

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Will there be open gyms before the season begins? Are they mandatory?*

A: Open gyms typically begin in January at the start of second semester. We generally try to have an open gym on Sunday sometime when the field house is available and again on Wednesday nights from 7-8 p.m. Open gyms are never mandatory. Players are strongly encouraged to attend open gyms if possible especially if they are not in a winter sport. Open gyms provide an opportunity for players to improve their game and get ready for the upcoming season. However, coaches are not allowed to provide any instruction during open gyms. Coaches will be present to ensure the safety of players.

Q: *Are there tryouts? How do they work? Are cuts made?*

A: Yes there are tryouts each year. The first three days of practice consist of tryouts for all players. Players are assessed on their hitting, bunting, fielding, throwing, base running times and overall abilities and attitude. Any cuts will be made based on the results of tryouts. An important consideration when it comes to cuts is the overall safety of the player and the team. When numbers allow there will be a freshmen, junior varsity and varsity team. Cuts may or may not occur each year based on these factors.

Q: *Can freshmen make the junior varsity or varsity team?*

A: Any player can make any team based on a number of factors including results of tryouts but also numbers and the possible positions they can play. On occasion players may play back and forth on different teams especially pitchers. Players are placed at a certain level to create the strongest possible teams and to provide them the opportunity to improve their game and to contribute at the appropriate level.

Q: *If a player makes varsity one year in your program are they on varsity all the upcoming years too? If someone at their position is better do they play JV to improve? Are all juniors and seniors on varsity automatically or not?*

A: This really depends on a lot of things. Generally speaking once a player makes varsity they are likely to stay on varsity in upcoming years however someone could displace them from their position, they could play a different position, or they could end up not playing as much as in previous years if there is a player who is clearly better than them. It is hard to "demote" a kid back down to JV after being on varsity but there is no guarantee just because they played a lot or somewhere the year before that they will again the following year – this is true at any level. Seniors are the only ones who are basically automatically on varsity. We do not want them taking playing time from a younger player at JV. We have had juniors on JV in the past. It all depends on numbers and abilities and ultimately what is best for the teams.

Q: *Are there practices over Spring Break? What about Memorial Day?*

A: Yes. We always have practices over Spring Break. In fact, there is often a V/JV game scheduled during the break. There is usually a freshmen game scheduled the Monday immediately after spring break. The varsity team practices on Memorial Day since there is a Regional game the very next day. Unless the WIAA changes dates for Regional games varsity will always need to practice on Memorial Day. The practice times for any days off of school will be set from the beginning of the season so families can plan around it.

Q: *What if my family takes a trip over Spring Break? Or during the season?*

A: While we understand and value the importance of family in the Waunakee Softball program we encourage families to take trips out of season. Our season is one of the shortest at 13 weeks long. We need all players present for the entire season. A complete season calendar is made available as soon as possible on our website so families can plan accordingly. Families can always contact the head coach, the school, or consult the WIAA website to see when the season begins and ends.

As a program we go to Florida every other year for a spring break trip and entire families are encouraged to make that trip if interested. Any practices or games missed by players due to a family trip during the season will result in the player missing an equal number of events once they are back.

Q: *Can I use my own equipment?*

A: Players will need to supply some of their own equipment – mainly a glove and appropriate footwear. Players will also be required to purchase their own batting helmet which they should be able to use the entire time they are in the program. The helmet should be purchased through the program so that each player has the same style helmet. Each team will have a supply of bats and catchers gear. If a player has her own bat it must meet ASA bat testing requirements. You can see the ASA website for a list of approved and illegal bats. If purchasing a bat please educate yourself on the best bat for you. Consult your coach if you are unsure.

Q: *Are there opportunities for summer softball and fall ball?*

A: Yes. Our U16 and U18 traveling summer softball teams are made up of our high school players. Generally speaking players on the 9th grade team would play U16 summer ball if they are interested. Players on varsity (who have not graduated) would play on the U18 team if interested. Players from JV would play on either the U16 or U18 teams based on age, abilities and numbers. On occasion players may play some on both teams if there is not an age conflict. There are not tryouts for U16 and U18 summer softball. Placement is based on the factors listed above as well as performances during the entire school season. We hope that all players are interested in playing both summer and fall softball.

Fall softball for high school players runs for 6 weeks on Sunday mornings beginning after Labor Day. Players are split up and put on teams with players from other area schools in order to follow WIAA rules. There is a Capital Area Fall Ball League website with additional information.

Q: *Can I participate on an elite travel softball team?*

A: Yes. In fact players who are hoping to play at the next level should play for an elite travel team. Please remember during the season your school team **MUST** come first. This means you should not be practicing with your elite team if it will take away time from your school team or other school commitments like academics. Also, it is a WIAA violation to participate in an organized game or scrimmage for another softball team during the high school season.

Q: *Can parents come and watch practices?*

A: Parents are always welcome to attend practices and games. The practice schedule is provided to both players and parents and it is also located on our website.

Q: *What if I need to take an evening class or driver's education class in the spring? What about the ACT or other tests?*

A: Players are urged to take these classes or tests at other times of the year. Most of these things can be scheduled outside of our season. Again our season is only 13 weeks long and missing practices and/or games for these things is not fair to the team.

Q: *Is there a Softball Booster club?*

A: Yes. Families are strongly encouraged to join the booster club. Membership dues are \$75 and the registration form can be found on-line. All parents are also encouraged to be actively involved with booster club activities. There are opportunities for parents to take the lead with certain activities and/or sign up to work events. The booster club board consists of a president and parent reps for each team.

Q: *Are there fundraising activities or events required of players?*

A: The booster club coordinates all fundraising events. As a program we have gotten away from running a lot of smaller fundraising activities to organizing a few major events spread out throughout the year. We expect each family to volunteer for these events. If everyone pitches in it is easier for everyone. The major events are: Badger Football Concessions (in the fall), WIAA Wrestling concessions (in late Feb.), annual 9 Pin Tap Bowling Tournament (in March), Summer Youth Tournament (last full weekend in June). All players and families are expected to help with these events. Players must be 16 however to work the Badger FB or WIAA Wrestling concessions. Money raised from the Badger and Wrestling concessions pay for the Florida trip every other year. Money raised from the Bowling and Youth Tournaments go towards general program expenses not covered from our small school budget.

Once every four years the booster club will conduct a major fundraiser/raffle to raise funds for our Mattie Aiello Memorial Scholarship. All players are encouraged to fully participate in this fundraiser since it will occur once during their high school career.

If you have additional questions not answered here please do not hesitate to contact the head varsity coach: Tammy Rademacher at trademacher@waunakee.k12.wi.us or use the Contact Us link on the website.