

## **Cupertino Girls Softball League Coaching Philosophy**

The underlying purpose behind Cupertino Girls Softball League (CGSL) is that of providing players a fun and educational environment in which to learn the skills and fundamentals of softball. To that end, the CGSL Board of Directors believes that it is important that players receive consistent instruction throughout their years in our league. Because CGSL operates under a system of assigning players to new teams and coaches each year as they progress, players need to be confident that the skills and techniques that they are taught as beginning and intermediate players will be useful for them as they advance to our senior divisions and competitive leagues. The following material is intended as a guide for both beginning and experienced coaches. There are certainly many approaches to teaching the game of softball. These notes summarize some of the methods that we have found to be successful in helping players improve their performance and enjoy the game.

### **Warmups:**

- Sufficient stretching of the legs, arms, neck, head, and abdomen.
- Running, with full arm motion. Run on the balls of the feet, with a slight forward lean.

### **Grip and Rotation:**

- Grip the ball across the “C”. Younger players will likely use a 3-finger grip. Older players may choose to use a 2-finger grip. Keep in mind that the ball is a little bigger for the senior divisions.
- Practice wrist snaps by isolating 1) fingers 2) wrists 3) elbow

### **Throwing Motion:**

- “L” position for the throwing arm, with front elbow pointing at the target.
- Close the front shoulder while drawing the arm back.
- Pull the arms apart (conducting the orchestra).
- Drive the front elbow down while bringing the throwing arm through.
- Follow through and complete the motion by bringing the throwing elbow to the opposite knee.

### **Catching the Ball:**

- Receiver must give a target to the thrower by raising both arms, with glove at shoulder level.
- Feet should be apart so that receiver has a solid base. Glide or shuffle to the ball, don't cross feet.
- Catch the ball with 2 hands and bring it into the body, ready for the throwing motion.
- Keep the glove hand “palm up” on throws below the waist.
- Keep the glove hand “palm down” on throws above the waist.

### **Infield:**

- Field ground balls from a natural athletic stance (knees bent, feet apart, hands and glove out in front of the body so that the feet and hands form a triangle).
- Watch the ball into the glove. Bare hand closes over ball in an “alligator” motion.
- Keep the glove below the ball on ground balls.
- Bring the ball into the body, with the arms acting as shock absorbers. Soft hands.
- Field the ball between the feet.
- Glide side to side. Don’t cross over step to the ball.

### **Outfield:**

- On ground balls, field as an infielder. Remember that the outfielder is the last line of defense.
- On fly balls, start the hands and glove below the eyes. Catch the ball above the eyes.
- Introduce catching a fly ball to young players by using with rag balls, tennis balls, whiffle balls and “Softie” soft compression softballs.
- When running after, and tracking a ball, run on the toes, not the heels.
- The right fielders responsibility, after determining that the ball is not hit to her, is to back up 1st base. The left fielder will back up 3rd base, especially on steals.
- All outfielders should back up a base on every play. Be in motion.

### **Baserunning:**

- Make a quick start out of the batters box, stepping with the rear foot first.
- Run through the first base bag on ground balls.
- When taking multiple bases, hit the inside corner of the bag. Either foot is ok.

### **Hitting:**

- Grip the bat with the knuckles lined up. Coaching advice to players is “Line up the knuckles that you use to knock on the door”.
- In the stance, feet should be slightly wider than the shoulders. Toes the same distance from home plate. Knees bent. Weight on inside balls of the feet (not on the heels).
- Elbows point toward the ground, with the front arm forming an “L” @ 90 degrees and the back arm forming a “V” @ 45 degrees. Both elbows are relaxed.
- Bat is held even with ear @ about 45 degrees from vertical.
- Stride with the front foot about 6-8 inches. (Note – the fastpitch softball stride is more compact than a slowpitch stride. Maintaining balance is more important, because of the speed of the pitches, than taking a long, uppercutting, stride.)
- Compact swing, with the eyes tracking the ball over the plate. The head should finish pointing at home plate. The chin should almost rest on the inside shoulder.

- Follow through completely with the swing, with the bat coming finishing on the hitters back.

**Suggested Coaching Educational Material:**

**Coaching Youth Softball**, American Sport Education Program, 1996.

Explains the hows and whys of coaching youths. Directed at the younger player, with plenty of drills and techniques. Excellent for coaching the youngest players.

**Softball: Fast and Slow Pitch**, Mario Pagnoni & Gerald Robinson, 1995.

Detailed and complete, this book is varied enough to use at both the beginning and advanced levels. Lengthy sections on fielding, hitting, and pitching.

**The Softball Handbook**, Susan Craig & Ken Johnson, 1985.

Written by the coaching staff at the University of New Mexico, this is directed at the college athlete. It is useful for younger players because of the extensive photos that illustrate techniques and drills.

**Defensive Softball Drills**, Jacquie Joseph, 1998

Written by the head coach at Michigan State University, this book details 66 different defensive drills. All drills are diagrammed, and drills are broken up between drills for individuals and drills that involve the entire team.