



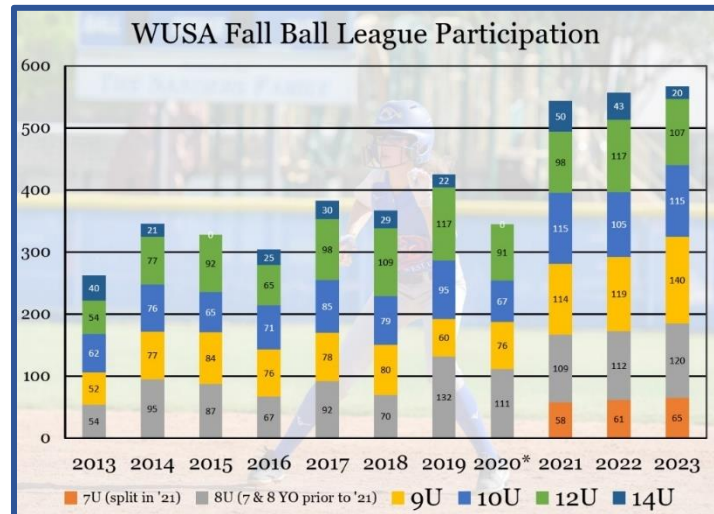
West University Softball Association

Summer – Fall 2023 Newsletter

WUSA Friends and Families:

We started the summer and fall WUSA seasons off hot in a number of ways. While the temperatures outside soared, so did our tournament teams. They were hot on the field earning regular top placement at events both around Houston and outside the state. WUSA fielded three, 12U, four 10U, and three 8U division teams. Over 103 WUSA players enjoyed the opportunity to play an average of 34 games with two practices per week over an eight-week span. The skill development was great but nothing compared to the fun that was had and the friendships that developed among WUSA players and families.

As Fall Ball started, we got no relief from the heat, but we were greatly relieved with our fall program registrations. Once again, a record number of girls enrolled in our fall season, with 567 girls.



We enhanced the skill developmental offerings for players this fall by instituting our WUSA Pro's Program. To augment our league's capacity to develop not only our players, but also our league managers and coaches, WUSA teamed up with three, "WUSA Lead Softball Pros".

Coaches Priscilla Riser (Head Coach St. Agness Academy), Kim Randolph (Former Head Coach Episcopal High School) and Angela Froboese (Head Coach University of St. Thomas) along with their colleagues and players provided high-level



instruction to our players at the weekly Pitcher-Catcher sessions and UST supported team practices. Over 75 player-sessions were filled each week at our pitcher-catcher sessions to help the league develop players in these two skill positions.



We also initiated a development program focused on enhancing the position-player's skills. While the program got off to a slow start due to three rain outs, the sessions were well received, and enrollments filled up to capacity indicating a great desire to get





more foundational skills development. These sessions helped players hone their softball skills and learn/correct mechanical issues with their throwing, catching, fielding, and hitting.



WUSA players training side-by-side with high-level, college players and expert coaches was a great benefit to our players, parent-coaches and families this fall season.



We want to thank our “WUSA Pros” and our affiliated coaches for supporting us this fall and enhancing the quality of the softball experience for our players.



WUSA Auxiliary Updates



Our auxiliary facilitates so many of our operations that get our girls on the field. This fall, our auxiliary was essential to organizing player uniforms while also keeping us all outfitted with the latest WUSA gear through our [WUSA Store](#). To get involved with this amazing team, email auxiliarywusa@gmail.com [Follow us on Facebook too!](#)

WUSA “ACES” Program Keeps Going Strong



WUSA introduced the “WUSA – Associates Committed to Excellence in Softball (ACES)” role to our league’s volunteerism ranks in 2023. ACES are recognizable in their distinctive blue shirts, and blue hats with

the ACES logo. Our ACES opened and closed our campus throughout the fall season, supported

WUSA Associate

- **Qualifications:**
 - Has current player in the league
 - Current, cleared background screen
 - Energetic about the mission of the league and its advancement
 - Possesses a skill aligned with need of the league
- **Responsibilities:**
 - Field oversight/maintenance needs as scheduled (~3 nights per season)
 - Opens campus and closes down campus at the end of the day
 - Serves as a liaison to WUSA Board and Executive levels when on duty)
 - Tarp Team member
 - Associate would be aligned with one of the following activities as discussed with the Associates Director.
 - Support a Spring Player Evaluation Session by running a station (e.g. timing running, fielding, throwing, hitting skill stations) while division managers score players.)
 - Support the preparation and return of WUSA-provided team equipment before season starts and at the end of the season

various tasks to maintain the facilities and provided support to our umpire crew and managers for rules interpretation when needed. Joining the ACES program is another way to support the league beyond involvement in your daughter’s team. Email the [WUSA helpline](#) if you have an interest in joining.

