



**Program
Handbook**

July 2023

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INFORMATION

Mission/Vision

The Menomonie Jr Mustang (MJM) Travel softball is designed for players that are prepared for a higher level of competition, a greater commitment to practice, a focus on individual development and development as a TEAM!

As a program, our goal is to provide your child with a wholesome and fun atmosphere in which to engage in healthy athletic competition through the game of Fast Pitch softball; on an appropriate sized team to ensure playtime, development, and engagements.

In doing so, we strive to help each player build and develop strong softball skills and mechanics, while also focusing on the essential elements of character building and ethics in sports. Players and parents are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship. Coaches are expected to model and teach competitiveness with an emphasis on good sportsmanship while promoting confidence and self-esteem.

Our goals can only be met if managers, coaches, players, and parents embrace them and work to achieve them TOGETHER as a program.

To clearly define what is expected, the following guidelines have been developed. The MJM program is much more competitive than our In-House/Recreation program and requires a greater level of commitment from everyone - players, parents, and coaches. For each team to reach their full potential, the entire team & program must be well coordinated and moving in the same direction.

Upon reviewing and understanding this document, both player and parent need to sign and agree via SportsEngine Registration.

Board of Directors

The MJM Board is composed of up to 8 voting members and at least 1 non-voting member.

The purpose of the MJM Board is to provide direction for the organization. The MJM Board will aid in the decision making of the organization, structure and assistance in fundraising, team structure, uniforms, scheduling of games/tournaments and promotion of the MJM Organization. The MJM Board also manages the Moose Lodge Field also known as Fisher Field.

A successful team and organization require communication. It is imperative that the player, parent, or coaches communicates concerns to each other. If a resolution is not met by the player, parent, or coaches they may request a hearing with the MJM Board. The MJM Boards decision will be final in all cases.

All members of the Organization will have an equal voice. There will be an organization meeting once a year. All members will have an opportunity to contribute positive constructive ideas to better improve the growth of the organization. All of which will be voted on by the board at a later meeting.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Schedule

Outdoor Spring/Summer Practices & Games:

April 1st (weather permitting and/or indoor) for non-high school teams.

Season ends at the mid-August, dependent on scheduling of games and tournaments by the team's coach.

Season schedules will be provided by your team's coaching staff once they are finalized. If a player has prior or conflicting commitments, the player is asked to inform the head coach of such commitments as soon as the player is able.

Teams may earn a national tournament berth, if the berth is earned in the Gold bracket of play. This gives the team an opportunity to play in a National Softball Tournament setting.

The MJM program will not organize Fall Ball.

Uniforms

Required Items:

Each player must have the following uniform items in good condition.

- Mustangs Jersey
- Black Belted Softball Pants
- Belt
- Sliding Shorts (Recommended)
- Socks (2 pair recommended) – color set by coach
- Defensive Fielders Mask – for infield positions all levels (metal wire style recommended)

Equipment

Players are responsible for providing their own helmet, cleats, bat, and glove at each practice and game. Team catchers gear will be available for all levels provided by the program. Please note that players wishing to pursue catching as a primary position should consider purchasing their own catcher’s helmet and gear to ensure proper fit.

Fundraising & Home Tournament

MJM sponsored fundraising events are designed to cover additional expenses to improve the program and your player experience. **All players and families are required to participate in our fundraising events without exception.**

We also host a home softball tournament. **All families are required to provide an approximate of 10 hours for volunteer assistance.** A little help from many volunteers makes for easier work for all! The 10 hours does not include league game responsibilities.

POLICIES

Player Eligibility

Players who reside and are enrolled in Menomonie School District are eligible to play for a MJM team. Players from outside of the Menomonie School District attendance area may be allowed to try out for a team (only if needed), but that player cannot take a spot from a Menomonie area player and will be placed on the lowest level team while playing in the MJM Program, unless otherwise voted on by the MJM Board of Directors. Players must receive written permission from the Board to be eligible to try out for a MJM team. MJM participation in the program should be determined by the gender indicated on the student-athlete’s certified certificate of birth. In the event any player rosters with a team/organization (other than MJM sanctioned) during an MJM team’s regular season and still resides within the Menomonie School District, the said player must remain exempt from MJM membership until 16U eligibility.

