

Cedar Rapids Blue Devils Softball Player/Parent Handbook

“Once a Blue Devil....ALWAYS a Blue Devil”

The mission of the Cedar Rapids Blue Devil Softball Organization is to teach the fundamentals of softball, hustle, work ethic, integrity, discipline, sportsmanship, and team unity. By effectively teaching these qualities, we will produce better players and better teams, but also teach our players valuable life skills that can be applied in the real world.

A. Facts about the Cedar Rapids Blue Devils Girls Fast Pitch Organization:

- Dedicated solely to girl's fast pitch softball continuously operational since 1990. Formerly Cedar Rapids Eby's.
- Registered Iowa nonprofit corporation-Corporate Name: CEDAR RAPIDS GIRLS FAST PITCH SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION – Iowa Corp. No. 239089
- Recognized by the IRS as a charitable organization.
- 8 teams: 8U, 9U, 10U, 12U, 13U, 14U, 16U and 18U.
- Past or current players have played for or are currently playing for the following high schools: Alburnett, Anamosa, Benton Community, CR Jefferson, CR Kennedy, CR Prairie, CR Washington, Center Point-Urbana, Central City, Clear Creek-Amana, Dubuque Hempstead, Home Schooled, Huntsville High School(Alabama), Iowa City High, Iowa City Regina, Iowa City West, Jesup, Linn-Mar, Lisbon, Marion, Midland, Monticello, North Cedar, North Linn, Olin, Omaha Burke(Nebraska), Oskaloosa, Pella Christian, Solon, South Tama, Springville, Union-La Porte City, Vinton-Shellsburg, Williamsburg and Xavier.
- Numerous former Blue Devil players have played or are playing in NCAA Division I, II and III programs, also NAIA, NJCAA divisions I, II and III.
- Dedicated softball diamond for girls-completely skinned infield with outfield fencing-185'.
- Dedicated Indoor Hitting Facility – Devils Den
- ASA Certified Softball Coaches, continuous membership in ASA since 1990, continuous membership in National Fast Pitch Coaches Association (NFCA) since 1995 (NFCA's senior most traveled ball coach in Iowa).
- Scholarship Program – no one is turned away from the Blue Devils' program due to inadequacy of family funds.
- Fundamental Training Stressed – focused on mechanical drills and performance while maintaining a winning program in the most competitive softball environment for girls.

B. Advisory Board

Cedar Rapids Blue Devils Board of Directors:

Scott Beck, President (319) 981-7623 cedarrapidsbluedevils@gmail.com
Josh Jensen, Treasurer (319) 899-0348 cedarrapidsbluedevils@gmail.com
Brad Chandler, Board Member
Alan Rutan, Board Member
Jamie Meyers, Board Member

C. Practice Facilities

Apache Park is located on D Ave. NW between 26th St NW and 28th St NW in Cedar Rapids. Apache was built by the Blue Devil coaches, parents and several sponsors including the Local Carpenters Union and Star Equipment. The Blue Devils lease this property from the City of Cedar Rapids as a dedicated softball diamond for the girls. The diamond has a skinned infield with outfield fencing set at 185'. We have covered dugouts, storage shed, bathroom facilities, covered pavilion, playground, water for the field and electricity.

The **Devils Den** is our indoor practice facility. This facility gives players the opportunity to keep improving over the winter months with multiple batting cages, T work, room for pitchers and catchers and strength and conditioning. This facility was made possible by the generous support of T&H Transport.

Alternate our door practice facilities: Noelridge Park, Jacolyn Park, and Lincolnway Park

D. Committees

Committees are a very important part of the Blue Devil program. These are usually parents that volunteer to step up and help out in a leading, positive role. Some of these can cover the whole program and some are more team specific. Listed below are the committees that are currently available.

- *Fund-raising
- *Field maintenance
- *Apparel
- *Blue Devil Softball tournament
- *Hotel room scheduling
- *Devils Den
- *Website/Computers

E. Coaches

Our coaches are volunteers, and are primarily, but not always, parents of players.

We are very appreciative of all the hours they invest into the program. If they ask of your help at a practice, at a game or any other way, please **SUPPORT** them!

