

Ralston Area Baseball Association



Ralston Rams 2020 Player, Parent & Coaches Guidelines & Responsibilities



Adopted and Approved by the RABA Board of Directors August 2013
Last Revised January 2020

Ralston Area Baseball Association Ralston Rams Team Policies

and Guidelines

For 2020, Ralston Area Baseball Association's (RABA) Ralston Rams Teams will be affiliated with the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) for all age groups under 15 years of age.

United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA)

www.nebraskausssa.com

"The primary focus of USSSA Baseball is the development of programs that allow teams of all skill levels to compete against one another. USSSA believes the experience and fun of national tournament play can enhance the overall development of all players. Until now the majority of players were denied this opportunity because of their skill level. USSSA Baseball offers programs for four levels of play. Major and AAA programs are national programs that culminate in a World Series. The AA program is a regional program ran by the participating state that culminates at a National tournament. The A level is for recreational teams and is at a state level only."

USSSA Classification Guidelines- State Directors determine actual classification: Major Division-

The top competitive teams in the country.

AAA Division- Upper Middle of the pack competitive teams.

AA Division- Lower to Middle of the pack competitive teams

A Division- Strong foundation from recreation to grow classification

RALSTON RAMS

- **Ralston Rams 9's** - for players who are 9 years and under as of April 30 of the year in which they will compete; *USSSA Sanctioned*
- **Ralston Rams 10's** - for players who are 10 years and under as of April 30 of the year in which they will compete; *USSSA Sanctioned*
- **Ralston Rams 11's** - for players who are 11 years and under as of April 30 of the year in which they will compete; *USSSA Sanctioned*
- **Ralston Rams 12's** - for players who are 12 years and under as of April 30 of the year in which they will compete; *USSSA Sanctioned*
- **Ralston Rams 13's** - for players who are 13 years and under as of April 30 of the year in which they will compete; *USSSA Sanctioned*
- **Ralston Rams 14's** - for players who are 14 years and under as of April 30 of the year in which they will compete; *USSSA Sanctioned*

RALSTON RAMS TEAM OBJECTIVES

1. Build players personal and social skills by emphasizing sportsmanship, discipline, independence, responsibility and teamwork.
2. Develop player's baseball skills through participation in both practices and games.
3. Develop player's knowledge, understanding and appreciation for the game of baseball.
4. Prepare players to compete at the next level of competition.
5. Have fun playing baseball at a higher competitive level.

POLICY AND GUIDELINES

The Ralston Rams Head Coach of each Team selects their players during July and August in the year proceeding the playing season, from a competitive try-out process managed by the Vice President of Competitive Teams. The Ralston Rams Coaching Staff operate under the Ralston Area Baseball Association (RABA) By-Laws and Guidelines, and are supervised by the Vice President of Competitive Teams, a member of the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee. The Head Coach is permitted reasonable discretion in stipulating specific rules for their team, however, the following policies and guidelines have become standard over the years.

- Schoolwork will come first - any player that is not completing his schoolwork or failing any classes will not be permitted to participate in practices and/or games until the deficiency is corrected. Parents are responsible for keeping coaches informed of any academic problems.
- Parents are expected to support the Head & Assistant Coaches - Parents pulling team loyalties in different directions can be very destructive to the team, player development, and enjoyment of the game by parents and spectators. Parents may have frank discussions with coaches; however, these discussions must occur outside of game and practice sessions with both parties ensuring discussions are private and that players do not overhear them. It is strongly recommended that a 24 hour window be allowed after games before approaching any member of the coaching staff, to ensure that any emotions have sufficient time to be calmed before any discussions/conversations are initiated. Any interactions between parents and coaches are expected to be professional and civil at all times. Parents are discouraged from talking about concerns in front of their player.
- Players and parents agree to commit to the Ralston Rams Team for the entire season – This includes support of the teams' fund raising efforts as coordinated by the Head Coach. RABA funding to each Ralston Rams Team is minimal to the cost of operating each team during a season, but may be adjusted at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
- Practices after January 1st are mandatory - Missing a scheduled practice is equivalent to missing a scheduled game. Absence must be arranged and approved with the Head Coach in advance. Unexcused absences may subject the player to disciplinary action by the Head Coach.
- Playing time is not a right, it must be earned - Positions on the Team and on the field are earned by skill, outstanding play, and exemplary sportsmanship. This statement should be qualified however, by pointing out that most coaches realize it is to everyone's advantage to continually develop all their players to be ready to step in at any time due to injury or illness.