Age Level Eligibility and Player Movement

The age level at which a player may participate is in accordance with the rules set by the USA Softball. The birth date cutoff is September 1 of the same calendar year for summer traveling softball. The player cannot be younger than 6 years of age as of September 1. **NO EXCEPTION.**

The team (age level) for which a player is eligible is the same as the player’s age on that date. Players are encouraged to play at their ASA age level. However, a MJM player of 10U and older, may be allowed to play in the age group directly above their actual age, if they are asked by the MJM Board based on need. Players will be evaluated at their age. MJM can make exceptions to this rule if needed based on numbers. MJM will be fielding teams at the following age levels: 10U, 12U, 14U (8U, 16U & 18U - if possible).

2024 USA Softball Age Chart



Match month (top line) and box with year of birth. The player’s age and division is indicated on the right.

SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	AGE	DIVISION
2015	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	7	8U
2014	2014	2014	2014	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	8	8U
2013	2013	2013	2013	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	9	10U
2012	2012	2012	2012	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	10	10U
2011	2011	2011	2011	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	11	12U
2010	2010	2010	2010	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	12	12U
2009	2009	2009	2009	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	13	14U
2008	2008	2008	2008	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	14	14U
2007	2007	2007	2007	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	15	16U
2006	2006	2006	2006	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	16	16U
2005	2005	2005	2005	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	17	18U
2004	2004	2004	2004	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	18	18U

Note: This age chart is for USA Softball, and only for the 2024 season (September 1, 2023 - August 31, 2024)

REGISTRATION AND PROGRAM FEES

The parent of any player who wishes to participate in an MJM season must register their daughter through the registration process contained on SportsEngine. MJM is only responsible to contact those listed as contacts in registration link. Within this registration process, parents will be required to complete and e-sign a registration form, code of conduct form, and other necessary registration forms through the on-line registration process. All fees must be paid prior to anyone playing.

Players on a team will pay a fee of \$350.00. This includes a non-refundable \$200 registration fee and a refundable \$50 if the given seasons volunteer hours are met. Expenses for participation in league games, tournaments, umpires, equipment, uniforms, field usage, field maintenance and improvement, association administration and support. Additional personal expenses may include hotels, equipment, warm-ups, fan gear, swag for National Tournaments, etc. These additional fees are based on decisions made by individual teams, without the direction of the MJM Board of Directors.

Program fees not received in full by specified date communicated by the MJM Board, will be charged \$25 and will not be able to participate until full fee and late payment is paid.

Refund Policy

Registration fees are non-refundable with the exception of the following:

- Player moves outside of Menomonie geographic area
- Pre-season injury with a doctor's written report and recommendation
- \$50 will be refunded per registration, if home tournament volunteer hours are completed

Registration fees of \$200 due at time of evaluations are non-refundable.

Dissatisfaction with team placement is not an acceptable reason for refund of registration fee. The MJM Board of Directors will discuss all other situations involving refunds on an individual basis at the next monthly board meeting following the receipt of a written request.

Refunds must be requested in writing/email and approved by the MJM Board of Directors. The MJM Board of Directors must approve any possible refunds and may determine a reduced refund to cover expenses, deposits, or other circumstances.

Refunds may be granted by the MJM Board, except for the player evaluation fee.

TRANSFER AND RELEASE REQUIREMENTS

Once a player registers, the player is committed to playing for MJM's for that traveling season. If a player wants to leave the team after registering for a traveling season, a written request must be made to the MJM Board of Directors. MJM Board of directors have the power to approve and/or deny any transfer request.

