

Ames Girls Softball Association
AMES THUNDER SOFTBALL

MISSION: Travel Team Program

The Ames Girls Softball Association (AGSA) tournament team program shall be open to any age-eligible girl from Ames or surrounding areas. The purpose of the AGSA tournament teams program is to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for girls to play softball at the next level in a competitive atmosphere; give girls the opportunity to develop self-confidence, leadership skills, and self-respect through the game of softball; to promote good sportsmanship for all involved; to help girls learn to succeed as a team through respect of coaches, players and other participants, and to develop a love for the game of softball to the high school level and beyond.

AGSA-Ames Thunder is a program focused on building the future of Ames High Softball. Given this focus, priority will be given to girls in the Ames Community School District if their talent is equal and/or better than girls from other school districts.

GOAL

It is the goal of Ames Thunder to build a competitive fastpitch softball program while providing a fun and exciting environment for players to develop softball skills, game knowledge, and the ability to work together as a team. We encourage and support our girls to excel on the field as well as in school, their community, and other activities. In order to ensure that each player clearly understands what is expected of both her and her guardians, the following agreement has been provided.

PLAYING TIME

Tournament softball is not Recreation Softball; it is a competitive environment where playing time is earned through ability, effort, and attitude demonstrated at practice and in games. The coaches will work to involve the players in positions best suited for their skills, however playing time and position placement is not guaranteed. Parents/Guardians are welcome to discuss questions involving individual playing time with the coaches during a scheduled time between the coach and the parents/guardians- not before, during, or after games/practices.

Subbing for other teams CANNOT interfere with the Ames Thunder practice or game schedule. Travel players are allowed to join community recreational leagues, but priority must be given to Ames Thunder games and practices. Recreational league games can be prioritized over travel practice but these absences need to be communicated to the head coach.

PRACTICES & GAMES ETIQUETTE

Practices are the key to developing solid all-around softball players and give coaches the time to determine a player's strengths and areas of improvement. Every effort should be made to attend team practices. We understand there might be times when a player can't attend practice. Please contact the coach ahead of time when a player will miss practice. All players should arrive for practice and be ready to take the field on time- cleats on, gloves out, ready to go. All necessary equipment should be brought to practice including glove, bat, fielding mask, and batting helmet.

In order to maximize practice time, it is essential that players give 100% of their effort and attention to practice.

Practice Time

1. Players will hustle on and off the field and between stations.
2. Players will not talk to anyone when a coach is talking to them specifically or to the team.
3. All equipment must be treated with respect and picked up at the end of practice.
4. All trash will be picked up before leaving the fields and dugouts.
5. All cell phones must be turned off or on vibrate in player's bags at all times.

Game Time

It is important to support our teammates and to learn from game time situations. In order to succeed in this, the following game time rules apply:

1. Players are to remain in the dugout during the entire game.
2. Players not playing are to keep a positive attitude and support team members that are currently on the field.
3. Players in the dugout are expected to be *actively* watching the game and encouraging teammates. This is for both offense and defense.
4. Players on the field should be moving with each pitch, actively talking game strategy, and have a positive attitude.
5. Parents/Guardians shall not coach players on the field this can conflict with coaching strategy and create confusion and anxiety for your player and others.
6. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to cheer and encourage all players during the game. Negative statements will not be tolerated. Coaches reserve the right to ask a parent/family member to leave a game if they are disrupting any players or coach.
7. All cell phones must be turned off or on vibrate in player's bags at all times

PLAYER CONTINUANCE

Players are not guaranteed to be on the same team year to year. If a special need is identified on the team for a new player, the coaches may hold individual tryouts to fill those needs. These tryouts may occur with the team or separate. Once a player signs a commitment to Ames Thunder, they will not be cut during the season to make room for a more skilled replacement player. The Director of Travel Teams must be consulted before any roster changes take place.

PLAYER DISMISSAL

A player's dismissal by the coaches is the last possible resort to resolving an issue that negatively impacts the organization and/or team. A player may be released if more than 3 documented violations occur to the Player/Parent Agreement. If a player asks to be released from Ames Thunder, they are still required to fulfill the original financial obligations and may be required to fulfill their tournament obligations if it puts the team in a position of not being able to play.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The grievance process will be as follows:

- a) The Head Coach of each team will try to resolve any issues arising on his/her team.
- b) If unsuccessful, the Head Coach will refer the grievance to the President of AGSA and the Director of Travel Teams (DTT) for resolution.
- c) If unsuccessful, the President and DTT will refer the grievance to the entire AGSA Board for resolution. The decision of the AGSA Board is final.

d) If the President or DTT are the Head Coach of the team, and/or if the parent is uncomfortable speaking to the President or DTT, for any reason, the issue may be raised to any AGSA board member for resolution.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

AGSA is a non-profit organization which relies on donations, sponsorships, fundraisers, and player fees in order to operate. All coaches and board members are volunteers and unpaid. The 2024-2025 season contains 7 months of practice and games (August, September, October, March, April, May, and June).

