

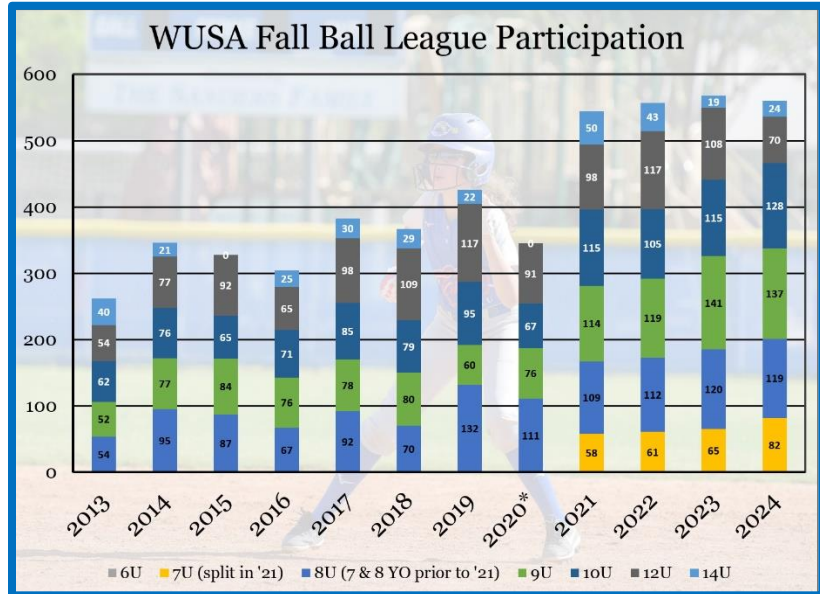


# West University Softball Association

## Summer – Fall 2024 Newsletter

WUSA Friends and Families:

As we near the close of WUSA fall ball, we reflect back on another great season. The league’s strong enrollment numbers continue akin to the past several years. Based on the participation and smiles on the fields, the girls are enjoying their experience. We were blessed with great weather this fall compared to



past seasons with only a handful of practices and games rained out. With the cooperative weather, the developmental session offerings saw an uptick in participation – both in players and sessions.

We are excited for the spring season and look forward to seeing both those playing fall ball and those returning back to WUSA on the field after the New Year!

Danny Hughes, WUSA Vice President and Fall Commissioner

### **President’s Message**

Dear WUSA family,

WUSA continues not only to have tremendous player enrollment, but also to garner amazing engagement from our families in the league. The ability for parents to actively participate in their daughter’s sport as a manager, coach, team scorekeeper, or just an encouraging spectator is uniquely WUSA, and an aspect I know many of us treasure. We continue to be a league dedicated to our core principles of Safety, Fun, Skill-Development, and Winning (in that order). Because of these values and the positive endorsement of existing families who bring new players into the league, we continue to grow. Add to the fact that we have the finest softball facilities in the area and provide open access to our families, we are the envy of many area leagues.

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On the heels of a concessions and bathroom expansion in 2022, REALLY BIG THINGS ARE COMING to WUSA! With your help, a South Campus facilities expansion that will cover us, no matter the weather is coming soon. We look forward to sharing more in the coming weeks.



Our Fall 2024 newsletter showcases a few aspects that make WUSA great. We revisit WUSA's Summer and Fall Tournament Teams' activities, showcase our skill development focus that is a hallmark of our fall recreation season, highlight our recovery efforts from the impact of Hurricane Beryl, and outline our plans for the upcoming spring season that continue our revised player's age division criteria.

We are ever appreciative of our WUSA board members, Auxiliary, ACES, managers, coaches, parents and players that make WUSA great and run smoothly (most of the time). On that note,



there is one group in our softball family that often goes under-appreciated: our crew-in-blue, our umpires. Umpires, like a utility service, are never really appreciated until they are not there. Their absence is being felt nationally by many leagues because there are just not enough umpires choosing to support youth sports. The reasons are multi-factorial, but it is not the players. WUSA took a small step this fall to recognize our umpires with our first annual,

“Luv-ya-Blue” week. WUSA seeks to attract the best umpires for our league and showing our appreciation for them is long overdue.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the WUSA News and mark your calendars, Early Bird registration opens November 11<sup>th</sup>.