F. Practices

Practices during the off-season (usually around the first part of January through the first part of March) are optional but are valuable and highly recommended. Practices during softball seasons are mandatory. Winter practices will be held indoors at the “Devils Den”. Depending on rotations with other Blue Devil teams, you may be practicing from 1 to 3 times per week. Once the weather permits and allows us to get outside, we will be practicing at Apache Park/DevilDen or other locations TBD usually 3 to 4 days a week, depending on tournament schedules. Players should be properly outfitted for practices. This consists of softball pants or sweatpants, sports bra, sliders, t-shirt (no tank tops) and the Blue Devil visor. Always bring your glove, bat, cleats, and water jug.

Please note: If you are 5 minutes early to practice, you are 5 minutes late! Arrive early and be ready to practice!

G. Parents Participation – Expectations and Rules

The success of the Cedar Rapids Blue Devils Softball Organization depends on the commitment of everyone in our program. Parents are encouraged to attend practices, games and extracurricular activities. Parents may be called upon by the coaching staff to help with practice drills, score keeping and field preparation. Each team is responsible for maintaining Apache Park and the Devils Den. This includes field maintenance and preparation before practice and cleaning up after practice.

Rules for Parents:

1. The Cedar Rapids Blue Devils organization is staffed 100% by volunteers. Countless hours are put in throughout the year by our staff to teach good fundamental softball skills and prepare the kids for the high school level. Thus, leave the coaching to the coaches, officiating to the umpires, and the positive encouragement and cheering to you.
2. The coaches aren't perfect and will make mistakes. If at any time anyone has any questions, ideas, or concerns, please feel free to talk to any of the coaching staff. Appropriate times for these conversations are times that do not interfere with practices or games. Issues should first be tried to be resolved with the coaching staff. If a solution can is not reached, contact an advisory board member.
3. Parents, relatives and friends attending the games are expected to act respectful towards umpires, opposing teams, coaches, players, and each other at all times. Please allow the players to play, the coaches to coach, and the umpires to officiate. This rule will be strictly enforced.
4. During games and practices, parents (including parent helpers), siblings, and friends are not allowed in the dugout or near the players' bench. This area is reserved for the head coach, the two assistant coaches and the players.
5. It is your responsibility to get your players to practice and games at the time the coaches have requested them to be there.
6. Use of alcohol or tobacco products during practices or games is prohibited.
7. Use of profanity and foul language is prohibited.
8. Keep a positive attitude. Negativity is detrimental to everyone!
9. Use of the Cedar Rapids Girls Fastpitch Softball Association, DBA Cedar Rapids Blue Devils, 501C Tax ID

Number, without written authorization is prohibited. All unauthorized offenders will be reported to the IRS as such.

H. Players – Expectations and Rules

In order for everyone associated with the Blue Devil Organization to have the most positive experience possible, it's necessary for our players to have some rules to follow. The following expectations and rules are for the safety of the girls and overall satisfaction of the players, parents, and coaches.

Rules for Players:

1. Players are not allowed to argue with or disrespect coaches, teammates, parents, or umpires for any reason.
2. Foul language and profanity are not tolerated at any time.
3. Good sportsmanship is a quality that is exemplified by our players. Taunting of your own, as well as opposing players, fans and umpires will not be tolerated.
4. Self-indulgence by players, such as hanging one's head after an error or mental mistake, pouting over personal failure, tossing helmets or bats, will not be tolerated.
5. Care of equipment: Each player is responsible for the care of the equipment issued. An individual's equipment is to be used only at Blue Devil functions-not for leisure use. Undershirts and jerseys are to be always tucked into the pants.
6. Games and practices during the season (roughly mid-March through the end of July) are not optional. All absences require notifying your coach in advance via whichever method (telephone, e-mail, or text) the coach prefers.
7. Field, dugout and equipment should be clean and orderly after each use.
8. No jewelry is to be worn at practices or games. This includes necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. Exposed body piercing is not permitted.
9. Players are to keep a positive attitude by respecting their coaches and encouraging your teammates!!
10. All players must wear a sports bra and a Dri-Fit type undershirt. Enforcement of Rules and Violations: Any parents, players, or families in violation of these rules will be handled in the following manner.

1st offense: A formal written warning will be issued and documented. This may be issued by the coaches or a member of the executive board. 1st offense could also result in suspension as well if the directors see fit.

2nd offense: A suspension from participation in at least one (1) game but no more than two (2) weeks will be issued and documented. The suspension must be reported to and approved by the executive board.

3rd offense: A suspension from participation in the remaining games and practices for the current season (possible expulsion from the Blue Devil organization may bypass the prior consequences based on the severity of the violation) will be issued and documented. The suspension must be reported to and approved by the executive board. Player fees will not be refunded!

