



Minnesota Starters Club/Travel Softball Program

2022 – 2023 Club Season Information

The Minnesota Starters Softball Organization was founded in 2017. Our mission upon creation has been to build a positive club/travel softball environment for athletes to develop as softball players and as confident young people. Our organization has grown to become one of the most competitive programs in the Midwest with player development and training that has been unrivaled in the state of Minnesota. As we continue to learn, grow, and reach our goals, we look forward to offering our player-development-first mentality and system for the 2022 - 2023 travel/club softball season. With great instruction, continued education, and relentless pursuit for greatness, we are pleased to present our ever-evolving club programming as one of the best in the Midwest.

We proudly offer year-round travel/club softball teams at the 12U, 13U/14U, 15U/16U, and 18U levels. The Minnesota Starters will be fielding a MAXIMUM of 8 teams for the 2022 - 2023 season as we move forward and continue into our goal of becoming an all-inclusive club/travel softball program with teams competing at the highest level locally, regionally, and nationally. Our teams will be led by a coaching staff of experienced individuals that have coached for decades, are former collegiate softball players, and current collegiate softball players. We are proud to have a diverse, former Division I collegiate softball player, female-led full-time staff here for the Minnesota Starters.

WHO ARE THE MINNESOTA STARTERS?

- **All-Inclusive System & Year-Round Training**
 - Our club softball player development system is unrivaled in the state of Minnesota. One of the biggest reasons athletes choose to play for the Minnesota Starters is for the full access to elite and certified instructors, coaches, and trainers. Our MN Starters program works directly with Starters Sports Training for high-level training and state-of-the-art facilities year-round for all facets of the game – hitting, pitching, arm strength, defense, baserunning, strength + development, and softball IQ. We are one of the only softball programs in the Midwest with their own training facility and various cutting edge hitting & pitching technologies and tools (Rapsodo, HitTrax, Blast Motion, GameSense, Axe Trainers, J Bands, etc.). All of this alongside qualified and

certified trainers that execute the player education and application. We invest in our players, coaches, and our facility to be the best in the Midwest and continue our retention rates within our club and training organization. Whether it is in the weight room, in the cages, or on the dirt – we will always assess, train, sustain, and emphasize overall mental and physical health throughout the year. Our assessments hold us accountable to continue to raise the standard. We are built on research and supported by data.

- **The Results:** The 2021-2022 development season was incredibly successful for our Minnesota Starters. We had many award winners from their respective high school seasons - including 8 All-State award winners (5 being first team), 8 All-Star Team Selections, over 20+ All-Section/All-Conference award winners, 2 finalists for Ms. Softball, and 1 Ms. Softball award winner and Gatorade Player of the Year. The results speak for themselves, and we continue to set the standard with our player development.
- **Strength & Development Training:** We are thrilled to offer the all-inclusive opportunity to focus on strength and conditioning as a member of our club softball program. Our training philosophy is that performance training goes beyond being bigger, faster, and stronger. It is about increasing your efficiency and abilities with respect to the sport specific movement. Speed, strength, agility, and power are by products of a well-designed strength and development program. We focus on improving your position, optimizing your strength qualities, transfer to the field of play, and an emphasis on year-round training to best maintain the athlete's health and preparation to be ready for softball at the next level.
- **High-Level Competition**
 - Our teams are complete with players and athletes that are passionate, respectful, and relentless in their pursuit for greatness alongside our coaches. With these players, we compete at the highest level of competition locally in the MN Top Tier League as well as in the toughest competition regionally and nationally in various sanctioned leagues throughout the country. We train year-round and compete year-round as well with a Fall competition season, Winter training and competition season, optional Spring training, and full Summer competition season. We offer various training opportunities during the Winter season to accommodate multi-sport athletes. We believe that to be the best, you must train and compete with the best.
 - **College Recruiting Education:** We at Starters care most about our athletes finding the RIGHT fit at the next level. Our staff has built a positive reputation and relationships nation-wide with collegiate coaches at all Division levels. We

just came off our most successful class, more than doubling the amount of athletes we had signed in the previous season, with all of our 2022 athletes finding their right fit at the next level from JUCO all the way to Power 5 Division I. We have implemented a dedicated development program, college showcase platform, and competition schedule that will allow our prospective student-athletes the opportunity to be seen by collegiate coaches as well as prepare and educate each player on the college recruiting process. We will walk through the process with each individual that has dreams of playing at the next level and will assist throughout the year with best practices. We have partnered with NCSA Team Edition and will provide various Recruiting Seminars throughout the year as well for our athletes.