This fee is made up of the following:

- Team Fee - This team fee covers basic maintenance for facilities and equipment for fall & spring.
- Uniform Top Fee - Uniforms are purchased by Ames Thunder one time per year. Each player is responsible for purchasing their own cleats, black pants, orange belt, and orange socks for games.
- Tournament/Game Fee – This covers Fall League, Spring League, and USSSA tournaments. Additional fees may be charged if teams elect to play more games/tournaments.
- Player Insurance Fee - All players are required to be insured through USSSA.

The total player fees for the 2024-2025 season broken down by division:

| Division | Team Fee | Player Insurance | Uniform Top Fee | Tournament/Game Fee | Total |
|----------|----------|------------------|-----------------|---|--------------|
| 8U | \$200 | \$15 | \$55 | \$120 <i>(Does not include Tournaments. Will be added to player balance separately.)</i> | \$390 |
| 10U | \$200 | \$15 | \$55 | \$420 <i>(5 USSSA Tournaments)</i> | \$690 |
| 12U | \$200 | \$15 | \$55 | \$540 <i>(7 USSSA Tournaments)</i> | \$810 |
| 14U | \$200 | \$15 | \$55 | \$480 <i>(6 USSSA Tournaments)</i> | \$750 |
| 16U | \$200 | \$15 | \$55 | \$480 <i>(6 USSSA Tournaments)</i> | \$750 |

Payment Schedule

- \$100 due upon team offer acceptance (non-refundable).
- Remaining fees can be split into monthly payments if desired.
 - o First \$400 is due by November 1st.
 - o Remaining player balance is due by April 1st.

Missed/late payments may result in reduced playing time. Excessive failure to pay fees may also result in AGSA's use of third parties to collect payment.

Additional Fees

Throughout the season, the team may be adding other items to each player's uniform for tournament specific themes. At that time, the player will be required to pay the fee for the items being ordered. We will have fundraisers to help offset the cost. Ames Thunder always operates with a budget-friendly mindset when purchasing these items.

Fundraising

Ames Thunder makes efforts to hold fundraising events throughout the year to keep membership fees as low as possible and take pressure off individual players/families. Families are HIGHLY encouraged to promote and attend these fun events!

Ames Girls Softball Association
AMES THUNDER SOFTBALL
Player Code of Conduct

By being a part of the AGSA-Ames Thunder organization, you are a part of a team that prides itself on demonstrating good character on and off the field. The coaches will hold every player to a high standard and will expect all team members to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. Behavior that is deemed disruptive and detrimental to the team can bring consequences ranging from reduced playing time to dismissal from the team. The following items are in place to encourage players as athletes and individuals.

- a) Please try your best to be on time for all softball related activities. Please be courteous enough to call/text/send a message if you cannot attend or will be late.
- b) Practice at “Game Pace.” You are expected to treat practice just like a game. Practice is the time to learn and improve. We will not coach poor attitudes. Effort is a player’s choice and can’t be coached.
- c) Always support your teammates on and off the field!
- d) Be Coachable. Listen to your coaches’ instruction. Ask questions if you are not sure. Be willing to try new positions, new techniques. Be willing to do whatever your team needs you to do.
- e) Accept your role on the team. If you do not like it, work harder to change it. Playing time is earned in practice and on the field. Players are encouraged to talk with their coaches about their skills and playing time. The coaches are here to help you learn and improve!
- f) Do not transfer blame or make excuses. Learn from your mistakes and get better. Ask for help when you don’t understand something.
- g) Coaches do make mistakes. Always feel free to talk with your coach about questions you have during a time that doesn’t disrupt games or practices.
- h) Disrespect for coaches, guardians, teammates, and umpires will not be tolerated.
- i) Always lead by example on and off the field, setting the standard high for future Ames Thunder players to follow.
- k) Injuries will be taken seriously. It is important that players and guardians have open and honest communication with coaches regarding injuries. Playing with soreness and slight pain is part of sports; however, playing injured is not. Health of the player is very important. If you are injured, please see your doctor and follow their orders. Injured players are still required to attend practices and games unless communicated otherwise.

Ames Girls Softball Association
AMES THUNDER SOFTBALL
Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

Parents/Guardians play a huge role in the development of a successful softball player. Your role is every bit as important as that of the coaches, and every bit as difficult. That is why we welcome your presence at every practice and every game. We try very hard to be a family-oriented organization, and your participation is a major part of our success.

