

CAROLINA CYCLONES SOFTBALL PLAYER/PARENT HANDBOOK



“IT’S NOT JUST SOFTBALL, IT’S A MOVEMENT!”



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CAROLINA CYCLONES FASTPITCH SOFTBALL CONTACTS

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CAROLINA CYCLONES SOFTBALL COACHING PHILOSOPHY

It is the goal of the Carolina Cyclones softball coaching staff is to develop **STUDENT ATHLETES** of character and integrity who will serve as positive members of the organization and the greater community. We strived to provide each athlete the opportunity to experience success in a variety of situations, both individual and as a team; on and off the field of play. As a program, our goal is to create an environment where student athletes are able to grow as leaders, competitors and teammates. Our athletes will be challenged to reach their full potential, encouraged to develop emotional maturity, and will have the opportunity to learn how to deal with success and failure. Not only will players learn the physical skills of softball, they can learn other life-long skills such as: self-confidence, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting, teamwork, cooperation, sportsmanship, and leadership.

Our coaching staff believes that players are young ladies and daughters first, students second, and athletes third. We recognize and support obligations to family, school, and softball. Players will learn about commitment and balancing many obligations.

Decisions made by the Carolina Cyclones Softball coaching staff will be based on what is good for the softball program, what is good for the team, and what is good for the individual. Our coaches will strive to win, however, winning is defined in many ways as a result of goal-setting and thus, our top priority will always focus on building young ladies of strong character through our softball program.

CAROLINA CYCLONES SOFTBALL – PROGRAM GOALS

- To Reach Our Full Potential As Athletes and Contributing Members of Society
- To Leave Carolina Cyclones Softball A Better Program Than Before
- To Represent Carolina Cyclones Softball With Class
- To Understand My Responsibility As A Member Of An Elite Softball Program
- To Be Accountable For My Actions And Maintain The Highest Standards
- To Challenge Myself And Teammates To Excellence
- To Put Forth Honest Effort In Order To Meet Team And Individual Goals
- To Look Back On The Season With No Regrets
- To Compete At The Top Level In The State

CAROLINA CYCLONES SOFTBALL – PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Four Terms That We Believe Should Define All Members Of The Carolina Cyclones Fastpitch Softball Program:

COMMITMENT

- Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to become your very best?

INTEGRITY

- Are you willing to do the right thing, even when no one is watching?
- Can your teammates trust what you say?
- Do what you say, and say what you mean!

PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP

- Are you proud of your softball team, the program, and efforts?

LOYALTY

- Do you support your teammates, your coaches, and the program?

RULE OF THUMB

1. Is it best for the Organization?

2. Is it best for the team?

3. Is it best for me?

In this order!

EXPECTATIONS OF CAROLINA CYCLONES SOFTBALL PLAYERS

As we build a program it must be done from the ground up. The ideas and philosophies that serve as a foundation are extremely important. Players in this program are expected to know and buy-in to these ideas. These four core beliefs serve as the ground work for you to develop as an individual and as a team.

“THE FOUR CORE” Beliefs

1. **TEAM** Comes First
2. Play and Live With **DISCIPLINE**
3. Choose Your **ATTITUDE**
4. Maximize Your **EFFORT**

1. **“TEAM Comes First”** is the number one philosophy in our program. The team is greater than the individual and will always take precedence. If a young lady learns to commit to the greater team and unselfishly puts her personal interests second, she has learned a valuable lesson in life as it relates to career and family situations. We will commit to teaching that every personal decision affects the team and consequences for personal actions also come with consequences for the team.

2. Playing softball requires tremendous personal **DISCIPLINE**. It is necessary in order to play error free defense and in order to be a smart offensive player. We will strive to build discipline in every individual player as well as the team. We will focus on it and demand it each and every day, in every way possible, knowing that if players learn discipline in the sport of softball it will lead to discipline in the realities of life.

3. We believe that **ATTITUDE** is the key to success. Each of us receives the gift and the ability to choose what our attitude will be each and every day, and in each and every situation. We will strive to teach proper and positive attitudes and will demand it from each person associated with our program. It is impossible to control many things in the game of softball and in life – the one thing you can always control is your attitude.

