

McFarland High School Softball 2019 Handbook

“A TEAM is a group of people working interdependently to achieve a common goal for which members are held mutually accountable.”

“To give any less than your best self is to sacrifice a gift.”
-Steve Prefontaine



Dear Athlete and Families,

Welcome to our 2019 high school softball season! All of our coaches are eagerly looking forward to a successful season for our program. Enclosed in this handbook are program goals, coaching staff information, and program expectations. We expect that every player (and family) will read through the material covered in this handbook. In addition, our Google Calendar will keep players and families up-to-date on our schedule of events.

We expect that every player in our program will give 100% effort and presence to be a part of our team. Although many of our goals will come from team conversations and “Chalk Talks”, some of our primary program goals include:

- Positive Character: Developing student athletes who serve as positive members to the school community and the greater society
- Commitment to Excellence: Winning & performing, both academically and athletically
- Hard Work: Giving 100% effort at practices and games with a winning attitude
- Maximizing Performance: Coaches are committed to helping all athletes improve
- Mental Toughness: Being mentally prepared, mentally tough, and willing to take risks
- Fundamentally-Driven: 100% effort by coaches and players to constantly improve fundamentals

Playing a high school sport and being a part of a team is a commitment, so full dedication is expected from our participants. We are looking forward to beginning our journey TOGETHER, AS A TEAM.

McFarland Softball Coaches

Lea Lackey	Varsity Head Coach
Steve Bahrke	Varsity Assistant Coach
Willa Papalia-Beatty	JV Head Coach
Heather Henke	JV Assistant Coach

PRACTICES & GAMES

The practice and game schedules will be posted on our McFarland Softball Google calendar. Game schedules are also found on the high school website. Our indoor practice schedule is unique, as we share gym space with many other sports. Please see the handout for the detailed indoor schedule. Other details:

- All players are required to be at each practice, on time and ready to work hard.
- All players should bring clothing for practicing indoors AND outdoors every single day. On game days, players should bring indoor practice gear as well. Weather is unpredictable, and we have to be flexible as softball players!
- All players are required to help set up and take down practice equipment every day.
- If a player is sick or absent from school, they are responsible for letting their coach know.
- Cell phones may not be used during any practice or game times, unless permission is given.
- All players will strive to give 100% effort, 100% of the time.
- We are a TEAM and a PROGRAM. If one team (JV or Varsity) finishes early, players are expected watch and support the other team.

MCFARLAND HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL GOOGLE CALENDAR:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar?cid=bWNmc2Qub3JnX2w5MjUxNzdiMWtxZzgwcTE1MWxzY3Y3NnBvQGdyb3VwLmNhbGVuZGFyLmdvb2dsZS5jb20>

CODE OF CONDUCT

The McFarland High School Athletic & Activities Code of Conduct will be followed for our softball players and families. To view this packet, head to the McFarland School District website. Within the “Sports” tab, you will find the “Athletic & Activity Code of Conduct” tab. The link: <https://www.mcfarland.k12.wi.us/schools/high/sports/MHS%20Ath%20Code%2018-19%20FINAL%20VERSION.pdf>

TRYOUTS

The first couple days of our practice schedule will be focused on tryouts. We will have two teams: Varsity & JV. Teams will be decided and announced to the players by the coaching staff, by the end of the first week at the latest. All players (grades 9-12) will have an opportunity to be selected for either the Varsity or Junior-Varsity teams. The selection may not coincide with the player’s grade level. Players may have an opportunity to move levels as the season progresses. Team placements will be focused on needs for the TEAMS.

COMMUNICATION WITH COACHES

In working towards maximizing character and performance, communication is key! Players are responsible for taking ownership and working on self-advocacy by talking to their coach(es). Players should do this in person. Email, texting, and team group chats are only appropriate if looking for program information.

PARENTS

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

Thank you in advance for everything that you do for your child and our softball program. We wouldn't be able to do all of this if it weren't for you. Our softball coaches are committed to the program and our goals. Our coaches are required to make judgement decisions based upon evaluations and what we believe to be the best for our program. There are certain topics that can and should be discussed with your student-athlete's coach:

- Ways to help your student-athlete improve
- Concerns about your student-athlete's behavior
- Academic progress

The following items are left to the discretion of the coaches:

- Playing time
- Play calling and game strategy
- Other student-athletes

PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN:

1. The student-athlete should meet with the coach(es) to discuss the issue. **On most occasions, this discussion will resolve issues or questions. If it does not, please follow the procedure below:
2. Allow at least 24 hours to pass. Then, the parent should contact the head coach of the player's team. Please make sure the player knows you are contacting their coaching staff.
3. Parent should contact the varsity coach of the program. Please make sure the player knows you are contacting their coaching staff.
4. Parent should contact the athletic director, Paul Ackley. Please make sure the player knows you are contacting the athletic director.

