

Hello Head Coaches.

Thank you very much for volunteering to be a Head Coach in our **2024 Rec Softball** program with JC Parks. I'm happy to welcome you to our upcoming season.

If we haven't already met, please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Steve Schellman. I am the Program Manager of Youth Sports for JC Parks. I look forward to working with you.

I also want to thank you for coaching and volunteering your time to mentor young kids. That is a very noble gesture. Personally, I've coached too for many years and have found it to be very rewarding and a great way to make a difference in our community.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with quality information so you are well-informed and well-prepared as a coach.

I have broken it down into the various topics below:

League Website Information:

I usually send out this letter after you have already registered to coach, so I assume you have already received all the info. you need from our league website (linked above). If not, please refer back to it or let me know if you have questions.

Team Rosters:

I will form teams by schools and reciprocal buddy requests. We prefer rosters to be between 10-12 players.

Coaches Registration:

If you haven't already, you must complete the Coach's Registration by going to [this link](#). You'll need to create an account with TeamSideline, our software vendor, if you don't have one already.

Background Check:

We require all head coaches and assistant coaches to submit their information for an online criminal background check through the Background Investigation Bureau (BIB). Please share the link above with all your coaches and make sure they complete the background check. Once you are on their site, just click "Volunteer Now" to get started. Once you submit your info., it should only take about 1-2 days to be approved. If you have already submitted a background check with us recently, it will detect a duplicate email address or social security number and not allow it. This means you already have an active background check on file and are exempt.

Team Sites:

Once you have passed the background check, and all teams are formed, I will publish your online team site through TeamSideline so you can see the players on your roster, the parents, and their contact information. You and all of your team's parents will receive an automatic email with a link to your team site from TeamSideline.

Communications:

Once team sites are published, please contact all of your team parents by phone ASAP to introduce yourself, let them know they are on your team, inform them of any possible upcoming practices, verify their contact information, etc. There are also many free apps available for team communication like GroupMe, Team Snap, Remind, etc.

Parent Meeting:

Please also set up a quick Parent Meeting at the beginning of your first practice so they can meet you and so you can go over your expectations, goals, etc.

Sample Goals:

- Have fun
- Get better
- Use good sportsmanship

Coaches Meeting & Equipment Check-Out:

All Head Coaches must attend the pre-season coaches meeting & equipment check-out on **Wed. March 13 at 5:30 PM at The Linc (1299 Lafayette St.) in the President's Suite (2nd Floor, East side)**. If the Head Coach cannot attend, please send an Assistant Coach. Due to space limits, only 1 coach per team can attend. We will discuss many important topics and hand out team equipment so your attendance is required and appreciated. The meeting should last about 1 hour, followed by about a 30-minute equipment check-out.

Team Equipment:

JC Parks will supply each team with team equipment including a set of catcher's gear, practice balls and about 6 helmets. Players are free to wear their own helmets or use their own gear too. We require a \$150 deposit to check out team equipment. You must provide a credit card number, expiration date, and 3-digit security code from the card or a check for \$150. The card will not be charged and the check will not be cashed unless the equipment is not returned or is badly damaged beyond normal wear and tear. Please make checks payable to "JC Parks."

Individual Equipment/Gear:

We do not provide shorts, pants, belts, fielder's gloves, cleats/spikes, etc.

Game Balls:

JC Parks will supply all game balls at no cost to teams. Each team is responsible for retrieving game balls on their side of the field and making sure they get back to the umpires.

Jewelry:

For player safety, jewelry, such as ear rings, necklaces, bracelets, etc. are not allowed while playing.

Team Jerseys & Visors:

Each player and coach will receive a jersey and visor. I will notify you when they arrive, usually about 1-2 weeks before the season starts, so you can come pick them up at The Linc and distribute them to your teams. The jersey sizes come from the online registration. The visors are adjustable.

Indemnification Form:

Each parent on your team must fill out an Indemnification Form (linked above) and return it to you. This form includes important information like indemnification, treatment authorization, emergency contact information, and medical conditions. Please distribute, collect and keep these forms until the season is over. You do not need to submit these forms to me.