- Players are strongly discouraged from participating in any other competitive/club athletic programs during spring or summer - School activities and sports, are exempt from this restriction. This recommendation is intended to minimize time management conflicts and ensure focus and commitment to the Ralston Rams Team. This **may** also extend to the Head Coach not permitting players to engage in strenuous activities on game days.

Players, Parents and Coaches must clearly understand this commitment!

CONDUCT, COMMITMENT AND SPORTSMANSHIP

As representatives of RABA and the Ralston community, Ralston Rams players, parents, and coaches are expected to maintain a high standard of conduct, commitment and sportsmanship to the team.

Everyone involved with Ralston Rams Teams must clearly understand the boundaries and expectations of acceptable behavior, and conduct themselves in such a manner as to not bring embarrassment or discredit to himself or herself, RABA, players, teams, or the Ralston community. General guidelines can be found in the RABA Constitution & Bylaws, Parent & Coaches Handbook, Sportsmanship Pledge, and in the principles outlined in the Character Counts/Pursuing Victory with Honor program.

Parents are expected to support team objectives throughout the season. This includes transporting their child to and from games and practices, as well as participation in various activities required to assist the team, including but not limited to fund raising, tournament assignments, working concessions, field preparation, maintenance, etc.

Parents are responsible for their child/player during out-of-town trips. If it is not possible for a parent to attend, special arrangements must be made with another parent and approved by the Head Coach. **No player will be allowed to stay alone.**

Arguing with or disrespecting umpires, coaches, fans, or other players WILL NOT be tolerated. The use of foul language by coaches, parents, or players **WILL NOT** be tolerated. Every player will respect all equipment and any misuse **WILL NOT** be tolerated. Any misuse, destruction or vandalism of our playing field and/or facilities **WILL NOT** be tolerated. Any violations may result in sanction/disciplinary action by the Head Coach, VP of Competitive

Teams, and/or the RABA Board of Directors.

The use and/or consumption of alcohol, tobacco, vaping or illegal or controlled substances by any player at any time is prohibited. At the discretion of the Team Manager/Head Coach, any player caught using or possessing alcohol, tobacco, vaping products or illegal or controlled substances may be suspended from the team. Any player convicted of an offense involving alcohol, tobacco, vaping products or illegal or controlled substances may be dismissed from the team. The use and/or consumption of alcohol, tobacco, vaping or illegal or controlled substances by any coach while on the field of play or in the dugout may result in dismissal from the team. Any coach convicted of an offense involving illegal or controlled substances may be dismissed from the team.

Discipline decisions made by the Head Coach regarding infractions of these guidelines may be appealed to the Vice President Competitive Teams and the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee. (Reference: Article VI of the RABA Bylaws).

HEAD COACH SELECTION

Each Ralston Rams Team will have one Head Coach. All prospective Head Coach candidates will submit an application via website prior to the July tryouts. The Vice President of Competitive Teams will interview all new candidates and recommend a selection to the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee for approval. Coaches finishing the current season and desire to continue coaching with RABA, may not be subject to the requirements in this paragraph, providing they are in good standing with the Vice President of Competitive Teams and the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee.

Each prospective Head Coach must be present, if requested, for an interview by the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee. A simple majority of the Executive Committee Members present and voting, which constitutes a quorum, will select a Head Coach for each team.