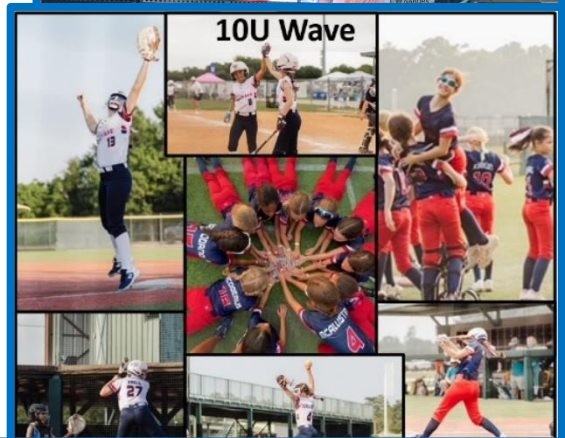
Michael Liebl, WUSA President (2024 – 2025)

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## WUSA Summer & Fall Tournament Team Updates

This past summer WUSA supported a record 12 teams. WUSA's tournament team program provides our league players an extended season in a competitive environment. Each team showed growth and had many successes as they played around Houston and beyond. Several teams had the opportunity to play in Oklahoma City the weekend of the Women's College World Series and attend the college games. All WUSA tournament teams attended a special night with the Astros.

No matter where your daughter is starting out, if she has interest in playing more softball, more competitive softball, or extending her season, we encourage you to consider WUSA tournament teams. WUSA fields tournament teams at all skill levels to grow the abilities of your daughter. While the softball reps are great, the opportunity to form even closer bonds among the players and families make our WUSA tournament team experience one you'll never forget!



As a complement to our recreation offering, our Fall Tournament teams formed in August and early September and are competing in events about every other weekend. Similar to the fall recreation season, the Fall Tournament Team Season is one where players are developing new skills as many players are playing at a new age level. The tournament play circuit has a different vibe in the fall. Cooler weather adds a different feel to the games and teams get into the fun in October with lots of Halloween themed events.



This fall, WUSA is especially proud to field two 14U teams. This strong 14U interest shows the continued passion by our league's players and families in high-level softball offerings at this age division. Our 14U teams are competing against highly accomplished national teams at showcase events and are preparing these ladies for high school softball and careers beyond, both on and off the field.



Our 12U Wave team has developed to the point they are not only competing in class C and Open level events, but they are also winning.



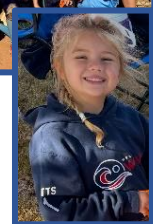
With strong interest and talent to match, WUSA fielded two, 10U teams this fall. Our 10U Wave



team is made up of mostly 2<sup>nd</sup> year 10U players. They are playing great ball at a high level and are enjoying lots of success in the win column. Our 10U Breakers team is comprised of rising, 1<sup>st</sup> time 10U players and has exceeded expectations. Players are now hitting off



live girl pitch regularly and developing their skills and having success at the pitcher and catcher positions.



Our 8U Wave team wraps up our fall tournament teams contention and are having a blast. Being the youngest tournament team offering by WUSA means our 8U team prioritizes fun, silliness and are all about the team camaraderie. Cool fall weather brings the chance to don the beloved WUSA hoodie in games which is a rare, but welcome, clothing option in Houston.

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## Facilities & Equipment Updates:

WUSA's commitment to improving our facilities continued this summer and fall. We completed construction of a batting cage at McGovern campus and recently installed lights for this cage as well. A new field tarp for McGovern is in the works to allow contingencies for inclement weather.

And speaking of inclement weather, WUSA did suffer damage from Hurricane Beryl. Our grounds crew



team and volunteers along with the support of our South Campus Sports Association leadership stepped up to get repairs started to our facilities. At our South Campus location, we replaced the wooden fencing between our property and the adjacent townhome complexes, removed damaged shade structures from SC #4 and #5, repaired outfield fencing on SC#4, and replaced the damaged backstop netting on SC#4 and SC#5 all before the fall season started. We repaired all the portable pitching screens so they were mobile again and replaced several protective screens in our batting cages. Shade canopies for #4 and #5 will be installed over the winter break just in time for our spring season.



At our Bayland Campus, we replaced the damaged dugout covers for all three fields and added netting to a batting cage there. New turf for this batting cage and those at South Campus will be installed in time for the spring season in part due to the generous sponsorship of [Southern Turf Co.](#)



Our McGovern campus saw the replacement of the outfield fence screen and shade coverings for the stands which are done in partnership with AOS.

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## WUSA Auxiliary Updates



Even though our auxiliary does not host as many extracurricular events in the fall, they are still very active. The auxiliary team ensured our concessions program was well managed. Our WUSA auxiliary continues to keep parents and fans alike outfitted with the latest WUSA gear. Visit our [WUSA Store](#) to get more! To get involved with this amazing team, email [auxiliarywusa@gmail.com](mailto:auxiliarywusa@gmail.com) [Follow us on Facebook too!](#)

## WUSA “ACES” Step up for 2024- 2025 Season

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 open and close our campus throughout the fall season, support various tasks to maintain the facilities and provided support to our umpire crew and managers for rules interpretation when needed.



