

Esko Fastpitch Tournament Teams Information

What are Softball Tournament Teams?

Esko Fastpitch has offered rec league softball for girls from 8U-16/18U for several years. During that time, teams have occasionally competed in tournaments outside of our Arrowhead league games. While we have encouraged coaches to sign up for tournaments, it is often difficult to find dates that work for all players, and tournament registration is often closed by the time we form teams. As a result, some teams were able to sign up for tournaments, while others did not have that opportunity.

In addition, we have gotten feedback from parents that some girls would like an opportunity for more softball and advanced training. Esko Softball Tournament Teams will fill this void, and provide upfront information on tournament dates and an opportunity for girls to participate in more competitive practices and games.

Tournament Team players will commit to attending additional practices and being available for pre-registered tournaments during the summer season. This is an opportunity to advance beyond rec league softball with a focus on skill development, tactical understanding, and teamwork. Teams will be formed based on evaluations and placement is determined by skill, athleticism, and determination.

What levels will Tournament Teams include?

Esko Fastpitch will offer one Tournament Team at each of the following levels:

- 10U, 12U, and 14U
- If not enough girls register for a given level then there will not be a Tournament Team at that level

How does this impact the current Rec League Teams?

The current Rec League team structure will not change. Tournament Teams are an opportunity in addition to rec softball. All girls will be required to also be part of a rec team which will play the same weekly schedule that families are accustomed to. Rec teams will continue to focus on player development, teamwork, and mostly fun.

Tournament Team registration will be in addition to Rec softball.

Who should try out for Tournament Teams?

Players seeking to challenge themselves beyond rec softball, improve their skills, and compete at a higher level should try out for Tournament Teams. These teams are ideal for athletes committed to regular practices, travel, and tournament play, with a focus on individual development, teamwork, and performance. To ensure we field the strongest teams in the spring, we encourage the most dedicated and skilled players to try out. This is a great opportunity for athletes to advance their abilities, showcase their talents, and contribute to the success of their teams.

Who should not try out for Tournament Teams?

We encourage players and families to consider their commitment to softball prior to committing to a Tournament Team. These teams will have additional practices, higher competition, and tournament attendance expectations. If a player prefers a more relaxed schedule, they should sign up for only a rec team. We feel Tournament Teams are a great opportunity to gain additional softball experience and skills but may not be for everyone.

What should players and parents expect?

- Additional practices and work on advanced skills
- Higher level competition in tournaments across MN and WI
- Playing time and positions based on skill and commitment. Playing time and positions are not equal for Tournament Teams
- Expectation for parents to volunteer at Esko hosted tournaments

How much does it cost for Tournament Teams?

Tournament teams will require additional costs to pay for tournament registrations, gate fees, jerseys, etc. This fee covers the cost of the tournaments and associated expenses. Teams can decide to sign up for additional tournaments later in the season which will be paid for by families.

Esko Fastpitch aims to keep Tournament Team costs below \$300 per player. That number will depend on the number of tournaments a team is signed up for.

What is included in the cost?

- Entry fees for three to five tournaments
- Tournament gate fees
- Softballs
- Tournament Team uniform that includes a jersey, socks, and belt

What tournaments do we need to commit to?

- Tournaments will be posted on the Esko Fastpitch website and vary by level each year

What are Evaluations?

Player evaluations are essential for fairly creating Tournament Teams. We will schedule two days of evaluations (players need to only attend one day) and will have local softball coaches serve as unbiased evaluators. While some Esko coaches may be evaluators, coaches with girls trying out for a given level will not be evaluators at that level. (Example: A coach with a 12U girl may be an evaluator for 10U or 14U but not for 12U.)

All players must participate in one of the evaluation days. This process aims to assess each player to ensure the most competitive teams are formed.

While players are not guaranteed a spot on a team, Esko Fastpitch strives to minimize cuts. If less than 13 players sign up for a given Tournament Team then cuts will not be needed. In addition, remember that all girls will still be rostered on a rec team so everyone will get a chance to play softball.

What is the registration process?

On rec league registration, there will be an option to select that your player is interested in the Tournament Team. After registration, you will receive information regarding evaluation dates. There will be no additional cost during rec registration. Tournament Team registration cost will be collected after evaluations and teams are finalized.

Who do I contact with additional questions?

Please reach out to Tom Besonen (Esko Fastpitch, VP) with additional questions at thomas.besonen@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Esko Fastpitch Association Board