

## **MISSION**

**Our Mission:** *The Cumberland Vets Softball is a sports organization dedicated to teaching the softball fundamentals and skills while stressing good sportsmanship, leadership, and peer and parent communication through positive coaching. The Vets organization was originally started in 1998 as a baseball team, with the first 10u softball team starting in 1999 and ending in 2010. In summer 2021, there was a need for a softball team for the girls in the community of Cumberland County and the Vets were reborn with 8u, 10u, and 12u teams. Cumberland Vets strive to contribute to our youth by providing the best athletic environment for these young athletes and their families. It is our goal to prepare these girls to learn the game of softball in a fun, healthy, positive, and safe environment. We highlight the importance of respect for parents, teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials. We not only strive to teach game skills, but also life skills, as well as help them build lasting friendships while allowing young athletes to be the best they can be. We want every player to **want** to keep coming back year-after-year to be a Cumberland Vet.*

## **TEAM, TOURNAMENTS & PRACTICES**

- **PLAYER SELECTION**

The coaching staff will deliberate and identify the players they want for each team. Players are selected based on three criteria: 1) attitude and commitment, 2) current skills and potential to learn, and 3) fit and alignment with the team and its philosophy of teamwork.

- **FACILITIES**

For practices during cold weather, we utilize the Cumberland School gyms and the Neal Center YMCA. Outdoor practices and home games will be held at the Toledo American Legion Field or Greenup's Haughton Park. Practice time shall be devoted to things such as hitting, fielding, and pitching; as well as speed, strength, and agility training. Each team may practice up to twice a week depending on the coach's preference.

- **SEASON GAMES**

Teams will play in tournaments and double-headers throughout the calendar year. Teams will likely play in a fall tournament and a few double headers, possibly a winter tournament, and a summer schedule. Players and families are expected to make a commitment to the practice and game schedule.

- **TIME OFF**

The Vets organization recognizes the need for athletes to have time away from the sport. All coaches are to choose a six to eight-week window of time in which their team does not practice or play games. The six to eight weeks can be split into two timeframes (e.g. two three-week breaks, one two-week and one four-week break, etc.) Coaches may hold individual or small group specialized practices during this time; however, all practices should be voluntary and initiated by the player(s).

- **UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT**

Each player will receive jersey tops, a pair of pants, two belts, two pairs of socks, a batting helmet, and equipment/bat bag. If a player leaves the organization, they are expected to return any and all provided apparel and equipment that is not personalized with the player's name. For additional cost families can purchase additional uniform pieces.

## **FINANCIAL OBLIGATION**

Cumberland Vets Softball is an organization that solely operates through volunteers and is funded by player fees, fundraisers, and sponsorships. It is the head coach's responsibility to collect these player fees by **January 31<sup>st</sup>** of each year and engage families in our fundraising efforts. Our Fall fundraiser is our Cumberland Smoke-Out competition. Each player is responsible for selling raffle tickets and helping at the event. Our Spring fundraiser is selling sponsor shirts, and each player must sell at least 5 shirts. Parents are expected to fill shifts in the concession stand during any home games/tournaments, as this is also a source of fundraising during the season.

Each family is committed financially to the team. The expenses for the 2022-2023 season are **\$350 per player for the 10u, 12u, and 14u age groups, and \$250 per player for the 8u age group. Families with multiple athletes in the organization will receive a \$50 discount per player.** This covers items such as tournament fees, uniform tops, pants, socks, helmet, equipment bag, umpire costs, and indoor practice facility. Travel, food, and lodging expenses will be the responsibility of individual families.

The last thing we want as coaches is a player excluded because of financial reasons! Please talk with a coach to discuss options for a payment plan if needed.

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

All players on 8u, 10u and 12u teams must wear a facemask when playing any infield position. Players on 14u team must wear a facemask when playing first, third, or pitching.