- a) Encourage your player to communicate with the coaches. It is very important that the players build the confidence to interact with and establish a healthy interactive relationship with their coaches.
- b) Make sure your player is on time to all team activities. Always know, if you as guardians cannot get your player to an event, we are a team, and someone will help you.
- c) Communicate with the coaches and respond to emails, texts or messages so we know you got information provided.
- d) Please come to any of your player's coaches if you have a problem or concern. Your thoughts are important to us. We will work to address your concerns. If we cannot help, we will explain why and work with you to find another way to address your concerns. Complaining to other parents cannot solve your problems, nor can we solve problems that we do not know about. If you respect our organization enough to allow us to play such a big part in your child's life, please respect us enough to know that we have your child's best interest in mind.
- e) Guardians play their role at home and outside the softball field. On the softball field, the coaches play their role. Please do not coach your player during practices or games. Your comments may detract from what the coach is doing, they give the player another thing to think about, and it interferes with the development of the player/coach relationship.
- f) Please stay out of the team dugout area during games. Make every effort to ensure that your player has everything they need prior to the start of the game (water, equipment, etc.) If your player needs something, the coach may give them permission to leave the dugout or request a guardian's assistance.
- g) Never question the coaches during a game. We will meet 1-on-1, in a productive manner to clear up any misunderstandings. Coaches do make mistakes.
- h) Be supportive of your player after good games and difficult games. Your support matters more than you realize. Focus on the good first!
- i) Please tell the coach before practice or games if you think your player has an illness or injury that will prevent them from participating. Please do not rely solely on the coach to make medical decisions.
- j) Be prepared for tournament weekends. Tournament play often starts very early in the morning (8:00 AM) and can last all day. Sometimes games are played back-to-back, and other times the team may have to wait several hours between games. Coaches will communicate tournament schedules as soon as they get them; however, Saturday game times are usually not set until the Tuesday prior to the weekend. Tournament weekends can be a great time to interact with other Ames Thunder families and build an atmosphere that allows the girls to develop "Team Chemistry," which is a winning quality that cannot be coached. If you are new to tournament softball, please ask the coach and other parents for advice. It can be great fun, but if not prepared, it might be an overwhelming experience before you gain an understanding of how things work.

k) Be a good example for your player. They are watching you and are still impressionable kids.

l) Guardians are expected to comply with all park rules, including the use of alcohol while at the park. Most parks prohibit or restrict the use of alcohol and smoking.

PLEASE REMEMBER

- I'm a KID
- It's just a GAME
- The officials are HUMAN
- My coach is a VOLUNTEER
- NO college scholarships will be handed out

Ames Girls Softball Association
AMES THUNDER SOFTBALL
Coaches Code of Conduct

Coaches must:

- a) Exemplify positive and encouraging behavior that is representative of being an adult, a coach, a member of Ames Thunder, and a leader of young women.
- b) Demonstrate high ideals, good sportsmanship, and desirable attitudes in personal behavior and demand the same standards from their players. Maintain self-control at all times.
- c) Emphasize to their players and other coaches the importance of proper behavior and the necessity of restraining from entering the playing field to engage in an altercation of any kind.
- e) Cooperate with and assist the AGSA Board in the planning, scheduling, and conduct of Ames Thunder activities. Coaches and Assistant Coaches are not guaranteed to coach the same players each season since teams are formed annually.
- f) Utilize positive educational methods in coaching; giving all players an opportunity to develop and use initiative, leadership, and judgment.
- g) Pay close attention to the physical condition and well-being of players; refusing to jeopardize the health of an individual for the sake of improving their team's chances of winning.
- h) Discourage profanity or abusive language directed toward anyone involved with Ames Thunder and its activities.
- i) Refuse to disparage opponents, officials, or others associated with Ames Thunder or its activities.
- j) Conduct themselves properly when raising a question about or discussing a call with an official.
- k) Ames Thunder coaches have an obligation to participate in the building of the AGSA-Ames Thunder organization, not just their team. The Director of Travel Teams must be consulted before any roster changes take place.
- l) Coaches are expected to interact with guardians, fostering an atmosphere of open communications, trust and team.
- m) The coaches should ensure that players and guardians understand what is involved in tournament play and provide enough guidance to ensure families are properly prepared for the early and long days that often accompany tournament play.
- n) Coaches should establish team rules, coaching philosophy, and properly set player and guardian expectations on practice participation, playing time, in-game interaction between player and guardians, etc.
- o) Coaches should conduct organized and productive practices. Practice should be conducted in a serious, "Game pace" manor. Practice is for learning and improving. Be prepared for practice and set the tone for your team.

Ames Girls Softball Association
AMES THUNDER SOFTBALL
2024-2025 Contract

Effective from signature date through July 31, 2024

I, _____, have agreed to play for AGSA-Ames Thunder for the 2024-2025 season and agree to follow the policies and procedures contained in the Player/Guardian agreement and all terms and conditions set forth below.

I agree there are no guarantees about player position or playing time and that these decisions are at the sole discretion of the Head Coach.

I understand the breakdown of fees and agree to pay all fees by the requested due dates and that if they are not paid on time, it may affect playing time. Additionally, excessive failure to pay fees may also result in AGSA's use of third parties to collect payment.

Player: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____