Hat Tip to the 2023 Fall Season ACES

Brian Bova	Brent Hodges	Greg McEldowney	Mark Prescott
Phillip Bunting	Mike Jones	Andy Mejia	Frank Rivas
Rhett Davis	John Keller	Will Mejia	John Robertson
Andrew Driscoll	Mike Kim	Matt Moake	Heidi Slay
John Galfione	Brad Kirklin	Paul Monsour	Tom Vetterling
Russell Gray	Greg Koush	Nick Nicodemus	Shawn Williams
Lacey Grimm	Anne Le	Jamie Nodler	Keith Wolf
Tracy Hale	JB McAllister	Chris O'Neil	Lee Wright
Marco Hirvensalo	Jenny McCarthy	Bradley Olitzki	Wei Zhang

WUSA Spring 2024 Program Updates

WUSA is continually improving the quality of the softball experience and over the last several seasons has made numerous rule changes to benefit the league and quality of play. Continuing with this trend, starting Spring 2024, we will introduce a modification to our Age Divisions and Rules of Play for 11 and 12 year-olds. With the growing number of players in the league moving into the 12U division, there is an opportunity to split the division which historically combined 11 and 12 year-olds. There will be two divisions by age: one for 11 year-olds and one for 12-year-olds. Projected player enrollments allow approximately 9 teams per division. The separation aims to align players of similar skill and maturity levels and worked well when the 8U division was split into distinct 7 year-old and 8 year-old divisions. WUSA continues to allow players to play down a division based on skill need and upon parent request.

Rules for the 11U and 12U division will have a few differences. The league rule that players play an infield position within the 1st three innings will be removed at the 12U & 14U levels. This change recognizes the natural position specialization that develops as players advance in their softball career. All other rules remain the same.

WUSA wants to be your daughter's softball home through the 14U division and will continue assessing our offerings to maintain a strong enrollment through this division. WUSA's mission is to support, a wide spectrum of softabll interests. Whether you are a recreational-minded player/ family who want a touch of softball while seeking the camaraderie and fun that come from playing team sports, or you are a family who desires a more competative, intense, and nearly year-round softball experience, WUSA has your fit. WUSA offers a blend of recreation and competative, tournament team offerings to match your level of softball intinsity. We also uderstand that your intinsity level may change from year-to-year and season-to-season as your player explores other interests. No matter where you are in your sotball journey, WUSA is reliable organization that offers you convenient, premier facilities and a commitment to our league's values.



WUSA Softball: The Softball Experience that Grows *with You*

6U (5 & 6 year-olds) This is the earliest introduction WUSA softball and includes a combination of "coach-pitch" and t-ball. There are no strikeouts. Players are encouraged to hit. The focus is on fun and instruction. Teams are arranged by friend and school requests though all enrolled players are placed on a team. No player evaluations are conducted. An 11" safety ball is used. Practices are once a week (one day between Monday and Thursday). Games are on Saturdays. No season standings are kept & no end-of-season tournament is played. The 6U division is open for the spring season only. No fall program is available for 5-6 year-olds.

7U (7 year-olds) A coach pitches to players using an 11-inch safety ball (DX5). All players play in the field every inning and all players bat. There are modified overthrow and baserunning rules to encourage players to attempt plays and develop their skills. To allow all players the chance to develop knowledge and skills at all the positions, WUSA requires rotation of players between infield and outfield positions each game. Practices are once a week (one day between Monday and Thursday) and games are on Saturdays.

8U (8 year-olds) Coaches pitch to players using an 11-standard ball. Overthrow rules become more limited to challenge players' skills, but also encourage players to attempt plays. All players will play in the field every inning and all players bat. To allow all players the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills at all the positions, WUSA requires rotations of players between infield and outfield positions each game. Practices are once a week (one day between Monday and Thursday) and games are on Saturdays.

9U (9 year-olds) Players pitch 1 inning each game with the remaining innings pitched by a machine. Modified overthrow rules are even more limited to challenge players to attempt plays. The dropped 3rd strike is in play. All players will play in the field every inning and all players bat. To allow all players the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills at all the positions, WUSA requires player rotation between infield and outfield positions each game. Practices are once a week (one day between Monday and Thursday) and games are on Saturdays.

10U (10 year-olds) For the 1st half of the season, players pitch 2 innings per game with the remaining innings pitched by a machine. The 2nd half of the season is all girl pitch. A baserunning rule to limit advancement on steals is the only rule modification. All players play in the field every inning and all players bat. To promote a player's skills develop and knowledge of all positions, WUSA requires rotations of players between infield and outfield positions. **Practices once a week on the weekends and games are weekdays once to twice a week.**

11U (11 year-olds) Introduced Spring 2024, our 11U division recognizes a major transition in girls fast-pitch softball. Starting at 11U players use a standard 12" softball and pitch from 40 ft. The larger softball and longer pitching distance is an adjustment for many players. In this division, standard softball rules apply. Teams field 9 players defensively while all players bat. WUSA rules to encourage player movement from infield to outfield positions remain. Practices are once a week on the weekends and games are weekdays once to twice a week.

