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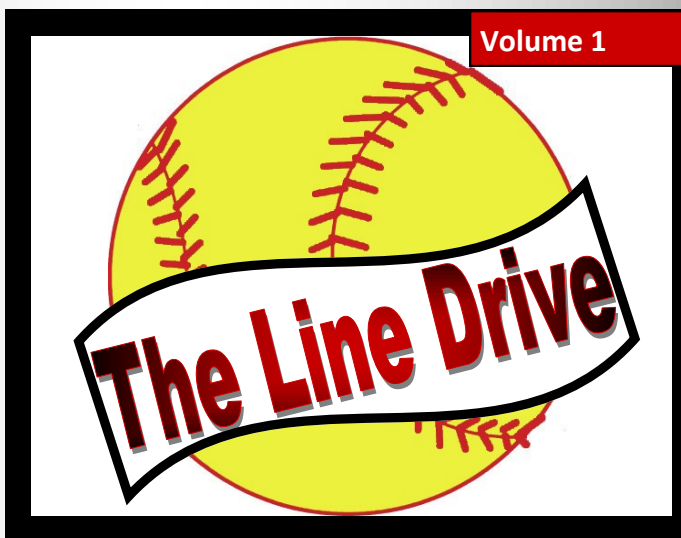
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All-Star Game Coordinator

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All-Star Game Coordinator

Volume 1

April 3, 2013



I would like to introduce myself. My name is Jeff Hodgson and I am the coach at Belmont High School in south-western Wisconsin. I am greatly honored to serve as your president. This is an exciting time for softball in the state of Wisconsin!

I am extremely fortunate to work with such a great group of coaches on our board. They are some of the best coaches in the state. If any of us can help you in any way, feel free to contact us.

### All-Star

Our board has decided to move this year's all-star game to the Chula Vista in Wisconsin Dells. We want to thank everyone in Stevens Point for their past efforts in making this a special event. The experience for the players in the Dells will include waterpark passes, Tommy Bartlet Show tickets, and poolside pizza parties for the players. Coaches, before you nominate your kids, please make sure they can play if chosen. Nominations are due April 12<sup>th</sup>. We are once again teaming up with Special Olympics for our all-star charity.

### Membership

Our membership closes on April 15<sup>th</sup>. If the head coach at your school is not a member, your players **are not eligible** for postseason honors. By being a member you have access to all-district, all-state, academic all-state, coaches awards, including rings to the State Champions. Please join today!

### Winter Clinic

Our clinic was, once again, a huge success, thanks to Cindy Suess. Thank you, Cindy, for your efforts. We are also very excited to have such a great relationship with the Badger coaches. Thank you, Yvette and Randy! Go Badgers! Next year's clinic will be held at Chula Vista in the Dells.

*Jeff Hodgson*

WFSCA President



## The Official Source

### Seeding in Softball

Questions continue as to what direction softball will take as we see more and more sports embrace the seeding of sectional half-brackets in Divisions 2, 3, and 4. Soccer was the first sport to seed half-brackets, followed by basketball, volleyball and now baseball. As I'm most familiar with volleyball, one of the sports I administer, I can relate that a number of issues last fall resulted in a less than favorable first year with this new format. First and foremost, administrators and coaches appeared to be caught off-guard regarding their responsibility to "vote" if they wished to revert back to the regional groupings.

Why would anyone want the regional groups? In a word: **travel**. Only one sectional half-bracket garnered enough votes to return to the traditional regional format. There were several high mileage trips in the early rounds of the volleyball tournament, most notably Sparta at Antigo, Northland Pines at West Salem, and West Salem at Antigo, all held on week-nights. This year schools are being required to vote if they want to **retain** the sectional half-brackets. If schools do not exercise the right to voice their opinions the brackets will automatically revert to the traditional regional groupings. Also, principals or superintendents will be notified when schools can register their "vote" so that schools are more fully aware of their ability to decide what format will be used.

In softball, extreme travel distances can also be



affected by loss of school time when day games are played and the possibility that a team may arrive on-site only to find that an unexpected downpour has made the field unplayable. In speaking with Deputy Director Wade Labecki, who has responsibility for baseball, there currently are no sectional half-brackets in place, all will be played in the traditional regional groups.

The Softball Coaches Advisory Committee will address this topic at their September meeting and at that time make a recommendation to move towards seeding sectional half-brackets in Divisions 2, 3, and 4 or stay with the current format. Contact your district representative to let them know your feelings regarding this topic.

### RefRanking

The WIAA continues to use RefRanking as the site for coaches to rank umpires. Umpires are responsible for entering their games into the RefRanking site and coaches then may rank umpires beginning 72 hours after the completion of their game (next year this changes to 48 hours). Your athletic director must register you on the RefRanking site in order for you to access it to rank umpires. Traditionally, the spring sport coaches have had the fewest coaches participate in this process. It seems that the end of the school year approaches and coaches simply forget to fulfill this requirement.



[www.RefRanking.com](http://www.RefRanking.com)

It's an important piece of the WIAA tournament assigning process, a beginning point for the early rounds of the tournament. The process is confidential; umpires only see the cumulative number and the names of the schools that have ranked them.

Please do your part and rank this spring!

*Marcy Thurwachter*



## Behind the Plate

*By John Peterson, Member NFHS Softball Rules Committee*

At this year's WFSCA Coaches Clinic we discussed new rules for 2013. They are:

1. Gloves with optic colored markings are not legal.
2. Stop watches now allowed in coach's box. Cell phones not allowed.
3. Any Illegal pitch followed by a play where batter-runner or runners do **not** safely advance to first or the next base results in option for offensive coach to take the result of the play or the penalty for the illegal pitch.
4. Batter no longer has to move to avoid a pitched ball that is entirely inside the batter's box.