*As previously stated, emails are only appropriate if looking for program information. If a meeting needs to take place, the player will be in attendance, along with the team coach, head coach, and athletic director.

*Please do not attempt to talk to a coach about this concern before or after a game or a practice. The coaches are responsible for supervision of players and responsibilities of coaching. Likewise, these can be emotional moments for parents, players, and coaches that often do not promote resolution.

My Goodbye

-Caitlin Lowe #26 decides to write a letter to announce her retirement from the NPF.

Today is the day I say goodbye to a huge part of my life.

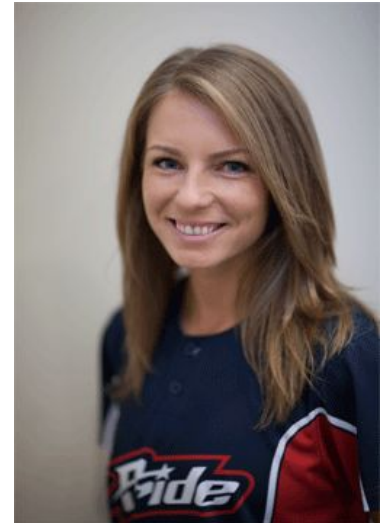
I quietly stepped on to a field for the first time at 6 years old. It was back in the days of long white pants and scrunched socks, the kind with the built-in stirrups. My little mermaid underwear showed right through those pants--parents didn't tell us that back then because it was just too cute

to pass up. I wore white cleats because my dad said they made me run faster. I STILL wear white cleats because they DO make me run faster. I would put puffy paint on my helmet because he said it was intimidating. I wanted to run so fast that my helmet fell off. I was obsessed. I fell in love with a game at the age of 6 and it has had my heart ever since.

The greatest thing about our sport is that it truly is a game of life. The best advice I could possibly give to the current softball world is to RESPECT THE GAME. You get what you put into it. I think that's why I fell so hard. If you respect the game in all its glory, if you do it with passion, then it will pay you back in ways you could never even imagine. Be a good teammate. There are a lot of selfish players out there who get lost in stats, lost in results, lost in themselves. Great players and great teams always see the bigger picture. We play a team sport, a selfless sport, a pure sport. Robyn Benicasa, a world champion racer once said, "You don't inspire your teammates by showing them how amazing you are. You inspire your teammates by showing them how amazing THEY are."

So rip your heart out and give it to this game, give it to your teammates, give it to your coaches.

When you can learn to do that, you will see that they will do the same for you. And man will you get to experience something special.



I do want to say thank you to everyone who has supported me throughout the years. My family has been by my side through it all and they will always be my biggest fans on and off the field. Thanks to my Grandma Judy for the countless turkey sandwiches on game days and to my grandpa who I know still has the best seat in the house up in heaven (probably still wearing my jersey). Thanks to my mom and dad for not just being my coaches but my parents, regardless of any game outcome.

Thank you to my coaches, especially Coach Candrea, for helping me through the game of life. Thank you to Under Armour, Wilson/DeMarini, and my agent Rob who not only supported me, but who empower the female athlete daily. Thank you to my owner Don DeDonatis who kept my dream alive long past college. Thank you to my wonderful fiancé (now husband) who without hesitation told me to play as long as I can. And last but not least, thank you to my amazing teammates who started as teammates, became friends, and now will forever be my family. I love you all so much.

And with that, I choose to say goodbye to my playing days the same way I said hello--quietly. I wanted to do it quietly because that's just how I operate. This game doesn't owe me anything, it's pretty much the other way around. As Joe Torre said in his Hall of Fame speech when talking about the game of baseball, "This sport is part of the American soul. And it's ours to borrow. Just for a while. If all of us who love it are doing our jobs, then those who get the game from us will be as proud to be a part of it as we were, and we are."

Thank you to softball fans and players everywhere. Remember to hustle when nobody is watching, to stay humble, and to never lose sight of that 6 year old version of yourself. Keep leaving it all on the field.

-Caitlin Lowe, #26