a batter and a runner)
- Knows how, why and when to run to the next base

Coach Pitch (ages 6-7)

- TEAM concept
- Warm up techniques
- Number of outs per inning
- Fielding techniques (proper down and ready position)
- Uses both hands to catch the ball vs. one handed or trapped catches
- Understands where to make the defensive play
- Proper Batting position
- Proper base running (on the ground vs. in the air)
- Good Sportsmanship (End each game with a High Five)

Tyke (ages 8)

- The ball is always "LIVE"
- Ground ball fielding techniques
- Where to make the play
- Relaying the ball from the outfield to the infield
- Pitching mechanics
- Communication (calling for a fly ball)
- Backing up plays
- Pitcher position
- Good Sportsmanship

Atom (ages 9-10)

- Relaying the ball from the outfield to the infield
- Batting stance (closed, open)
- Bunting
- Infield Fly Rule
- Communication (calling for a fly ball)
- Backing up plays
- Pitcher position
- Difference between a Force Play and a Must Tag
- Good Sportsmanship
- Proper grip of the bat
- Acceptable level of determining ball vs. strike
- Passing the bat through the strike zone
- Proper base running techniques including:
    - Stealing after the ball crosses the plate
    - When to tag up
    - How and when to slide
- Correct pitching mechanics
- Competence in batter's box positioning
- Proper footwork to field and throw quickly
- How to go back on a fly ball
- How to rundown a base runner (pickle)
- Covering bases and backing up positions after a hit

Squirt (ages 11-12)

- Coming on time to practices and games prepared to play softball (including safety equipment)
- Sacrifice situations
- Covering bases and backing up positions after a hit
- Show proper batting stance, bat position, and swing execution
- Reasonable competence in making contact with the ball
- Know the difference between bunting for a base hit and a sacrifice bunt
- Demonstrate proper base running techniques including:
    - Exploding off the base after the ball crosses the plate
    - When to tag up vs. going half way
    - Proper sliding techniques
- Execute proper pitching motion
- Use Catching skills (blocking the plate with the ball, blocking wild pitches, throwing out runners)
- Cover bases correctly when receiving a throw or fielding a ball
- Understand how to go back on a fly ball
- Properly execute a double play
- Execute a run down - both as a runner and a fielder
- Know what can happen after a ball is caught in foul territory
- Use the relay man from outfield or throw home if needed
- Cover all bases and backs up other players after a hit
- Always show good Sportsmanship on and off the field (no bad mouthing other players)

Peewee and up (ages 13+)

The Peewee and Bantam levels focus on strategy and situational plays, mastering specific positions and preparing for play at a higher level of competition.