

North Fulton/Forsyth Feeder Fastpitch Softball League
Fall 2011 Program Information for Team Coordinators
<http://www.northfultonfeederfastpitch.com>

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We anticipate 10 teams participating in the Fall 2011 feeder fastpitch league with the possible addition of 2 more teams to bring the total to 12 teams. The returning 2010 committed schools are Alpharetta, Chattahoochee, Johns Creek, Lambert, Milton, Northview, Roswell, and South Forsyth. These programs will be joined by Forsyth Central and West Forsyth from Forsyth County to bring the total to 10 teams. Centennial (Fulton) and Creekview (Cherokee) are contemplating entry into the league but are not confirmed at this time. This document contains general information, a timeline for participating programs, and a checklist of items necessary for the league to begin play.

Timeline

- School specific parent/player meetings: March/April/May
- School specific team tryouts: late July/early August
- Uniform order deadline: July 15
- Home date schedule availability deadline: August 8
- Roster submission deadline: August 15
- Umpire & ASA fee deadline: August 15
- Start of regular season play: no later than August 22
- End of regular season play: October 5
- End of season tournament: October 14-16 (tentative date)

Information Meetings & Tryouts

Each school program should conduct their parent & player informational meetings in March, April, or May prior to the end of the school year. Team managers should be selected prior to these meetings if possible so they may participate in the meetings and provide parents with details on tryouts and team selection. To recruit players, consider advertising with local newspapers, middle and high school web sites, as well as local athletic associations that operate travel and recreational fastpitch programs that serve your area. Each program will schedule and conduct its own tryouts and is

responsible for selecting its team. Each program is also responsible for coordinating with their high school softball coach, the high school booster club, or the appropriate parks & recreation department for approval of their feeder program and for access to fields for practices and games.

Player Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to participate on a feeder fastpitch team representing a particular school, a player must meet the following criteria:

- Must reside within the attendance zone for that school as defined by Fulton or Forsyth County for the school year 2011-12
- Must be a 6th, 7th, or 8th grade middle school student for the 2011-12 school year

A player is eligible if they meet the above criteria even if they plan to attend a private school or they will be home schooled but live in the attendance zone, or the family is participating in an Open Enrollment or other county approved hardship program permitting attendance at a different school. In previous years, the attendance zone requirement has been inconsistently enforced. Teams that did not have sufficient players would then recruit from outside the attendance zone to complete their roster. Often this resulted in teams targeting the most talented travel team players from the surrounding area to complete their roster which provided them with an unfair advantage over the other schools that only selected players zoned for their schools. The purpose of the feeder program is to build teams that consist of players who will be attending the same high school so they can become acquainted with each other and the coaching staff prior to the time they enter high school. The feeder program is not intended to be a travel team league consisting of players zoned for a school but supplemented with players outside the zone to make the team more competitive.

For 2011, teams will be required to submit player rosters prior to the start of play. Player addresses are required on the form and coaches must indicate whether or not a player is zoned for their particular school. A waiver or approval from league coordinator(s) is required for any player from outside the attendance zone and waivers will only be considered if a team does not have sufficient players to field a team. Waivers will not be granted simply to allow a team to recruit a more talented pitcher or any other skill position player. School teams should be represented, to the extent possible, by players that are eligible to attend that school.

Team Rosters

Once a team has completed tryouts and selected its roster, complete the official league roster form and submit the form to the league coordinator(s). *Team rosters must be submitted to the league coordinator by August 15th.* Players may be added or dropped later using the add/drop form but a player may not participate in a game until the player add form has been submitted. Any players added to a team must be zoned for that team's high school. As noted above, only eligible players may be on a team

roster. Any player that fails to meet the attendance zone requirement for her team may be ineligible to play. A request for a waiver must be submitted along with substantiation for why the waiver should be granted.

GHSA Forms

Some schools may require that players complete the GHSA participation and medical release forms prior to competing. If necessary, these forms can be found on the feeder league web site. Note that the medical form must be signed by a physician and therefore may require

Uniforms

In 2010, teams were provided an option to purchase uniforms at a very reasonable cost through the league through an arrangement with S&S Team Sports. This option will again be offered for 2011. The uniform for each team will be in the official school colors and will have the school name screened on the front of the jersey. In addition to a sleeveless uniform jersey, players will receive matching shorts and socks. An option will be offered in 2011 for teams to substitute pants for shorts. An Intensity fastpitch softball pant option will be offered and teams may choose shorts, pants, or both. Only the beltless pant option will be provided so teams do not need to purchase belts.