I. Dues **REVISED 8/21/2023**

8's \$TBD (6 Tournaments)

9's \$TBD (10-12 Tournaments)

10's \$TBD (10-12 Tournaments)

12's \$TBD (10-12 Tournaments)

13's \$TBD (10-12 Tournaments)

14's \$TBD (10-12 Tournaments)

16's \$TBD (5- Tournaments)

18's \$TBD (5 - Tournaments)

14U and 16U National Teams \$TBD

*****Number of tournaments entered may be affected by weather/cancellations*****

*****Number of tournaments entered may vary depending on tournament selection*****

The Blue Devil organization may offer additional fund-raising activities which are intended to help fund the organization and help offset player dues. The more the player sells, the more they benefit! This fund-raising activity could be voluntary or mandatory.

J. Paperwork

All players need to return the signed paperwork that is located under the parent resource tab on the website. Must be completed prior to participation in any Blue Devil activity.

Player Commitment Form

Publication/Website Consent Form

Player Contact Form

Medical Authorization/Treat Consent Form

Devils Den Release Form. Must also be completed by all parents and anyone else who may enter the Devils Den.

***** New Blue Devils Will Also Need to Turn In:**

Copy of Birth Certificate

Recent picture that the player has signed the back of.

The Blue Devil Picnic will be held in the fall or spring at Fairfax Complex. The Organization will supply the meat, your coach will communicate what dish you will be responsible to bring, along with your own drinks. **WEAR A BLUE T SHIRT FOR A GROUP PICTURE!**

K. General Information and Policies

Changing Teams During the Season: After an athlete has been placed on a team, the Blue Devils reserve the right to move them to a different team at any time during the season to continue to improve the level of play for all considered. This means a player may be added to a team during the season, or that a player may be asked to move to another team to better match the player with the appropriate team. It may happen that a player is moved to another team that may not have the same schedule, we apologize in advance for any inconvenience that may bring.

Playing Time Policy: The Cedar Rapids Blue Devils does not guarantee playing time to any player. However, we do believe players are entitled to know what is affecting their playing time as well as be given instruction on how to increase their playing time.

- 1) Playing time is not guaranteed, is not equal and must be earned.
- 2) Playing time is based on the players performance at practice and in games.
- 3) Your coach will determine who plays and how much. They will consider many factors in coming to that decision, but the decision is theirs.

Coach/Player/Parent Communication (24 Hour Rule): We have a communication plan (minimum 24-hour rule) between coach/player/parent that must be strictly adhered to. Please wait a minimum of 24 hours to contact the coach to address the issue. When issues arise, please do not approach the coach at practice or an event. The order of communication until there is a resolution will be:

- 1) Player contacts the Coach
- 2) Player and Parent meet with Coach
- 3) Player and Parent meet with Coach and Board

Practice Attendance: Practice attendance will factor in determining a player's role on the team. Attendance will be kept by the coach throughout the season. All absences will be considered unexcused with the following exceptions:

- 1) Family Emergency
- 2) Illness / Injury
- 3) School Sport / School Activity Sanctioned: Must be Verified by School Calendar
- 4) College Entrance Exam
- 5) Religious Events

Note: Missing practice for homework and studying (including finals) is not considered an excused absence. **Please contact your coach well in advance when you will be missing practice!**

Multiple unexcused practice absences will result in the following: **3 Strike Rule**

- 1) 1 unexcused = Reduced playing time in 1 game-up to entire game
- 2) 2 unexcused = Hold out 2 game minimum up to 4 game max
- 3) 3 unexcused = Player/parent dismissal from the Blue Devil Organization. 1st and 2nd offenses will be handled at the discretion of the Coach. After 2nd offense – Mandatory meeting with Board member. Each offense will be documented by the Board.

L. Coaches Expectations

1. Teach athletes to play fairly and to respect the rules, officials, other coaches, and volunteers
2. Do your best to provide a safe playing environment for the athletes
3. Coaches shall always, by their actions on and off the field, be a credit to the team and the Cedar Rapids Blue Devils organization.
4. Coaches should put the welfare of their athletes above all else and maintain a professional relationship with them.
5. Develop, train, and teach each player to maximize her ability as an athlete, student and as a moral person, and has a responsibility to help each Blue Devil player develop fundamental softball skills, mental toughness, and emotional control.
6. If you are using a substitute player or players, they shall bat at the bottom of the order and should be the players rotated the most.
7. No new players are allowed to be added or removed from your roster unless you have received approval from the board.