4. Our goal will never simply be to “win” on the scoreboard. Our goal will always be to play hard, play with discipline, and have fun while giving our very best **EFFORT** possible. If this is achieved (combined with the three qualities above) winning will be the natural result. If our very best effort does not result in a win, then we can still hold our heads high, feel good about our effort, and give credit to our opponent. Again, we cannot control many things in the game and in our lives, but we can control and give our best effort. We will expect and demand the best from our athletes not only on the diamond, but in the classroom, and in life.

BEHAVIOR + CAPABILITY = PERFORMANCE

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Parents of athletes in the Carolina Cyclones Softball Program are expected to adhere to the following expectations:

- THE HARSH REALITY. Kids do better when mom and/or dad aren't hovering.
- Be aware of your daughter's needs, feelings, and concerns. Most young ladies perform better when they don't have a parent critiquing them. Be positive, and their biggest fan.
- Attend as many games as possible so you get a full and complete picture of the program.
- Understand the objectivity of each situation. The point of view from: your daughter, other athletes, parents, coaches, and yourself.
- **Support the "team first, individual second" philosophy.**
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship at all games and practices.
- Allow your daughter to participate on the team in her own way; don't re-live your childhood, career, successes, or shortfalls through her.
- Show positive support and encouragement for your daughter, for all members of the team, and for the Carolina Cyclones Softball Program.
- Let 24 hours elapse before initiating communication with the 3-step process below. Do not try to resolve a conflict with a coach before or directly after a game – that will likely create more conflict. Allow time for emotion to dissipate so that all parties can communicate objectively. Encourage your daughter to begin the 3-step communication process below:

1. Athlete meets with individual coach and/or head coach.*
2. Athlete and parent meet with individual coach and head coach.
3. Athlete, parent, and head coach meet with activity director.

*Athletes under the age of 12 may skip to Step 2 in the communication process.

Most of the time a conflict will be solved after Step 1.

Things parents may not ask about:

- Playing time
- Game strategies
- Other players on the team

Things parents may want to ask about:

- Does my child work hard and have a positive attitude?
- How would you evaluate my child in terms of her offensive, defensive and/or team skills?
- In what area(s) does my child need to improve?
- Is my child a positive addition to the team?
- What can I do to help?

In order to run a classy and successful program, we all need to be supportive and respectful of each other!

CAROLINA CYCLONES SOFTBALL TEAM RULES

It is a privilege to be a part of the Carolina Cyclones Fastpitch Softball Program and your Softball Team. Because of that privilege, our players must strive to be the kind of quality young ladies that we are trying to teach them to become. In order to participate in games a player must be in good standing academically, have no disciplinary infractions at their school or on the team, and must have met all team practice expectations during the week. The Carolina Cyclones Fastpitch Softball Organization rules are team rules. We will not deviate from any organizational rule. We will be 100% supportive of all administrative decisions.

- **Attendance:** Every effort shall be made to attend all practices, and be on time. That means, “dressed and ready to go” by the start of each practice. Pitchers and catchers will be required to show up 30 minutes early to get in some additional work! However, we realize things come up so if you are running late please call the coaching staff. Parents shall be solely responsible for ensuring that the player is transported to and from all practices, games, tournaments and related activities. The Carolina Cyclones organization and coaching staff assume no responsibility or liability for, or in connection with, the player's transportation to practices, games, tournaments, and/or activities. While in attendance of all events and as a member of the Carolina Cyclones, you are expected to run on and off the softball field and give to maximum effort at all times. ***NO EXCEPTIONS***
- **Absences:** Players may not miss practice without a legitimate excuse. If a player must miss a practice, the parent must communicate that to the Head Coach. When the season starts, if a player misses a practice, she should not “expect” to start the following game, though, she may. This is not meant to punish players who must miss a practice. It is meant to encourage and reward players who are there. The more a player is absent from practices, the less the chance that she will be playing in games or remaining on the team. In the event that a player misses practice or game or has to leave early from either, it is the responsibility of the player to call and get any updated information for upcoming events. Contact information for each member of the coaching staff is located on the third page of this handbook. ***Please do not leave word with anyone else.*** The possible practice tardiness and absence consequences are described below. The ultimate decision is left up to the coaches’ discretion.