Uniforms can be ordered through **S&S Team Sports** (Jones Bridge Road, Alpharetta) and Becky Snider is the contact point (770.753.0069). In order to ensure timely arrival of uniforms prior to the start of the season, *all uniform orders must be received by league coordinator(s) by July 15th*. Teams should submit a roster that includes the sizes required by player (jersey and shorts or jersey and pants) as well as the jersey #. Contact Becky at S&S for more information. Teams may choose to purchase their own uniforms from other sources but if a team exercises this option, please inform the league coordinators so we do not hold up other team orders waiting for your team.

ASA Registration and Liability Insurance

Softball Umpires Unlimited (SUU), an umpire association certified to work ASA, GHSA, and NCAA softball games, will be responsible for all games played at NFFL feeder team sites. We have negotiated with them a price per game of \$82 that is consistent with high school JV game fees that avoids a surcharge & travel charge common when only a single game is being worked. SUU insures its umpires through ASA and a condition of its insurance is that teams participating in games called by its crews must also be ASA registered. The league coordinator(s) will handle ASA team registration for each team once your roster is submitted. The ASA team registration fee is \$30 and registration does not have any impact on players that are already individually registered with ASA for travel ball play. Player names are not submitted as part of team registration and as a result, there is no impact to ASA player eligibility with their travel team or club.

Each team must carry liability insurance for their team. This is required for participation and a copy of your liability certificate will most likely be needed by your sponsor (the high school softball program or the booster club). Once teams are ASA registered, we can provide coaches with the login information that allows them to purchase inexpensive team liability insurance through ASA (Bollinger). Optional medical coverage for players is also available at an additional cost. Teams are not required to insure through ASA but this is an inexpensive and convenient option. To insure with ASA, visit the following web site:

www.asabollinger.com

Select Team Insurance , select 2011 Junior Olympic (Youth), select Georgia-Atlanta, and then login to the site using the username and password which can be obtained from the league coordinator. You can then select the policy desired, purchase it online, and download your insurance certificate from the web site.

Schedules (including Cherokee County interleague play)

The exact game scheduling format for the 2011 season has not been determined and will depend ultimately on the number of teams in the league. With the expansion to 10 teams, it is not possible any longer for each team to play a home/home series with every other team since it is not possible to play 18 games in a 7-week period while maintaining our limit of 2 games per week and also accounting for make-up games. If the league expands to 12 teams, the problem is even more acute. It is anticipated that we will move to a sub-region structure splitting the teams into 2 sub-regions based on geography or similar criteria. Teams would play each sub-region opponent in a home/home series and then each opponent in the other sub-region one time either home or away. This reduces the game schedule to a more reasonable 13 or 16 game schedule depending on the final number of teams. We will again have an end of season tournament with a double elimination format. Traditionally, we have combined our end of season tournament with Cherokee County and played at Twin Creeks. We will make a determination later this year as to whether or not the increase in teams in NFFL no longer makes combining the two programs practical for an end of season tournament due to size. For now, the location and format of the end of season tournament has not been determined but there will be a championship tournament in the mid-October time frame.

For purposes of determining standings, each win is worth 1 point and each tie is worth ½ point. Team winning percentages will be computed accordingly and teams will be sorted high to low. Team that finish with the same percentage in the standings will be evaluated based on the following criteria (**note**: every attempt will be made to ensure that all teams have the same number of games but in the event teams do not have the same number of games, winning percentage based on the games played is the primary criteria for determining the standings):

- Head to head competition (if tied, then)
- Games with North Fulton teams only (if tied, then)

- Computation of run differential including all games (if tied, then)
- Coin toss by league coordinator(s)

Changes or modifications to the standings criteria may be needed once the number of teams that will be participating in 2011 is known along with the specific format of the league (dividing into sub-regions).