**This rule was implemented beginning with the 2018 season in order to provide the safest possible environment for players. There will be no exceptions.**

- **PLAYING TIME**

All playing time decisions will be made by the coaches. Since this is a competitive team, playing time in tournaments will be based on game strategy, including which players have earned a spot on the field to compete. Players should expect to compete for playing time by demonstrating a positive attitude, being a team player, and working to improve their skills. All players should learn that they play an important role on the team. These roles may change based on the game situation and strategy being employed by the coaches. Sitting on the bench, being a designated

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hitter, being an extra hitter, and/or being on the field are all of equal value. All position assignments will be determined by the coaches. Each player should have a positive attitude and should strive to be better at her position(s). Coaches will make their decisions about position assignments and batting order that are in the best interests of the team. Coaches will recognize attitude and effort in their decisions. The batting order will be determined with the benefit of the team in mind. The best hitter does not always bat 3rd or 4th-the situation will dictate order. All players should strive to improve their hitting skills and to accept the place in the order they have been assigned. Remember, the 9<sup>th</sup> hitter is just as important as the lead off hitter!

### **PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Demonstrate self-control and respect for others at all times
- Remember that participation is a privilege that is not to be abused with unsportsmanlike conduct
- Show respect to all opponents, umpires, spectators, and coaches
- Accept the judgment of managers/coaches, umpires, and tournament officials
- Never argue a call with an umpire
- Refrain from use of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs
- Remember that improper behavior while in uniform reflects poorly upon the player, the team, and the organization.
- Understand and abide by the rules of the game
- Accept winning and losing with grace and dignity
- Treat all equipment with respect, regardless of ownership
- Avoid the use of profane or abusive language
- Arrive at practices and games on time (cleats on and ready to go)
- Hustle and maintain a positive attitude; these are expected of all players at all times
- And remember **JUST HAVE FUN!**

### **PARENT AND FAMILY CODE OF CONDUCT**-expected of **all** spectators attending Vets games

- Applaud good efforts in victory or in defeat.
- Reinforce positive points, never yelling negatively at any players, coaches or umpires.
- Maintain a “Good Citizen” spirit and attitude.
- Never use foul language embarrassing your daughter, the fans and the Vets Organization.
  
- Although you might disagree with a particular coaching decision, you will respect the coaches, recognizing their volunteerism.
- Support your player, her team, and the organization with fundraising and sponsorship efforts.
- Stress good health habits for continued player development.
- There will be absolutely no interference, no contact, or interruptions from outside the fence or dugout by parents, family or friends at practices and games.
- Notify the coaches in a timely manner before vacations and of any absence of a practice or a game

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- Coaches will not discuss player position and/or playing time with parents.
- Parents and family members will not directly question officials on rules or calls. Any questions should go through the coaching staff in a respectful manner.
- If Parent or Family Conduct becomes an issue, *that player will assume disciplinary measures of reduced playing time*. This disciplinary action will be enforced by the Vets Board and/or Team Coaches.

***Let the coaches coach and the players play, your job is to stay positive for these girls.***

### **REASONS TO DISMISS A PLAYER:**

- Failure to follow rules regarding conduct during games/tournaments that leads to the player, coach, and/or team being disqualified
- Sexual, physical, and/or verbal abuse of any umpire, parent/spectator, coach, or player
- Violation of any board policies or rules
- Inability to control personal behavior and/or emotions during practices or games
- Regularly/consistently missing practices, games, and/or tournaments
- Inappropriate use of social media and/or publicly badmouthing the organization
- Any physical altercation will result in an immediate dismissal from the team for the remainder of the season, no questions asked.
- Having a family member who engages in the behavior outlined above

### **PLAYER/FAMILY/COACH CONFLICT**

In the event that a challenge or issue arises, the player/family involved is expected to initiate a conversation with a member of the team's coaching staff, preferably the head coach. We ask that you wait 24 hours after the incident, going into the conversation with possibly a cooler head and clear mind. If waiting would create bigger problems, all involved need to remember the code of conduct and work to conduct a constructive conversation. If the player/family is not comfortable addressing the coach or doing so has not created a mutually agreed upon solution, the family may contact a board member to discuss concerns.

