



# *Alpharetta Youth Softball Association*

*www.AlpharettaSoftball.com*

North Park  
13450 Cogburn Road  
Alpharetta, Georgia 30004

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July 21, 2009

AYSA Parents, Families and Players,

As many of you have heard, the AYSA Board is planning the transition to fast pitch for the park beginning in the Spring of 2010. I would like to take several minutes of your time and explain what is being considered and why.

First and foremost - **the program will remain recreational**. This is not a move to become more competitive in the program. We will continue to stress to the coaches and the families that this is for the girl's enjoyment and development. Learning to win and loose is a key component of their development, and winning at the expense of player development will not be tolerated. We will continue to offer Travel teams and select/all star teams for those girls with the requisite skill and desire for a higher level of skill and competition. The base of OUR program however, will continue to be recreational.

Why are we considering this? The trend nationally and regionally is towards the fast pitch game for girls youth sports. There are only a handful of parks in the Metro area that still offer slow pitch and very few more nationally. Less than ten Georgia high schools field a slow pitch team, and they have lost the sanctioning from the state athletics board. Most recently, the Powder Springs program transitioned to fast pitch only (2008). Our own program has been changing towards fast pitch on its own accord as we register our daughters. AYSA data shows that since the 2006 fall season, registrations for Interpark (IP) fast pitch has increased 35% and "slowpitch" has decreased 10%. We want to stay current with the game as it is being played these days!

The Board is actively managing the program migration versus reacting to it as everyone registers their daughter to play. If the Board does nothing, we still expect that we would be a predominately "fast pitch park" within about 3-4 years as the families continue to move their registrations to fast pitch. The Board has been aware of the trends and has considered this change for several years.

Our program mix has reached a point where it is conducive to implement the transition. Our goal is to lead this change, accelerate it with a well managed plan that is player development friendly and such that no player is left behind or feels they do not have a place to play. We will continue to have slow pitch for the older age groups to facilitate the aging out of girls that have not elected to move to fast pitch (demand dependent). The end-point of the transition is that the AYSA softball program will be in-line with the majority of other girl's softball programs in the nation.

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The migration plan for the program is still developmental and is not set in stone. Below is a “straw dog” league design that we are communicating to the families for a planned Spring 2010 implementation.

<b>AYSA Program Offerings (DRAFT)</b>						
<b>Program</b>	<b>Spring 2009</b>	<b>Spring 2010</b>	<b>Fall 2010</b>	<b>Spring 2011</b>	<b>Fall 2011</b>	<b>Spring 2012</b>
Recreational Softball	4-6	4-6		4-6		4-6
	7-8	7-8	6-8	7-8	6-8	7-8
		9-10	9-10	9-10	9-10	9-10
Recreational Fast Pitch Softball		11-12	11-12	11-12	11-12	11-12
		13-14	15U	13-14	15U	13-14
		18U		18U		18U
Recreational Slow Pitch Softball	9-10	13-18	13-15	13-18	13-15?	13-18?
Advanced Recreational Fast Pitch Softball	9-10					
	11-12	*	*	*	*	*
	13-14					
	15-18					

\* This offering will be a combination of all-stars/select and IP type teams, and will be a limited performance based opportunity at an additional cost, and will vary spring to fall.

In order to communicate the transition concepts, answer questions and provide families the opportunity to contribute to the transition path, we will hold ‘town hall’ meetings at the Field #5 Pavilion (behind the play ground):

- Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm
- Wednesday, Aug 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm
- Wednesday, Aug 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm

We understand that there is concern relative to the unknown for those who do not have experience with fast pitch. I will admit our family was once there. As my younger daughter made the transition when she was 10, we had concerns about the differences in the game and whether or not she could she be successful and enjoy her time on the field. We have never regretted our decision, as she has truly enjoyed the game and in the last few years has begun to excel.

I would like to point out a few of the differences between slow and fast pitch by age group. (Note that we, as a league, can/will manage our local recreational rules as needed.)

Change to 4-6

- No expected changes

#### Changes to 7/8

- Run rules - from 5 per inning/12 open inning to 3 per inning/8 open inning

#### Changes to 9/10

- Run rules – from 7 per inning/12 open inning to 3 per inning/8 open inning
- Pitching motion – from “underhand” (generally 25-33 MPH) to “windmill” (generally 28-38 MPH)
- Pitching distance – from 40 feet to 35 feet
- Bunting
- Stealing - 1 base (no advancing on overthrows), no stealing home

#### Changes to 11/12 and older groups

- Run rules – from 7 per inning/12 open inning to 3 per inning/8 open inning
- Pitching motion – from “underhand” to “windmill” (generally 35-45 MPH)
- Pitching distance – from 46 feet to 40 feet
- Bunting
- Stealing (TBD) – stealing home, dropped third strike, advancing on overthrows
- Ball size – from 11” to 12”

NOTE: ASA (Amateur Softball Association of America) has implemented stealing in slow pitch and is considering changing to the 12” ball size for the older age groups.

As you can see there are minimal changes to the ages 4/6 and 7/8, the transition starts at 9/10 where there will be additional skills to learn. Our biggest challenge is managing the transition for the girls 10 years old and older. As stated previously, we are looking at options to transition these girls so that every current player has an appropriate place to succeed. The best way to look at this migration is - the players will be the same, the coaches will be the same, and the parents will be the same – the difference will be some rule changes and some additional learning that will be required by everyone. We will also be posting some documents on the website that give additional information.

Part of our transition plan is the additional training we have implemented this spring. We conducted coaches training sessions, combine practices stressing skill fundamentals and demonstrating practice planning, and the Sunday clinics. We are planning a similar type of regimen for this fall and the spring.

Again, our mission for this transition is to remain a recreational program with “no player left behind”!

We look forward to answering any questions and discussing the plan with everyone during the town hall meetings!

Kurtis Brown  
AYSA Commissioner