TEAM SELECTION

RABA Ralston Rams Teams, age groups 9's through 14's, shall not consist of more than 15 players. Players will be selected based on their physical ability, maturity, attitude, game knowledge, skill level, and desire to excel. Try-outs to determine player selection will be held on dates determined by the Vice President of Competitive Teams and approved by the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee, giving all Ralston Area players an opportunity to compete.

The Ralston School District (#54) will define the "Ralston Area" as stated in the RABA Parent and Coaches Handbook and defined by the RABA Board of Directors. For purposes of the Ralston Rams Team tryouts, the "Ralston Area" may be expanded by the sole discretion of the

RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee. Each Head Coach shall have a Player Selection Committee for the Ralston Rams Team tryouts, with the advice and guidance of the Vice President of Competitive Teams. Player selection committee members should not have personal interest in any player being considered but may assist in evaluations of other teams during the tryout process.

It will be the Head Coach's final decision as to the players selected for their team.

COACHING STAFF

AFTER players have been selected for the team, the Head Coach may appoint Assistant Coaches which may be subject to RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee approval. The minimum coaching staff for the Ralston Rams Teams is as follows:

- Head Coach
- Assistant Coach - *(assist with base coaching & bench duties)*
- Assistant Coach - *(assist with base coaching & bench duties)*

All Coaches and players must be in uniform dress as specified by USSSA and/or RABA rules and shall remain in the dugouts, on benches or in their designated areas throughout the game. The Head Coach shall be responsible for all field operations of the Team, which shall include but not be limited to, team selection, team conduct, Assistant Coach selection, equipment maintenance and most importantly, player development. The Head Coach may designate a parent or affiliate with the team to maintain the scorebook and record stats for each game. The Head Coach may also be subject to scheduling both an announcer and concession crew for any and all home games. The Head Coach may also appoint a Team

Manager to coordinate functions of the team such as those mentioned above, in an effort to help with the non-player functions of/for the team. Scheduling of both practices and games, purchases of equipment, and all other possible related expenses pertaining to Ralston Rams Teams will be approved by the Vice President of Competitive Teams.

All Coaches shall share in the responsibility for the conduct of players and parents of the Ralston Rams Team. This includes but is not limited to the acquisition and handling of birth documents, medical release forms, and evidence of accident insurance and eligibility affidavits for all practices and games at all times.

Each RABA Ralston Rams Head Coach **may** be remunerated a stipend determined by the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee. The RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee may choose to remunerate the Head Coach the full stipend or may decrease the stipend, including no stipend, based on the committee's review of the season and coaches behavior/acitons. The position of Assistant Coaches and Team Manager shall be volunteer positions.

It is strongly encouraged that each Head Coach and assistant coaches meet with their respective team on a monthly basis to discuss any financials, updates of both practice and games, with reference to tournaments and any rescheduling, and all other information pertinent for their Ralston Rams Team.

TEAM FINANCES and FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Vice President of Competitive Teams is responsible for all financials and expenditures as well as the general management of all Ralston Rams Teams. All Ralston Rams Teams monies shall be monitored by the Vice President of Competitive Teams and the RABA Treasurer, in relation to the financial status of the Ralston Rams Team throughout the season.

UPON ACCEPTANCE ON A SELECT TEAM IN JULY, the player's deposit fee is due in the amount of \$100. If not paid by September 1st, registration will be considered delinquent. Delinquency of Registration Fees may subject the player's dismissal from the Ralston Rams Team. Ralston Rams Teams are intended to be self-supporting through registration fees, sponsorships, and fundraising events with minimal financial support from RABA. Parent(s) are expected to equally and fairly participate in Ralston Rams Team fundraising and adhere to any deadlines imposed by the Vice President of Competitive Teams and/or the Head Coach to insure cash flow and smooth operations of the Team. The Ralston Rams Team funds must be utilized for the benefit of the players or the team as a whole, to include but not be limited to uniforms, umpire fees, equipment, Team meal during out-of-town trips, and post-season activities. **Lodging at season out-of-town games and tournaments is the responsibility of each player's parents and will not be reimbursed.**

Each team will have a designated amount in their Ralston Rams Team account at the beginning of the season to help with initial operating capital prior to any funds received. The same amount will be available (at minimum) at the end of the season in order to be available for the next year's team.