If a player is late to practice without a legitimate excuse:

- 1st violation – additional conditioning at the end of practice
- 2nd violation – suspension from participation in the next game plus additional conditioning
- 3rd violation – possible dismissal from the team

If a player misses practice without a legitimate excuse:

- 1st violation – suspension from the next game plus additional conditioning
- 2nd violation – suspension from the next two games plus additional conditioning
- 3rd violation – dismissal from the team

When in doubt, please call a Coach!

Carolina Cyclones Softball Player/Parent Handbook

- **Conduct:** The Carolina Cyclones will be a first class organization that prides itself on a strong reputation for good sportsmanship and professionalism both on and off the field. Good sportsmanship and professional behavior is expected at all times, and in all circumstances by both the player and parents. There should be no conversation with umpires, coaches, players, or parents regarding a call or a play. We **will not** tolerate players that throw bats, helmets, or show disruptive behavior on the field or in the dugout. Parents and players both acknowledge and agree that when participating in activities organized by the coaching staff, their actions reflect on the reputation of the Carolina Cyclones Organization as a whole. Carolina Cyclones reserve the right to dismiss any player who breaches good sportsmanship or ethics, or who engages in any activity with the Carolina Cyclones where its sole and absolute discretion determines it to be contrary to the best interest of the Organization. Issues in this category include, but not limited to; yelling at coaches, players, umpires, parents, and others; cussing or swearing; refusing to honor an authority figure's request; throwing equipment; getting in trouble with teachers/staff in school; not maintaining a 2.0 GPA or higher; fighting; ejection from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct, etc.
- **Any Offense:** Coaches' discretion and could result in some/all of the following PLUS an individual conference:
 - **Extra Physical Conditioning**
 - **Immediate Benching**
 - **Dismissal From Practice**
 - **Sit Out Next Game(s)**
 - **Recommended to Board for Dismissal From Team**
- **Uniforms:** Players shall wear uniforms (pants and shirt) to all practices unless other directed by the coach. Players should **ARRIVE** in the correct uniform for all games and practices. It should be clean and in good shape. Before warm ups start, all shirts are to be tucked in and remain tucked in for the entire game or practice! All jewelry is to be taken off before the game or practice begins.
- **Dugout:** Coaches and Players in dugout **ONLY**. Parents are encouraged to support their children. However, during practices & games they should refrain from approaching the dugout to coach, counsel, or to critique their daughter. **Absolutely NO** boyfriends or girlfriends in or near dugouts or on field during practice or games. Players should not leave dugout during games unless it is to use the restroom. Players should have everything they need with them inside the dugout (sunscreen, medications, water, Gatorade, snacks, etc.) prior to practice or game. **CELL PHONES are NOT allowed to be used during team meetings, warm-ups, games, practices, or anytime while in the dugout. They are required to remain stored in your bag during these events.**
- **Academics:** All team members must be in good academic standing, carrying a minimum of a "C" average (2.0 GPA), passing all subjects in order to be eligible to play on the team. However, if a parent has a higher standard, we will honor their requirements. Any player who earns a D or an F during the season will be required to study before or after school until the grade is improved to a C or better. The coaching staff will inquire with the parents about grades.
- **Guest Playing/Players:** Guest playing will not be allowed for any member of the Carolina Cyclones. Teams use guest playing to recruit players which creates a divisiveness amongst teams and players. If you are unhappy with the team or organization and want to seek other teams, please see the head coach to discuss opportunities. .