- **Empowered Environment**

- We care about members of our organization as people and young women FIRST. Our program was built by former collegiate softball athletes that had incredible experiences on their club and collegiate teams. The common denominator of those experiences was the opportunity to be their authentic selves as confident young women in a group setting with others who had the same goals. Our potential was fulfilled due to the atmosphere that was produced by passionate players and coaches alike. We have dedicated coaches, many that are former collegiate softball players, who promote a positive environment where athletes will be provided mentorship and autonomy throughout their time as a Minnesota Starter. Our program will provide the training necessary for the development of a softball player, but we will more importantly provide the insight, encouragement, and inclusivity to all members in order to produce an overall positive environment. Our goal is to empower each player in our program with the confidence to continue to develop physically, socially, and emotionally to be successful for life after softball.
- **Emphasis on Mental Health:** The Minnesota Starters believe in supporting those in our program as people before the athlete and the student. The mental health epidemic is an incredibly difficult, terrifying, and emotional subject & reality. We will be spending the 2022-23 season spreading awareness and continuously educating our athletes on the local and national resources available. We have partnered with Duck Cup Memorial Fund for our season and events, a non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing resources and education for mental health awareness and suicide prevention. We will be donating a chunk of proceeds from events ran directly to their Memorial Fund this season.

STARTERS CLUB SOFTBALL SEASONAL BREAKDOWN

- **Fall Season & Training:** *August – Early November*
 - All age groups of Minnesota Starters teams will be participating in 1-2 practices per week during their Fall season – these will typically take place on weekends where the team does not have games/tournaments. Otherwise, practices will take place throughout evenings on weekdays.
 - Each team will participate in about 3 - 4 fall tournaments. Our National level teams will typically be entered in 1 – 2 tournaments that are out-of-state or college exposure tournaments. The other two tournaments will be local – typically a showcase and local state tournament.
 - We will additionally schedule either in-house scrimmages or doubleheaders with local competition throughout the Fall as well.
 - Age groups 13U – 18U will be provided with Strength and Development training included in the club membership fees and will have access at various set times to work with our S&D team in the weight room and on our turf. This is 2 days per week but can add additional days if necessary.
 - **Starters Softball Combine** – Our Starters Softball Combine will take place on an early date in the Fall to begin our process of assessing our student-athletes. During this time, we will be testing all metrics necessary to create a player profile that athletes can send out to collegiate coaches of their choosing. We will also take this opportunity to take team pictures, grab athletes' headshots, and take the time to bond and get to know each other early in our season! The numbers collected will represent our starting point and will hold us accountable in our goals to always improve on our quantifiable measurements. Some numbers we will be collecting will be:
 - Hitting – exit velocity, distance, bat speed, rotational acceleration, power
 - Pitching – velocity, spin rate
 - Miscellaneous – over hand throw mph, 60 ft sprint (home to first), 30 ft sprint
 - Hit-A-Thon Fundraiser – Each year we offer the opportunity to participate in our top (and most fun) fundraiser in our Hit-A-Thon. This fundraiser will take place early in the Fall to make sure we can execute it outdoors with how iffy weather can be. Our Hit-A-Thon allows players and families to pledge money with a \$ per foot of the ball hit. It is an incredible environment and a homerun derby style setting. We will have food to grill, raffles, trivia, and tons of fun during this time while girls are trying their best to hit a maximum distance off front toss at our home fields at Prior Lake High School! In our two years of running the Hit-A-Thon, we have raised nearly \$20,000 in pledges that went towards individuals club member fees. We also provide various other opportunities for fundraising as well throughout the season.
 - **College Recruiting Seminar** – We will be holding our annual virtual college recruiting seminar in the Fall. This will be an informational seminar to go over the recruiting process, how COVID has affected the process, and how to utilize

our resources (college contacts, NCSA Team Edition, best practices, etc.). We will continuously be checking in throughout the year with college recruiting process recommendations and furthering the education to put our athletes in the best spot moving forward.

- We will provide discounts for club members **ONLY** for our highly anticipated Starters Sports Training High Performance Development Programs. This includes HP Hitting, HP Pitching, HP Defense, and our Arm Development Program.
- Additional discounts will be provided for Academy Classes and Camps/Clinics throughout the entire year.

- **Winter Season & Training:** *Early November – End of February*

- **Weekly Player Development:** We will be conducting weekly player development sessions throughout the winter training season for all players in our club organization. These weekly player development sessions will be on a set weekly date and time and will be offered with the following skill sets:
 - **Hitting PD:** We will have weekly hitting player development with our club program where we will address hitting philosophy, biomechanics of the swing, and application through learning.
 - **Pitching/Catching PD:** We will have weekly pitching and catching player development with our club program where will address pitching/catching philosophy, tools and biomechanics of pitching, and application through learning.
 - **Defense & Team Focused Training:** Team practices and defensive focus training will take place in a dome for weekly sessions. These are used to work on our infield and outfield specific skillsets as well as our baserunning and softball IQ training.
 - **Strength & Development Training:** This will continue throughout the winter offseason to continue to grow and maintain our physical and mental health. Club members receive 1 day a week throughout the winter.
- Each team will participate in a maximum of 2 winter tournaments. These tournaments can be local dome tournaments or out-of-state tournaments.
- We offer each team the option, upon full commitments from families, to opt-in and participate in a winter dome ball league during the winter season if it aligns with our other training times.
- We will provide first access to our highly anticipated High Performance Pitching, Hitting, and Fielding programs. These programs have consistently sold out each year we have offered them and we have seen our results within our program and our High School athletes. We prioritize our club members getting first access as we want these girls to perform at their best during their high school and club seasons with us.
- **Starters Softball Combine** – Our final Starters Softball Combine will take place on a later date in the Winter to continue our process of assessing our student-athletes. During this time, we will be testing all metrics necessary again and

seeing where we are at in our improvements, decreases, etc. This will give us the opportunity to continue to move forward and grow with what is going well and adjust to what hasn't been increasing. We are excited to use this as a tool for our player development and accountability within our staff and players.