Certification Course:

We certify all of our Head Coaches through online courses from the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS). If you are a new coach to our programs, you will need to take the following 3 courses:

Coaching Youth Sports Intro. (1 hour)

Basic Youth Sports Safety & First Aid (50 minutes)

Coaching Youth Softball (1 hour).

These courses are free. They can be done online at your leisure, but please allow several hours to complete the courses. I will send you an automatic email through NAYS with a link to the course(s) at some point.

After completion of the Coach Training, coaches become full members of NAYS. As members, coaches receive \$1,000,000 excess liability insurance coverage in case he/she becomes liable for an occurrence while coaching. Coaches also gain access to a members-only section of the NAYS website, with coaching resources and additional training opportunities. These include a Resource Library, Coach Rating System, Skills and Drills section, and a Coaching Forum. Coaches have the ability to complete several additional trainings at no cost as well.

If you have taken the general course, but not the softball course, I will add that for you. If your membership has expired, I will renew it for you. If you are certified through another organization please email me your membership card for verification purposes.

Assistant Coaches:

Assistant Coaches must complete the coach's registration and background check. They will receive a team jersey and visor. They do not need to take the certification courses.

Practices:

Here are our policies and procedures for any of our rec teams who would like to use our game fields for pre-season practices as a thank you for being in our league.

- You can reserve our [Ball Fields](#) for FREE, as long as they are available.
 - Please check the website linked above for details on each field.
 - We are offering practices at Binder (5 fields), Optimist (3 fields), Washington Park (3 fields)
 - We are not offering practices at 63 Diamonds (4 fields), Vivion Field (in Washington Park) & at North Jeff (2 Tee-Ball/Coach-Pitch fields).
- Practices will be pre-season only, from **March 18-May 5**. First games are on **May 6**.
- Limit of one 90-minute practice per team, per week, to help accommodate the demand.
- Time slots on weeknights are 5:30-7:00 PM and 7:00-8:30 PM. We will only offer the 7:00-8:30 PM time slot at Binder since we are able to set the lights to turn on and off automatically by remote at that complex.
- Timeslots on the weekend are also 90-minutes each from 8:30 AM-7:00 PM.
- Beginning, **March 4**, you may call me directly at 573-634-6493 from Mon-Fri, 8 AM-3:30 PM to make a practice reservation. We allow our rec teams the opportunity to reserve practices a couple days before our competitive teams, since they typically have less resources.
- All practice reservations must be made by the Head Coach.
- Bathrooms will be unlocked and available, if possible.
- Bases and portable pitching mounds will not be provided.
- We will try to drag the infields as often as possible. Baselines/batter's boxes will not be provided.
- The fields will be unlocked so you do not need to check out a key.
- In case of rain, cancellations are up to the Head Coach. We will not make this decision or notify you. If the infield is too wet you can still use the outfield grass if possible. Please use good judgement. If in doubt, please cancel. You can be held liable for any damages to the field.
- Of course, you are free to schedule practices at other fields that you may have access to (school, church, other cities/towns, etc.) that are not owned by JC Parks.
- You can also practice at the North Jeff Practice Fields #1-10 at any time without a reservation. These are strictly practice fields, not game fields. They are maintained, but at a lower priority.

Game Schedules:

Game schedules will be released as soon as possible after the final registration deadline at teamsideline.com/jeffersoncity. This usually takes at least 2-4 weeks.

Cancellations:

In case of inclement weather, please [sign up](#) to receive text alerts from JC Parks via TeamSideline. An email will also be sent to coaches & parents. I will also post all cancellations at: jcparks.com/cancellations. We usually decide on cancellations at about 3:00 PM. Please do not contact us regarding this. It only slows down the process. I will notify everyone as soon as possible.

League Rules:

Complete league rules are linked above & on the league website. Please take the time to become very familiar with the league rules for your age division.

Playing Time:

Equal playing time is required in this league. I've found that it works well to plan this out and write/type it out before the game begins.

Score/Standings & Awards:

Score and standings are kept for all age divisions at teamsideline.com/jeffersoncity along with the game schedules. All players will receive an award (i.e. medal) at the end of the season. We will notify you when the awards come in so you can pick them up at the front desk of The Linc and give them to your players.