Carolina Cyclones Softball Player/Parent Handbook

- **Friends/Parents:** Friends or Parents are encouraged to attend practices and games alike. However, they should not attend practice “if” it is a distraction to “any” player. Players should always remember that practice/game time is not designated as time to visit with friends or family outside the field of play. If necessary, coaches may hold closed practices. Parents, please refrain from coaching daughters on the sidelines! Please be courteous to the Coaching staff & allow coaches to coach. Trust plays a big part in allowing the Coaches use their experiences and education to make your daughter an elite softball player. Parents are encouraged to work with their daughters, but not during game time or practices. That includes comments or instruction when up to bat and especially after errors. Outbursts and/or disruptive behavior from the parents, fans and/or players will not be tolerated in this organization - such actions will result in removal from team and organization. **During game time, parents: be your daughter's Mom & Dad.....be her biggest fan!**
- **Injuries/Insurance:** In the event of an injury, if possible, the player should still attend practice. Much can be learned from helping coaches & listening to practice. If you are injured or become ill during a game or practice, it is your responsibility to your team to report it to a coach immediately. Parents shall maintain medical, health, dental and accident insurance for the benefit of the player. Parents understand that any insurance that might be procured by Carolina Cyclones will be secondary. Such insurance (if procured) will only provide benefits to the player once the limits of coverage of the insurance procured by the parent have been exhausted. Player/parent agree to immediately notify the Carolina Cyclones Organization of any claim that the player was injured while participating in the Carolina Cyclones Travel Softball Team.
- **Addressing Concerns/Problems:** We encourage an open relationship between coaches, players & parents & keeping all lines of communication open. Parents should call the manager or coach to set up an appropriate time to address questions or concerns. For your sake and for the sake of the players **DO NOT** bring up concerns during or after a game nor in the middle of a practice. It is easy to exhibit good sportsmanship when things are going our way. How do we conduct ourselves when things are not going our way? For this reason, we respectfully request for all parents to abide by the **“24 hour rule”**. If you see something you disagree with, please wait 24 hours before approaching a coach. This gives time for emotional thinking to subside. It is vital for all personnel to remain objective when addressing any issues.
- **Financial Obligation/Team Fees:** It is important to be reminded of your financial obligation and ensure that every effort be made to pay your fees on time. In order to keep Carolina Cyclones Fastpitch operating (reserve spots in tournaments, order uniforms, equipment, and provide field use, facility use, and schedule clinics), it is absolutely essential that all fees be paid timely. If player fees are behind, the player’s participation with the team/organization may be affected. If you cannot meet this financial responsibility, or have questions, please contact your coach ASAP. During the season, there will be fundraising activities that require participation in order to help with player fees.
- **Travel:** During any part of the season, there may be extensive travel. Please be advised that these travel days are not vacations! A lot of money has been spent to enable us to go to a tournament. **As a team, we are going to tournaments with a purpose – that is to play softball!** It is the responsibility of the players to adhere to all curfews (if implemented by your Head Coach). Any exceptions to this must be approved in advance by the coaching staff.

Carolina Cyclones Softball Player/Parent Handbook

The Carolina Cyclones team guidelines are intended to help make our softball team run as smoothly as possible. We understand that problems and concerns will come up throughout the year, however it is our hope that these guidelines will help to eliminate some of those issues and provide the proper foundation for our teams to be successful. Remember that we are all working toward a common goal of making our young ladies better individuals both on and off the field.

“Know Your Team Rules In Addition To the Consequences for Breaking Those Rules”

- **Release of Liability:** With the signing of this contract, parents and player hereby release the Carolina Cyclones Organization, coaching staffs, and other players from, and against any, claims, injuries, and/or damages which the player and /or parent may suffer during or as a result of the player's participation in the Carolina Cyclones Travel Softball Program, including, but not limited to; travel to and from practices, games, tournaments, and/or related activities. Parents shall indemnify the Carolina Cyclones Organization, coaching staffs, and other players from, and hold them harmless, against any and all losses, liabilities, claims, damages, costs and expenses, including; legal fees and court costs of, or in connection with, the player's participation in the Carolina Cyclones Travel Softball Team, and/or the player's performances within the terms of this agreement.