12U (12 year-olds): The 12U Spring Division is the pinnacle year for WUSA Spring play. 12U showcases WUSA's balance of high-level softball, a supportive team environment, & fun. Standard softball rules apply. Teams field 9 players defensively while all players bat in the lineup. Recognizing the development of player-position specialization at this age, league rules for rotation among infield and outfield positions no longer apply. Practices are once a week on weekends and games are weekdays once to twice a week.

14U (13 & 14 year-olds) Players to continue to grow their skills as they prepare for middle-school and high-school softball with a pitching distance of 43 ft. The number of teams formed depends on the number of players and players at skill positions (pitcher & catcher).

- Fall Ball: Teams alternate weekly between intramural scrimmages & college coach and player-led practices
- Spring Ball: WUSA teams compete against area middle schools and other 14U recreation league teams in a WUSA-led cooperative league. Practices are once a week on Sunday evenings. Games are weekdays once to twice a week. Approximately 2-4 games each spring are played outside of WUSA facilities.
- Players completing 8 WUSA seasons (Fall or Spring) and a 14U Spring division season are honored as WUSA Graduates

For 7 – 12U Divisions:

- Player evaluations are conducted
- Teams are formed through a draft process
- All enrolled players make a team
- Season standings are maintained (Spring Season)
- A regular season Champion and Runner-up recognized (Spring Season)
- An end-of season tournament is held for all teams per division and a Tournament Champion and Runner-up are recognized (Fall & Spring Seasons)

Players 7 years and older can opt to tryout for Tournament Teams (TT)

WUSA TTs are open to WUSA players and families seeking more frequent and more competitive softball. Teams fit into four age groups (8U, 10U, 12U and 14U) and compete across the greater Houston & surrounding areas during weekend tournaments.

Players are assigned to a team within a skill-based tiered structure fitting the player's skills and fit for the team.

WUSA forms as many TT teams as there are players available and as skill positions (pitcher/catcher) allow.

Summer TTs begin competition the weekend after the WUSA Spring Recreation Tournament concludes and may run through the first week of July based on the manager and players' availability.

Fall TTs form after tryouts in August and play September - November.

Between our Fall & Spring Recreation seasons, and the Summer and Fall TT programs, WUSA offers the softball enthusiast ~9 months of softball a year with the option of high-end, highly-competitive play at each age division.

Parents are invited to reach out to our WUSA helpline to request time with a WUSA board member to discuss the full range of options the league provides for player progression and family participation.



WUSA Alum Gives Back

This past year, Lillian Pate reached out to WUSA to identify a project whereby she could give back to WUSA on her way to earning her Eagle Scout rank in Scouts BSA. Lillian is a senior at St. John's, and a WUSA alum. She played Fall and Spring seasons starting in 9U all the way through 14U. She was a WUSA summer 10U tournament team player in 2017 and



played three years on

the St. John's middle school team. She is now completing her fourth season on the St. John's varsity team where she is a team captain. The WUSA Board and Lillian identified needed repairs at our Bayland Fields campus which would benefit not only WUSA's use of the fields but also the wider softball community which has access to the fields through WUSA.

Our WUSA Bayland facilities needed updates to approach the quality of our other WUSA fields. As part of the project, Lillian installed new, protective fence toppers, repaired the dugout roofs, fixed hitting cage nets, and painted the foul poles. Lillian's updates allowed use of our Bayland facilities again this fall for a number of high-school softball games on Monday evenings. These events showcased a number of WUSA alumni who play for various area high-school teams.

With the league's investment in new infield dirt and field maintenance combined with Lillian's hard work, our Bayland Fields are in a much better position to host regular WUSA events moving forward. On behalf of the league, we want to recognize Lillian and thank her for remembering WUSA. It is inspiring to see young leaders emerge as a byproduct of their time in WUSA.



Sponsorship

Thank you to [our sponsors](#) who help us provide top-notch softball experiences. Please support [our sponsors](#) and let them know you appreciate their commitment to WUSA. Sponsorships are available at different price points and WUSA can create customized opportunities. To discuss, [contact us](#).

From all of us at WUSA, we hope you added new memories and new friendships during the Summer and Fall 2023 WUSA seasons. We wish you a peaceful winter and will see you next year.

Michael Liebl

WUSA Executive Vice President



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Spring 2024 Season Early Bird Registration – November 6th – November 10th
- Spring 2024 Regular Registration – November 11th – December 25th, 2023
- Spring 2024 Manager Meetings Begin – January 10th, 2024
- Spring 2024 Season Practices Begin – Week of January 22nd, 2024

If you missed any of our past newsletters, link to them here:

[Winter 2022 – Spring 2023](#)

[Summer – Fall 2022](#)

[Winter 2021 - Spring 2022](#)

[Summer - Fall 2021](#)

[Winter 2020 - Spring 2021](#)

[Fall 2020](#)

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