Facility Supervisors:

A Facility Supervisor will be on-site at each complex during league games. The Facility Supervisors wear bright-colored shirts with the JC Parks logo so you can spot them easily. If you need any assistance, please ask them. Please report all emergencies, accidents, incidents, etc. to them ASAP.

Scorekeepers/Scorecards:

We need one volunteer between the two teams to run the scoreboard. The Facility Supervisor will hand out the wireless remotes to run the scoreboard. Each team is also responsible for supplying one volunteer for each game to keep a scorebook (paper or online). Umpires will confer with both teams often to make sure the score is accurate. The umpires will also keep score each half inning on a scorecard. At the end of each game, a coach from each team will need to verify the accuracy of the scorecard and sign it.

Sportsmanship:

Everyone must always use good sportsmanship and conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. This includes all coaches, players, parents, and fans. Head Coaches are responsible for the behavior of everyone associated with their team. We have a zero-tolerance policy and will not tolerate poor sportsmanship from anyone. Consequences will include ejections, suspensions, removal from the league and any means necessary to ensure the kids have a safe, fun, and enjoyable youth sports experience.

Please also respect your opponent and do not run up the score. Please sub different kids in at various defensive positions to help keep the score more competitive when needed.

Umpires:

We have a great team of hard-working and dedicated umpires. But we are facing a nationwide, statewide, and local umpire shortage. At JC Parks, we usually have about 50 umpires on our staff, but most of them are understandably not willing or available to work every night due to various other commitments and important reasons. On some nights we will have as many as 16 fields going which requires 32 umpires at two per field. We will do absolutely everything possible to provide two trained and experienced umpires for each game, but unfortunately sometimes that is just not possible. In that case, we try to make sure the older age groups have 2 umpires and then work our way down to the younger ages. So, at times, particularly the younger age groups, may only have one umpire. I apologize for not being able to provide a 2-person crew for every game, every night, but please know that we are doing absolutely everything we can to attract, hire, train, and retain umpires.

Personally, these circumstances have taught me to further support and appreciate our umpires. Unfortunately, we had to reschedule a few games last year due to lack of umpires. A high school in Missouri recently had to cancel some of their baseball games because they could not find umpires. So again, this is not an issue unique to JC Parks. Umpiring is often a tough and thankless job, but our team is dedicated, loyal, and hard-working. They will do the absolute best they can, even if they have to work alone, and I sincerely appreciate all of them. I also expect everyone to be considerate and respectful in all interactions with the umpires.

By the way, if you, or anyone you know would like to join our outstanding team of umpires, please visit our [Sports Officials website](#) to learn more. We are always hiring officials for all sports and it is a great way to have fun, help kids, and earn extra money.

Pre-Game Meeting:

15 minutes before the start of each game (especially the first game of the night) the umpires and the Head Coach from each team will meet at home plate for a Pre-Game Meeting. The designations for home and away teams are listed on the games schedule so no coin flip is needed. During this meeting, the umpires will explain the ground rules for the field and answer any questions coaches may have regarding the league rules. The Home Plate umpire will then let both Head Coaches know:

1. Any poor sportsmanship by anyone associated with their team will not be tolerated.
2. Head Coaches are responsible for anyone associated with their team and will be held accountable for it.
3. All interactions with the umpire need to come exclusively through the Head Coach.
4. Any calls made by the umpire, especially balls & strikes, will not be argued by anyone.
5. Consider this conversation a warning. Any violation of these rules will result in an immediate ejection from the game and suspension from the league.
6. Compliance with these rules will help ensure the kids have a safe, fun, and enjoyable youth sports experience.

At the conclusion of the Pre-Game Meeting, the official game start time will be announced by the umpires followed soon by the first pitch.

Survey:

At the end of each season, we will email a brief (3-5 minutes, 7-8 questions) online survey to all coaches and parents. Please take just a few minutes to offer us constructive feedback so we can continue to improve all aspect of our operations and service.

Questions:

I hope this information has been helpful and has answered all of your questions. Please let me know if you have additional questions or need assistance at any time.

Thanks:

Thanks again for coaching and thank you for your time and efforts as we all work together to provide a safe, fun, and enjoyable youth sport experience for the kids in our community.

Sincerely,

Steve Schellman
JC Parks
Program Manager of Youth Sports
Certified Youth Sports Administrator (CYSA)
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