In the event any player rosters with a team/organization (other than MJM sanctioned) during an MJM team's regular season and still resides within the Menomonie School District, the said player must remain exempt from MJM membership until 16U eligibility.

PLAYER EVALUATIONS

Evaluation Fee

Evaluation fee must be paid online *prior* to player evaluation. The amount of these fees will be posted prior to the evaluation date.

Player Evaluation

Each player is to be evaluated to determine the player's skill and ability level. The primary goal of evaluations is to evaluate each player impartially and objectively so that they may be placed on a team with players of similar ability, who in turn play against other traveling teams with comparable skill levels. This is the best way to maximize each player's

opportunity to develop her skills and confidence. Players mature and develop at different times, so it is important to re-assess their skill development every year to ensure that the players remain properly placed. Information on each player will be compiled from observations, clinics, workouts, practices, and/or games.

The MJM Board of Directors, coaches, and the independent assessors will determine the evaluation criteria. Every effort will be made to make the evaluations as fair and consistent as possible. The MJM Board of Directors, in its sole discretion, will determine how many evaluators and assistants will attend the evaluations. No parents are permitted to observe unless specifically authorized by the MJM Board of Directors. These scores are confidential to the MJM Board only and are NOT to be shared with anyone beyond the MJM Board. A parent/guardian may request feedback via email on player evaluation within 72 hours of notification of team placement. This request does not exceed 72 hours after placement.

The MJM Board of Directors will hold evals for 10U, 12U and 14U (16/18U if applicable) at the end of the summer season typically in early August for the upcoming season.

There is currently no evaluation process for 8U girls traveling. Teams will be selected after trying to reach as many families as possible in the Menomonie area. This communication could be in the form of email, City of Menomonie Fall brochure, word of mouth, social media, etc. The MJM Board of Directors will aid in helping define the best approach to form teams to be as competitive and equal, IF we have enough interest for more than one MJM 8U team. Coaches may help in the process but will not have final say of team placement.

Players are not allowed to wear any clothing that contains their name or indicates in any way that they played on a traveling softball team or any other club team. Players are only to be known by the evaluations number assigned to them during check-in. The players will keep this number until all the evaluations are completed at their age level. This number is used by the evaluators to record the results and will be used by MJM Board of Directors when reviewing the results.

Missed Evaluations by Players

In the case of an emergency, notify the MJM Board as soon as possible. The MJM Board may offer the candidate an alternate evaluation date.

Some examples of an emergency excused absence:

- Verifiable medical condition that requires a doctor's release prior to participation
- Verifiable and mandatory school or church function
- Death in the family
- Pandemic

Players missing evals may be placed on teams following those who have attended or have been evaluated if there are open roster spots. If the teams have full rosters, then that player runs the risk of not being able to participate in traveling softball that season.

Team Placement

The following criteria will be used for team placement:

- Evaluation scores
- Team placement in prior years
- Previous player evaluations and coaches' feedback

The MJM Board will evaluate the pool of available players for each age group to determine the number of teams and competitive levels A, B and C. The final decision on number of teams at each competitive level rests solely with the MJM Board of Directors and will be voted on by majority vote.

The MJM Board reserves the right to make any changes necessary to the team and player selection process, including moving any player(s) from any age group or level to another age group or level.

All team rosters must be approved by a majority vote of the MJM Board of Directors. Rosters are targeted to include up to 11 players, minimum of 10 players. If there are only 12 participants registered, then the roster will be expanded to accommodate the 12th player. If roster reduction is necessary to create two teams, the MJM Board will make an appropriate decision. Every effort will be made to place each participant on a team, but, if necessary, a player will be cut. Those players are encouraged to play Recreation ball.

When player shortages arise in a particular group, players from the next lower age group may be rostered up if there is an abundance of players at the lower age group. If a roster is still short, attempts will be made to recruit players first from within the Menomonie community.