With our signatures, we have executed this agreement and release of all claims freely and without restraint or reservation of any kind or nature. We have read, fully understand, and agree to abide by each and every item and condition set forth within this player/parent handbook.

I understand the responsibilities and will uphold all of the standards that is expected of me as a Carolina Cyclone

Player's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I understand the responsibilities and will uphold all of the standards that is expected of me as a Parent of a Carolina Cyclone Athlete

Mother's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Father's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I, _____, give the Carolina Cyclones Softball Organization permission to photograph/video my daughter during softball practices and games. I understand that this will allow families to post photographs on social media or even livestream the games. If you have any reservations or exceptions to this permission, please list them below your signature.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

PREPARING FOR COMPETITION

Visualization:

- “Run a movie” of a successful performance in your head.
- Visualize details like solid hitting, catching fly balls, sound defense, and good throws to your target.

Physical:

- Good nutrition, adequate rest, and relaxation!
- Maintain a good balanced diet.
- For an energy boost eat simple carbohydrates – not candy or junk food!
- Lack of sleep will cloud your mind, dull your senses, and slow your movement.
- For relaxation – Watch a movie, listen to music, read, anything that puts you at ease and relieves stress.

Be Determined:

- Determination begins with a goal. Decide how to achieve that goal. Start with: pride in what you’re doing, not what you can’t do; learn from your mistakes; don’t be afraid to fail; be willing to sacrifice to reach your goal; reward yourself for our accomplishments. ***Through Failure Comes Success!!!***
- Once you get close to the day of competition, the physical aspects of optimum performance is overshadowed by the importance of mental toughness.
- If you have prepared well, your body will automatically know how to perform. Your mind must now be tough enough to hand the situation.
- To be at peak performance, an athlete must be equally strong in mind and body.

Mental Toughness:

- Believe and have faith in your abilities. Make a commitment to develop that faith.
- Faith quiets the voice of doubt inside your head. You must quiet self-doubt.
- Believe it is your responsibility to do the very best you can with the tools you have.
- Accept the fact that faith is a growing process, not an absolute.
- Responsibility for our life rests in your own hands.

To succeed in anything, think of yourself in a positive way. Consciously replace a negative thought with a positive one. “I am a winner” and “I deserve to be here” will facilitate our best performance.

THE 6 INCH PLAYING FIELD

THE 6-INCH PLAYING FIELD - is the part of the ball field that is between the player's ears...the brain. Arguably, about 90-95% of the game takes place in this relatively small area, yet it is the most difficult part of this game to master. This is THE KEY component of this game. The only thing a player can control in this game is how they are going to respond to a situation. Everything else is at least partially up to chance. Knowing, expecting and recognizing the situation is where the 6-inch playing field comes into play. Mastery of this 6-inch playing field is the single most important fundamental of the game and is often left out completely. Mastering this small area includes, but is not limited to, knowing what to do with the ball, admitting mistakes/errors and shaking them off, concentrating not on hits, but Quality At-Bats, visualizing success, focusing and playing this game ONE PITCH AT A TIME. ONE PITCH AT A TIME - Softball, like baseball, is one of the few games in the world that is designed for failure. After all, the best hitters in baseball hope to fail only 7 of 10 times at the plate. Constantly dealing with failure, be it offense or defense is frustrating. The only way to combat the feeling of failure is to focus on the positive. Quality-At-Bats will generate hits. Concentration on the current situation coupled with visualization and focus will generate the necessary defense. This game is played ONE PITCH AT A TIME no matter what else happens.

It's All in Your Mind

If you think you're beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win, but think you can't,
It's almost certain you won't.
If you think you'll lose, you've lost.
For out in the world you'll find,
Success begins with a person's will;
It's all in the state of mind.
For many a race is lost, before a step is run,
And many a coward fails, before the work has begun.
Think BIG and your deeds will grow,
Think small, and you'll fall behind,
Think that you can and you will:
It's all in the state of mind.
If you think you're outclassed, you are.
You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster one,
But sooner or later the one who wins
Is the one who thinks she can!