

MSR launching women's softball league

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 20 September 2016 04:51 - Last Updated Tuesday, 27 September 2016 05:01



I was talking to a friend whose daughter plays college softball and asked him where she planned to play softball during the summer once her college season was over.

His answer surprised me.

As it turned out, there were no women's fast-pitch softball leagues during the summer in Iowa this year for players to sharpen their skills and enjoy some friendly competition.

Well, there is now.

I am delighted to announce that the Metro Sports Report will be launching a new women's league next summer for all players who are currently on fast-pitch college softball teams in Iowa and for all Iowans who are playing at out-of-state schools.

This includes graduating seniors who may want to continue playing next summer, but it does not include any high school players who have not begun their collegiate careers.

We have secured four generous sponsors to help us pay our bills and we have two high-quality softball fields to host the games at Kirkwood Community College and Coe College in Cedar Rapids. Now we need to begin attracting the players.

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The registration process begins right now [\(CLICK HERE TO REGISTER\)](#) . You can register online and use PayPal to pay the \$100 player fee, or you can simply mail the registration form and a check to me (Jim Ecker) at the Metro Sports Report at 2803 Q Ave NW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 52405.

The doubleheaders will be played on 10 consecutive Sundays next summer, beginning on May 28 and ending on July 30 for a 20-game season. There will be doubleheaders each day at both sites, beginning at 1 p.m. The final Sunday will be reserved for the playoffs.

There are 25 colleges within a two-hour drive of Cedar Rapids that offer fast-pitch softball as a varsity sport. We sent notes to all of those head coaches this summer, informing them of our plans, and the feedback was universally positive from the 20 coaches who responded.

"I've been waiting for years for someone to start a summer program like this," one coach replied.

"I have four girls on campus this summer who would drive to Cedar Rapids tomorrow and play," another coach responded in July.

"This is very exciting news for college softball," said another.

Our goal is to have four teams of 16 players apiece. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis, so if you'd like to play (or know someone who would) please enroll as soon as possible.

Players will be assigned to one of the four teams for competitive balance. Our goal is to have three pitchers, two catchers and three middle infielders per team, along with enough corner infielders and outfielders.

We'll accommodate all college coaches who would like to have their own pitcher and catcher on

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the same team so they can work together during the summer. We'll do the same for middle infielders from one school who'd like to work on their double-play skills and communication. We'll also group college teammates together for travel purposes.

We anticipate having players from NCAA, NAIA and NJCAA colleges. That means players from Iowa and Northern Iowa (NCAA Division I), Upper Iowa (NCAA Division II), Coe and other Iowa Conference schools (NCAA Division III) will be mixed with players from Mount Mercy (NAIA) and Kirkwood (NJCAA).

Old friendships will be renewed and new ones made.

We are making the league as player-friendly as possible. We will use a continuous batting order with free defensive substitutions, because we want everybody to play as much as possible. If the No. 6 batter in the lineup is the final hitter in Game 1, then the No. 7 batter will become the leadoff batter in Game 2.

We can accommodate as many as four players from one college on each of our teams, according to collegiate rules. That means we can have as many as 16 players from one college in our program, which should be more than enough to handle all demand.

We have set the player fee at \$100, which we feel is reasonable for a program like this. That breaks down to \$5 per game for a 20-game season. We wanted to have a player fee so that everyone has some skin in the game, to encourage attendance on a regular basis.

Nobody will be denied a place to play for financial reasons. You can pay the \$100 in installments (i.e. four payments of \$25 apiece) and scholarships will be made available on a confidential basis. Please do not hesitate to ask.

Our four gold medal sponsors are Ironside Apparel, Emil's Hideaway Restaurant, Construction Materials and the Barracudas AAU softball program.

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Ironside Apparel will be providing the quality jerseys for all players and coaches. We are asking the players to supply their own generic white softball pants and their own glove, equipment, batting helmet, belt and socks.

Our silver medal sponsors so far are Play It Again Sports, Kirkwood and Coe.

The coaches will be named later.