We also discussed Illegal Pitches. The NFHS and the WIAA continue to stress the importance of teaching proper pitching techniques and having umpires enforce the rules regulating pitching.

Coaches, whether hired by the school or independent "consultants," should teach pitching mechanics that conform to the rules. It is not in the best interests of our

sport if the coach is unfamiliar with the rules or if the coach teaches the student to throw both legally and illegally. Coaches code of ethics provides that, "the coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules," hoping umpires will ignore the infraction(s).

Umpires should enforce the rules consistently throughout the game and from game to game. The WIAA continues to stress that calling illegal pitches is a requirement of all officials and will continue to be a criteria for assignment in the Tournament Series.

Many factors make this a daunting task. Some umpires may be unfamiliar with the pitching rule, some may be afraid of the consequences of calling illegal pitches and some may believe it isn't that important. In addition, umpires who do know the rule and know its importance may just disagree on whether a pitcher is throwing legally or not. Judgment is subjective. An umpire can have good knowledge of the rules and good mechanics and technique, but have trouble making calls consistently or accurately.

The conclusion is that all participants in the great sport of fast pitch softball must work together to play by the rules so that the players experience the thrills of playing the game honestly and fairly.

# ON DECK WITH A BOARD MEMBER....



## Team Unity

*by Sue Stoltenberg, North East District Rep. & Wausaukee Softball Coach*

As a coach of young women, I often see a lot of “**drama**” coming from either the players themselves, or from outside forces (other students, family issues, academics, etc...). To alleviate some of this “drama” and get the focus back on softball where it belongs, I continuously look for ways to build team unity with my players.



This season I have instituted a team bonding activity at the end of every practice. These activities, **designed to build trust, unity and improve communication**, don’t take much time but are proving to be **invaluable** for our team. My players actually look forward to the activity at the end of each practice and are anxious to find out what interesting, unusual task they will be asked to perform.

Activities have included things like:

- giving each player a number and having them, without talking out loud, place themselves in numerical order,
- assigning a short, affirming phrase and challenging the players to physically spell

out the phrase using their bodies as the letters,

- having each player come up with a “hand signal” to identify herself with (I’ve seen some pretty creative and goofy ones!),
- featuring one player each practice, and having teammates say something positive about that person—very powerful!

There are thousands of similar activities out there to try. I encourage all of you to look into this strategy for building team unity and getting rid of all that drama that detracts from playing softball. Google “**team bonding activities**” on the internet and just see what comes up!

For my team, these activities are already proving to be very beneficial. **I truly feel that they are making an impact on my players— both on and off the softball field.**

Have a great season everyone!!!



# ON DECK WITH A BOARD MEMBER.....



## The Wall Game

*by Roger Schliewe, All-Star Coordinator & Horicon Softball Coach*

1. Divide into two equal teams
2. Team 1 will be on defense and Team 2 is up to bat
3. Use a Foam ball (we use the Green Dimple ball) or Incrediball in the gym
4. Team 1, in the field, has their gloves
5. Team 2 is up to bat and must have a lineup
6. Coach can pitch from the side, about 15 feet away
7. Have two foul lines. For example, the width of the basketball court
8. If you have lines on the end wall of the gym, that will make scoring easy
9. Scoring if the ball hits the wall or net if you have one (teams can score points)
10. A ground ball through the defense that hits the net or wall scores **1 point**
11. A line drive through the defense, that does not hit the ground, is **2 points** (have a line about 6 to 8 feet above the floor to indicate the 2 point mark)
12. If the ball goes above the 2-point line, but yet stays below the ceiling /top netting/other line about 15 feet above the floor, it will be worth **3 points**
13. The ceiling/top part of the net/above the line is an **out**
14. If the defense fields the ball on a ground or line shot, with a clean catch, it is an **out**
15. If the defense errors or bobbles the ball and it hits the ground, the batter gets a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance to hit
16. Defense must work as a team to protect the wall
17. Offense can hit from about half-court on the basketball court or you can use your judgment as to where they should set home plate
18. Coach is the umpire and will determine scoring and outs
19. Each team bats until they get **10 outs per inning**
20. We usually play about 5 innings, which takes about 20 to 30 minutes
21. Let them be competitive and heckle each other to build team unity and make them competitive

*If you have any questions call Roger at 920-382-7014. Good luck and have fun!*



This year the All-Star Games will be held in Wisconsin Dells on June 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>

The Coaching staff for each division are listed below.

### **Division 1**

Mike Mathies *D.C. Everest*

Bill Weyers *Kimberly*

Jamie Olson *Sun Prairie*

Kurt Raguse *Germantown*

### **Division 2**

Rick Coltrain *Baldwin-Woodville*

Bob Sulser *Beloit-Turner*

Todd Felch *Mosinee*

### **Division 3**

Dave Bjorge *Arcadia*

Scott Ritzman *Laconia*

Don Bjelland *Grantsburg*

### **Division 4**

Duane Garrison *Montecello*

Becky Demuth *Racine Lutheran*

Tony Paletta *Desoto*

**Congratulations to these coaches—it is a great honor and a fantastic experience!**

**Players and coaches will be staying at the Chula Vista in the Dells .**

# FINAL INNING.....

## IMPORTANT DATES

-  **April 12:** All Star Nominations Due
-  **April 15:** Deadline for Joining WFSCA
-  **May 16, 21, 23:** D-2, D-3, D-4 Regionals
-  **May 21, 23:** D-1 Regionals
-  **May 28, 30:** Sectionals
-  **May 30:** All-District/All-State Nominations Due
-  **June 6-8:** State Tournament—Madison
-  **June 10:** All-Star Banquet
-  **June 11:** All-Star Games
-  **June 14:** Academic All-State Due
-  **June 14:** Coaches Awards Due