Team Placement Appeals

A parent/guardian may request feedback via email on player evaluation within 72 hours of notification of team placement. This request does not exceed 72 hours after placement.

Any player not satisfied with their team placement may appeal, in writing, to the MJM Board. Evaluation scores and coaching input will be relied upon when reviewing team placement appeals. Submission of a written appeal does not guarantee that it will be approved. You have 72 hours to appeal, once addressed by the board we will ask for the issue to be closed.

TEAM EXPECTATIONS/CODE OF CONDUCT

Team Goals

The goal of MJM Program is to make our teams highly competitive and at the same time make softball an enjoyable and fun experience for the players, parents, and coaches.

As a team and as individual athletes, each player will get out of this season what they put into it! Each year we will face stronger, faster, and more capable opponents. How we compete will be a measure of how we prepare as Individuals and as a Team. At times, you may be asked to make a change, or approach the game differently. Learning new mechanics may feel awkward or uncomfortable at first, but trust that our intention is to make you the best player that you can possibly be. Allow the coaches to help you become a stronger player on a stronger team.

Player Code of Conduct:

Players will be responsible for their participation and follow these rules:

- Be on the field, on time, with a positive attitude for practices and warm-ups
- Do their best, work hard, providing 100% effort always
- Put the team's goals, welfare, and success before their own
- Be receptive to coaching and always demonstrate good sportsmanship
- Be committed and attend and participate in all scheduled games and practices when reasonable possible
- Respect all fellow players, opponents, fans, coaches, and umpires, no bullying
- Be responsible for all uniforms and equipment
- Work on improving individual skills outside of team practices

Players need to be available for practices, games, and scheduled weekend tournaments. During the summer session, players can usually expect 2 or 3 practices per week until the start of the league games schedule. After the league schedule starts, players can expect to practice at least once per week with 2 nights of league games and tournaments on the weekends. Tournaments are scheduled with the agreement of the players, player's parents, and their coaches. Coaches may excuse a player when notified in advance of any scheduled church activities, school activities, family vacations or other legitimate reason that prevents a player participating.

PLAYERS AND PARENTS WILL COMMIT TO ATTENDANCE AT LEAGUE GAMES AND TOURNAMENTS, PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SEASON. Failure to attend practices, games, and weekend tournaments places an unfair and unnecessary burden on the players who are attending on a regular basis.

Playing Time

On the MJM teams, playing time may not be equal. The amount of playing time any player receives is dependent on many factors including skill, ability, attitude, effort, and attendance. Also, please understand that factors such as full rosters and substitution rules can make it difficult to equalize playing time.

While we would like to maximize playing time for all players while meeting team objectives, positions and playing time can be affected by:

- Ability demonstrated during practices and in games
- Attendance and punctuality at practices and games
- Level of cooperation, and effort displayed during practices and games
- Attitude and positive participation during practices, games, and other team activities

If a player has a concern about positions or playing time, we encourage them to ask the coach, “What they could work on to earn an opportunity at the position they desire” or “What they need to do to earn more playing time.” Teaching players to ask questions is an important part of character building. We want players to learn to speak for themselves and understand that positions and playing time are earned through practice and effort. We also expect our coaches to answer respectfully and in a helpful way. We trust that our coaches will work to develop ALL players.

Injured Roster Replacement

Per league and tournament rules, and at the discretion of the coach and MJM Board, a player may be asked to fill a roster spot due to an injured player. Injured player is encouraged to participate in team events.

All responses of willing players will be chosen by the following criteria:

- Evaluation scores
- Team placement in prior years
- Previous player evaluations and coaches’ feedback
- Availability

Coaches

All MJM teams will consist of one head coach and one assistant coach. Additional parent involvement may be asked by the head coach. All coaching applicants must complete a written application. All applications will be reviewed and voted by the MJM Board for a final decision. Head coaches will have the ability to weigh in on their assistant coaches, but all selections are subject to final approval by the MJM Board of Directors. The Head Coach will be the lead and the assistant coaches/team managers will take and follow their direction. No exceptions.