- Our winter season will have no training during holiday breaks and will be communicated with families on those dates. Starters Sports Training will in most cases remain open with our programs, classes, and individual training options.
- **Spring Season & Training:** *Beginning of March – End of High School Softball Season*
 - For high school aged athletes, we typically do not provide any mandatory team practices out of respect to local high school coaches. We will, however, provide training through Starters Sports Training throughout this time. Club practices will resume after high school season concludes. Optional practices may be put on per coach's discretion.
 - Our 12U teams will resume training with a full Spring practice schedule of 1-2 practices per week as well as participate in 3 local Spring tournaments.
- **Summer Season & Training:** *End of High School Softball Season – Beginning of August*
 - All age groups of Minnesota Starters teams will be participating in multiple practices per week during their Summer season – these will typically take place throughout the weekdays with opportunities to combine additional practices with alike age groups.
 - All our teams will be participating in league doubleheaders for their club teams. Our teams participate in the Gold league or Top Tier league in Minnesota. These league games will be scheduled by coaching staff with a maximum of 6 games per season (3 doubleheaders).
 - Each team will participate in 6 - 7 summer tournaments. Our 14U – 18U teams will typically be entered in 1 – 3 tournaments that are out-of-state or college exposure tournaments dependent on team skill and need. These teams will also be participating in 2 – 4 local tournaments with a Nationals tournament (can be in or out of state dependent on team skill and need).
 - Our 12U team will compete in 4-5 local tournaments and have 1 out-of-state tournament.
 - We make sure that we build our schedule around the team skillset as well as what is best for the girls on the team.
 - Strength & Development and Speed Programs will be offered for athletes that are interested in participating during the summer.
 - Starters Sports Training will continue to provide individual softball training at a discounted rate to all club softball members.
 - All tournament and training info is subject to change based on Starters discretion and team necessity.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:

- Our practice facilities are in the Savage/Burnsville area. Our home fields are at Prior Lake High School. Our winter training facilities are located at the Savage Sports Center Dome and our year-round, home base and facility is located at Starters Sports Training in Burnsville, MN (right on the border of Savage, MN).
- We have a sponsorship with Under Armour through GameOne (formerly Universal Athletics). We only require purchasing our jersey tops, two practice shirts, socks, and helmets for our uniforms as we want to give the option to purchase your own pants, socks, belts, etc. With that being said, we will have a store open that will provide packages at a discounted price if you would like to go through and purchase all necessary items for uniforms. Our uniform combos will include:
 - Mandatory to purchase: 3 Starters Softball uniform tops, helmet, 3 pairs of striped socks, & 2 practice shirts
 - Optional to purchase through us, but mandatory to have in the colors red, black and white: softball pants, plain socks, belts.
- Fees & club coaching assignments will be announced on our website annually in July with a breakdown of what our club softball season will offer with training, facility rentals, league dues, team insurance, tournament fees, travelling fees, coaching fees, all administrative work, etc.
- We will provide various fundraising opportunities for individuals to raise money for their club member fees. These will happen throughout the season and per request.
- Volunteer opportunities will be a priority to give back to our community and continue to help these athletes become better people as well as softball players.
- We are excited to offer the opportunity to our club members only to provide us with their report cards and grades to get discounts with our training! We want to continue to raise the bar and hold our girls accountable with their school work as well as softball work.
- We offer a STAR scholarship for those who are interested in applying to help cover club – contact us for more info!

We will be providing more info as we continue to evolve, update, and learn! Any questions can be forwarded to softball@starterssportstraining.com.

MINNESOTA STARTERS FULL-TIME STAFF

- **Erika Smyth** – Director of Softball Operations & Head of Hitting and Defensive Instruction (University of Minnesota)
- **Brooke Otterstatter** – Club Softball Director & Head of Pitching Instruction (University of Northern Iowa)
- **Marybeth Olson** – Club Softball Coordinator & Co-Head of Pitching Instruction (University of Connecticut)
- **Tyler Peterson** – Head of Player Development and R&D (University of St. Thomas)
- **Andrew Betcher** – Head of Positional Arm Development (Ripon College)
- **Nick Pinkleman** – Head of Strength & Development
- **Ryan Schwertman** – General Manager, Starters Sports Training