### **TEAM RULES**

The following rules have been established to provide guidance to the players regarding our expectations of them during games and practices. The list below can be changed and added to at any given time.

#### **FACILITIES**

- When leaving our practice and/or game facilities (dugouts), whether indoor or outdoor, it should be left exactly how we arrived if not cleaner.

### **PLAYING TIME**

- Expect unequal playing time
- Tournament games we play to win
- Practice attendance will affect playing time, exceptions will be made for mandatory school events or other sporting events for which a player participates in, but missing practice for non-school events or other non-sports will affect playing time unless cleared by a coach.
- Tardiness to the game may result in decreased playing time. Players are expected to be ready to warm up at the time given by your coach, that means cleats on ready to go.

*“If you’re 10 min early you’re on time; if you’re on time you’re late” – Denny Throneburg.*

### **SELF-DISCIPLINE & ATTITUDE**

- Respect everyone on the field: umpires, opponents, your team, coaches, and yourself.
- Complaining to officials through words, expressions, or gestures will result in disciplinary action according to the four steps in the Code below
- Respect your coaches’ decisions
- Throwing anything because of anger will result in removal from the game
- Stay positive and be supportive
- If you make an error, learn from it and move on

### **PRE-GAME BEHAVIOR/RULES**

- Warm up, follow your coaches’ directions
- Do not ask a batting line up or where you are playing
- Do not ask to play a certain position
- Expect to sit out part of every game, whether it happens or not

### **DUGOUT BEHAVIOR/RULES**

- Keep the dugout neat – bats, bags, helmets, and gloves in order
- Always know where your equipment is
- Support your teammates
- No pouting about playing time or position
- Sport drinks, water, and gum are okay in the dugout – no other food
- No leaving the dugout during games, except to take the field or with coach permission
- No talking with fans during the game
- No sitting down in the dugout during the game – be on the fence, engaged

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- Never say negative things about the opponents or umpires
- Non-players are not allowed in the dugout
- Stay focused on the game at all times - no discussion other than softball during games
- When on-deck, stay focused on the pitcher and take swings as she delivers her warm up pitches
- Watch the pitcher to determine specific pitches she may throw

**FIELD BEHAVIOR/RULES**

- Pitchers warm up should be like pitching in a game
- Pitchers need to remain positive no matter what the umpire is calling, regardless of how many hits are given up or how many walks you give.
- Players will run on and off the field during games and practices, there is absolutely no walking on the field.
- No chatter to the batter
- Be alert of your coach, if they tell you to move, move and let them know you heard them.
- Protective face masks will be worn

**BASE RUNNING**

- Watch and listen for your coach, look for your sign.
- Run hard always, no watching the ball. Trust your coach.
- When stealing bases, run hard unless you hear a hit ball then stop and find it.
- Be confident and aggressive, always looking to take two
- Always plan on sliding.



## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

An organization/team code of conduct has been developed to include players, coaches, parents, and spectators. Players and parents are expected to sign that they agree with the Code. Player violation of the Code will result in the following:

**First offense:** Verbal warning by the coach

**Second offense:** Removal from the game

**Third offense:** Removal from the game plus a one game suspension

**Fourth offense:** Removal from the team

In order to advance the principles of sportsmanship and fair play and to promote mutual respect among players, coaches, umpires, and spectators, Cumberland Vets Softball has established a Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct shall govern the actions of players, coaches, and spectators and is intended to provide guidance and establish clear expectations for all involved. The Code was not conceived to address every possible circumstance; however, it shall serve as the team's standard. It is the obligation of players, coaches, and spectators to comply with the terms and provisions of the Code of Conduct. Any person violating the Code shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of the privilege to participate in or attend tournaments and games.

## **PLAYER & PARENT AGREEMENT**

We hereby certify that we have read this document and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for players and parents and agree to abide by the rules of the team and organization.

Player Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Player Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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