Joining the WUSA 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 for the next season (Fall 2024 and Spring 2025).

Andrew Beaupre	Drew Firestone	Lee Wright	Matt Moake
Ryan Brauer	John Galifone	Chad Kuck	Paul Monsour
Brad Bucher	Russell Gray	JB McAllister	Jamie Nodler
Will Byers	Ted Hartz	Kevin McCarthy	John Plumb
Rhett Davis	Marko Hirvensalo	Jim McDade	Mark Prescott
Lee Donovan	Brent Hodges	Greg McEldowney	Frank Rivas
Tom Vetterling	Ashley Irwin	Andy Mejia	John Robertson
Andrew Driscoll	Mike Kim	Will Mejia	Lawrence Saenz
Dennis Stasio	Brett Taaffe	Ryan Taaffe	Wakeford Thompson

## WUSA College Scholarship Applications Open December 1<sup>st</sup>

Going on six years now, our league has supported WUSA alumni who are graduating seniors. These seniors have participated in WUSA for over 8 seasons and continued to play athletics through High School. Applications are now open for the 2025 graduating class. [Link here](#) for more information about WUSA’s College Scholarship program and learn about the criteria for consideration as you plan your daughter’s WUSA career.

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## WUSA Fall Season Clinics

Our Fall program is intended to be a time for players to adjust to new divisions and focus on new skills as they learn the game. To that end, WUSA offers several skill-building options.



First, our Pitcher and Catcher sessions that were held every Sunday evening during the fall season saw great turnout. Players got top-notch instruction from our WUSA Pro Coaches. Coach Prescilla Riser led our pitching sessions and Coach Valerie Quiroga led our catching

sessions. Both coaches were supported by assistants from University of St. Thomas. Current college players and coaches helped WUSA players (and parents) develop. The engagement was great and the players really responded to the instruction. Our coaches struck the right balance with encouragement, fun, and healthy instruction.

Not to be outdone, our 14U player clinics supported by our UST Head Coach, Angela Froboese were well attended. We had 24 players enrolled in our recreation season 14U division. While this division sees many players with commitments that compete for their time on Sunday evenings, the quality of the program and the



commitment of the players the group was regularly fielding 18 players each night which is great turnout for this program.



Lastly, with the great weather, our Wednesday position-player skills development sessions were conducted every week this fall season. Players got semi-individualized instruction by one of the area's top high school coach.



Coach Kim Randolph led our group of instructors that also included our UST players. They made it fun for our players and the sessions were filled every week cementing the interest by our families and players in getting a little added instruction to help them improve their game.

## WUSA Softball: A Softball Program 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> half of the season, players pitch 2 innings per game with the remaining innings pitched by a machine. The 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 player's skill develop & knowledge of all positions, rotation of players between infield & outfield positions is required. ***Practices are 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 season is the pinnacle year for WUSA recreational 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 one to two times a week.

**14U (13 & 14 year-olds)** Players 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 overall 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 2–6 games each spring are played outside of WUSA facilities.
- Players completing 8 seasons (Fall or Spring) and a 14U Spring season are honored as WUSA Graduates!



### For 7 – 12U Divisions Recreational Spring Seasons:

- 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 experience. 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 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.

### **Images from the Summer Tournament Team and Fall Recreational Seasons**



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## **Sponsorships**

Thank you to [our sponsors](#) who help us provide top-notch softball experiences. When you have the choice, support [our sponsors](#). Tell them you appreciate their commitment to WUSA. Become as sponsor! WUSA is a family with over 1,000 members! Get your business noticed. Sponsorships are available at different price points and WUSA can create customized opportunities that may meet your interest. To discuss, [contact us](#).

From all of us at WUSA, we hope you added new memories and new friendships during the Fall 2024 WUSA season. We wish you a wonderful winter filled with relaxation and joy and we hope to see you in the Spring!

*Michael Liebl  
President*



### ***UPCOMING EVENTS***

- Spring 2025 Season Early Bird Registration – November 11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>
- Spring 2025 Season Regular Registration – November 17<sup>th</sup> – December 25<sup>th</sup>
- Spring 2025 Season Late Registration – December 26<sup>th</sup> – January 8<sup>th</sup>
- Spring 2025 Season Division Meetings – January 15<sup>th</sup>
- Spring 2025 Season Practices Begin – Week of February 20<sup>th</sup>
- Spring 2025 Season Concludes – Weekend of May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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

[Winter 2023- Spring 2024](#)  
[Summer – Fall 2023](#)  
[Winter 2022 – Spring 2023](#)  
[Summer – Fall 2022](#)  
[Winter 2021 - Spring 2022](#)  
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Vol.14 Summer – Fall 2024

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