Scheduling (Field Availability)

Each team will be emailed a copy of an Excel file which contains a number of worksheets including a contact list, team roster template, and a player add/drop form (these forms for 2011 can also be found on the feeder league web site). Additionally, a field time & date availability schedule is provided in the file and this worksheet must be completed on or before August 8th. This worksheet must include a minimum of 14 possible HOME dates that can be used for scheduling games with other NFFL teams. Cherokee interleague games will be played on a Saturday and scheduling for those games will be handled directly with each team (details of Cherokee interleague play for 1 Saturday during the season remains to be worked out). Home game dates should preferably be Tuesdays and Thursdays although Mondays and Wednesdays are acceptable. Regular season games (those counting in the standings) will not be scheduled for Friday, Saturday, or Sunday except for Cherokee interleague games. Start times for all weeknight games must be 7:00pm, 7:15pm, or 7:30pm. Games may not be scheduled to start any earlier than 7:00pm or any later than 7:30pm.

Rules Governing Play

Feeder league games, including the Junior League tournament, will be played by GHSA high school fastpitch rules. Coaches should obtain a copy of the GHSA rules and familiarize themselves with the rules. Games are scheduled for 7-innings but no new inning is permitted to start after 1:20 elapsed time. If 7 innings are completed and the score is tied with time remaining, ITB format is used to determine a winner. If the time limit expires during regular play or during ITB play and the game remains tied, the game will be recorded as a tie in the standings. Run-ahead rules do apply as defined in the rules and may result in early termination of the game. Standard GHSA substitution rules will be used – starters may re-enter once in the same spot in the batting order and substitutes once removed from a game may not re-enter. Teams may also use the DP/FLEX option as described in the GHSA rules which permit a defensive-only player and a designated hitter. Teams will only bat 9 players at a time even if the DP/FLEX option is utilized. **One note:** GHSA and other high school softball associations are permitting players to use steel cleat shoes – these are **NOT PERMITTED** in the feeder league. **Pitching Distance:** although GHSA has moved the high school pitching distance to 43' starting Fall 2010, the feeder league will continue to pitch from 40' so please make appropriate field arrangements with your school. To order an official NFHS (National Federation of High Schools) softball rule book for 2011, visit the following site and select the Publication page. Each rule book is \$6.95 (Georgia GHSA uses the standard NFHS rules with only minor modifications):

www.nfhs.org (see Publications/Ordering web page for Softball 2011 rule book)

The championship tournament at the end of the season is played according to strict GHSA rules meaning only 9 players may bat and substitution is governed strictly by the GHSA rules. Time limits are however utilized in the tournament to help maintain the schedule. If a game is tied at the end of the time limit (or at the end of 7 innings), the game moves to the ITB format until a winner is determined. A starting player may leave the game and re-enter once but must return to the same spot in the batting order. A substitute (non-starter) may enter the game but once removed, they are ineligible to play again in that game.

League Cost

There are no "league fees" to participate in the feeder league. There are however costs associated with feeder league participation for which each school will be responsible. The league coordinator(s) will schedule umpires for all games with our umpire association but each school is responsible for their fees. The umpire fee on a per game basis is \$82 and once the number of participating teams and schedule format is determined, each team can easily compute their season umpire cost. If a team is selected to host a Cherokee interleague Saturday game, each additional game is \$82 payable to SUU either in advance or at the time of the game (if scheduled early enough, this may be paid through the league scheduler). Once the schedule format is known, umpires will be coordinated and cost information will be made available to the coaches.

There will be an end of season championship tournament but the specific format is not known at this time. It will likely be a double elimination format tournament with the number of participating teams ranging from 10 to 18. The end of season tournament fee will be based on the number of teams entering so that we may adequately cover umpire costs and trophies for the top 2 finishers. Teams are directly responsible for fees in any other tournaments in which a team chooses to participate. This includes the Milton pre-season tournament or the Milton Invitational tournament typically held at North Park in September in conjunction with their HS and JV tournaments.

Aside from umpire costs, teams are responsible for uniform, ASA registration, liability insurance, game balls and any miscellaneous costs (**note**: the home team is responsible for providing game balls which should be NFHS stamped/approved softballs). The league coordinator will handle ASA registration for all teams and instructions will be provided to teams for making their \$30 payment. If uniforms are ordered by the league coordinator for a team, payment should be made to the league coordinator who in turn pays the supplier. Liability insurance and any miscellaneous costs such as trophies, booster club fees for field rental, softballs, field equipment, additional tournaments entered, etc. will be the direct responsibility of each team.