The amount initially and to be retained in each checking account at the beginning and end of each season is \$100, which is approved by the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee.

TEAM SCHEDULE – No weekday evening double-headers will be scheduled while school is in session for Ralston Rams Teams.

The **Ralston Rams 9's Team** suggested schedule limit is 30-40 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games, and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Competitive Teams. This number does not include post-season State, Regional, and World Series play. The Ralston Rams 10's Team is not allowed to participate in season tournaments where the team would be required to stay over-night **unless approved in advance** by the Vice President Competitive Teams and RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee.

The **Ralston Rams 10's Team** suggested schedule limit is 35-40 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games, and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Competitive Teams. This number does not include post-season State, Regional, and World Series play. The Ralston Rams 10's Team is not allowed to participate in season tournaments where the team would be required to stay over-night unless approved in advance by the Vice President Competitive Teams and RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee.

The **Ralston Rams 11's Team** suggested schedule limit is 40-45 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Competitive Teams. This number does not include post-season USSSA State, Regional, and World Series play.

The **Ralston Rams 12's Team** suggested schedule limit is 40-45 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Competitive Teams. This number does not include post-season USSSA State, Regional, and World Series play.

The **Ralston Select 13's Team** suggested schedule limit is 45-55 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Competitive Teams. This number does not include post-season USSSA State, Regional, and World Series play.

The **Ralston Select 14's Team** suggested schedule limit is 55-65 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Competitive Teams. This number does not include post-season USSSA State, Regional, and World Series play.

TEAM PRACTICES

As previously stated, practices after January 1st are mandatory for all players in the Ralston Rams Program. Other exceptions to this rule may be made on a case-by-case basis by the respective Head Coach and approved in advance. Practices should continue throughout the baseball season and should be viewed as excellent learning opportunities and development of baseball knowledge. Coaches shall communicate to all players of any practices within a 24-hour advance notification, with exception to sudden cancelation situations.

TOURNAMENTS

Ralston Rams Teams may participate in a variety of tournaments throughout the season. Once each Ralston Rams Team begins sanctioned tournament play, they will continue playing until eliminated from the tournament. USSSA State Tournament entry is mandatory for each Ralston Rams Team. **Refusing to continue to the next level of tournament play could cause disciplinary sanctions against all RABA teams by USSSA, and could be detrimental to continuing in the RABA Ralston Rams Program.**

Players and parents must clearly understand this commitment.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

The Vice President of Competitive Teams, in collaboration with RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee, will determine purchasing and usage of any and all uniforms and equipment expenditures needed for the season for each Ralston Rams Team.

<p>All Ralston Rams, players pursuant to USSSA By-Laws, with bats in hand or on bases, <u>will be required to wear helmets with face guards</u> during all practices and games. This includes players in the on-deck area.</p>

PLAYING TIME

It is one of the objectives of each team to develop the baseball skills of all players through participation in both practices and games. However, it is the decision of the Head Coach as to the playing time of each player. While equal playing time may be an objective for players who regularly attend practice, work hard, keep a good attitude, and show exemplary sportsmanship, the Head Coach will give opportunities on a regular basis for players to participate in games played during the season to assure team balance in case of injury or illness.

Any concerns by parents of any players should be directed to the Head Coach in a timely and professional manner, after a 24 hour period as expired. **Under no circumstances shall a parent or guardian confront a coach during a game or practice!** If a concern cannot be resolved after discussion with the Head Coach, the Vice President of Competitive Teams will be asked to make the decision, mediate the situation, or recommend the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee review the situation.

RABA MISSION STATEMENT

“The primary objective of the RABA shall be to implant firmly in the youth of our community the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and reverence. The objective will be achieved by providing a supervised baseball program. The attainment of exceptional skill or the winning of games shall be secondary to the prime goal of molding ethical young adults.”