All head coaches and assistant coach are required to pass background checks and commit to the defined softball schedule. In the event of a Head Coach being unable to fulfill their duties, the MJM Board has full discretion to assign/chose the new Head Coach.

Coach’s Code of Conduct

Coaching a youth sport is a privilege that is not to be taken for granted. Coaches have an important role in the development of our players and in line with the MJM Vision and Goals, the Coaching staff shall be responsible to:

- Promoting good sportsmanship, teaching high quality softball skills and have fun in the process.
- Teach and coach in an organized manner to advance all players skills towards their full potential while building confidence, at practice sessions and during game play.
- Balance player growth and development while fielding a competitive team.
- Always make sure safety and the athletes' welfare comes first.
- Treat all players, parents, officials with dignity and respect.
- Ensure respect of players to one another and respect all players.
- Never use profane language toward any players, parent or official.
- Maintain an open line of communication with players and parents. Be approachable. Address and handle any parent issues in a courteous manner and involve the board when needed.

- Fully know and understand the game, rules, and all regulations.
- Fully comply with the Player/Parent Code of Conduct.

Parents' Responsibilities

We are a team – athletes, coaches, and parents. Parents need to support their child by allowing them to experience their frustrations and successes on and off the field. We want you to know that we always have the best interest of your child in mind. Our intention is to get the best out of our players collectively as a TEAM and help them to grow individually. This is a process, and by the end of the year your child will have improved tremendously. How much she improves depends upon her openness to instruction, effort to be the best, and how she is encouraged to grow.

Parents Code of Conduct

Parents will be responsible to follow these rules:

- Coordinate schedules and transportation for their player to attend all practices and games.
- Be a positive role model and encourage their player to be receptive to coaching.
- Keep their child focused on her goals, assist with their skill work, and to be positive always.
- Assist with player growth and development, including work outside of scheduled practices.
- Support the team coaching staff and decisions.
- Promote good sportsmanship by respecting coaches, opposing fans, participants, players, and umpires.
- Report all injuries to a coach immediately, to allow coaches time to adjust practice and game plans.
- Follow the 24-hour rule and/or use the proper compliant form to address any violations of rules, questionable conduct, or conflicts.
- Support the decision made by the MJM Board, while it is hard to make everyone happy all the time, the board makes decision that best support the program.
- Please note that the MJM Board works to make consistent decisions, however, not every team's schedules will be exact.
- Parents shall not slander any player, coach, manager, or other player's parent(s) on this team and any opposing teams.

24 Hour Rule

Any comments or concerns that a parent may have regarding coaching decisions may be discussed with the coaching staff, after a 24-hour time. In other words, if you have a complaint, we mandate that you wait 24 hours after the incident (concern) to give you time to think about your concern and to facilitate a calm discussion of the concern. If you still want to address the issue with the coaching staff, you may then call one of the coaches regarding your concerns. This rule is designed to help prevent all parties involved from saying something out of haste that may be regretted later.

Should a parent have a problem with the coaching or managing staff of this team, please arrange to meet with the coach(es) and the MJM Board.

Complaint Form/Protocol

If an issue cannot be resolved by your coach, please fill out the "Complaint Form" on our MJM website and submit to the board for review. We ask that you provide your suggestion and/or improvement when submitting. The complaint will review within 72 hours by the MJM Board, who will then decide if a special meeting needs to be called to discuss the complaint or if it can be handled at the next schedule board meeting.

Violations to the handbook will be discussed by the MJM Board based on the situation.

I have read, fully understand, and agree to the guidelines requested of me as a parent and player in the MJM Program Handbook and WILL REVIEW THESE RULES WITH MY DAUGHTER.

An electronic signature during the registration process from one of the parents acknowledges agreement by ENTIRE household.