

Maryland **STARS**

Select Travel Fastpitch Softball: **FACT** vs. **FICTION**

Geographically centered in the Carroll County, Maryland area, the Maryland STARS created a select fastpitch softball program in 1997. With goals centered around player development, the program continues to operate with the same ideals and principles it was founded on.

Develop the **Skills** and fundamentals of the players.

Build **Teamwork** amongst the players on the teams and across teams in the program.

Insure that **Attitude** of the players, coaches and parents are consistent with a teaching/learning environment.

Show **Respect** to others (teammates, opposition, administrators, officials, parents, etc).

Show **Success** (measured by more than just wins & losses on the field)

Maryland **STARS** website: <http://www.marylandstars.net>

FICTION: The **STARS** only want experienced and skilled players to be part of their program.

FACT : At the younger age groups, new players to the **STARS** program are typically right out of in-house or instructional leagues, baseball teams, or slow-pitch softball teams.

*One year a player gave up lacrosse to try softball for the first time (as a player of the Maryland STARS) and has become a very accomplished player.

*Because of the nature of softball in the area, we often have 10U, 12U, and 14U players who come from slow-pitch teams and have never played fastpitch softball.

*The local baseball programs are good feeder programs to the **STARS**.

*Ultimately, the **STARS** seek athletically inclined players who possess the desire, heart, and will to work and improve. Being involved in the **STARS** program helps them develop into top-level select softball players – and they will all tell you that they are having fun through the process.

FICTION: The **STARS** are only concerned about winning.

FACT: Although winning is an important part of the game, the **STARS** organization believes instruction comes first.

***STARS** players have benefited from their coaches thorough instruction since the organization was founded. Numerous alumni and current players made their high school varsity teams as freshmen, and have excelled at that level winning honors such as all-county, all-conference, and all-state. Many of those players have gone on to, and continued to excel at the collegiate level.

FICTION: It costs a lot of money to play for the Maryland **STARS**.

FACT: When it comes to youth select sports, **STARS** fees are considerably lower than most teams. The program keeps costs down by keeping uniforms simple and reusable from year to year, as well as hosting 2-3 tournaments per season as fundraisers. The **STARS** do not pay for fields nor do those working to make the program a success get paid.

The Maryland STARS have never turned a player away due to financial difficulties.

FICTION: The **STARS** travel often to distant tournaments.

FACT: **STARS** teams at the 10U, 12U, and 14U levels typically travel to a tournament requiring an overnight stay no more than 2-3 times per year. In almost all cases, the tournaments can be reached by car. The 16U / 18U teams travel approximately 5 times per season—again most can be reached by car. In rare cases, **STARS** teams have had to travel by air.

FICTION: The **STARS** require total commitment from their players...forbidding them to participate in other activities.

FACT: The **STARS** prefer well rounded athletes; many participate in 3 sports ranging from recreational and select levels, as well as middle and high school sports. Others are involved in community activities, school extracurricular activities (dance, drama, student government, band, etc.).

FICTION: **STARS** teams practice year-round.

FACT: **STARS** teams usually practice once a week during the fall and winter (a second *optional* practice is occasionally held). There are no mandatory practices during the months of August and November. In the spring and summer, **STARS** teams practice twice a week.

*The goals of all **STARS** practices are to be efficient and effective.

FICTION: **STARS** players do not have time to focus on their education.

FACT: All **STARS** coaches require education to be the player's top priority. Players facing a deadline with a school project are excused from practice.

*The Maryland **STARS** award annual scholarships to their high school seniors who maintain a high grade point average. **STARS** players routinely excel in the classroom at all levels of their education, due in part to the discipline emphasized by their parents and coaches.

*The **STARS** are extremely proud of their alumni's accomplishments. Doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, and other highly skilled professionals are all proud to have once called the Maryland **STARS** home.

FICTION: **STARS** players come in one shape—big, fast, and mean.

FACT: **STARS** players come in all shapes and sizes. **STARS** coaches maximize the player's best attributes, assisting in making them the best player they can be.

Maryland STARS all have one common characteristic: Their heart and love for the game.

FICTION: The **STARS** level of play is no different than the instructional teams.

FACT: **STARS** teams play true travel softball against the best competition in the area. **STARS** teams excel at this level, winning 3 State Championships in two seasons, and routinely place at, or near the top, of tournaments in which they participate.

FICTION: The Maryland **STARS** are not committed to their returning players.

FACT: The **STARS** goal is to insure returning players with positive attitudes and commitment have a place to play. The **STARS** do not replace players just because another one comes along.

FICTION: The **STARS** ignore the recreational programs and instructional leagues.

FACT: **STARS** teams annually hold peer mentoring practices with instructional league or in-house teams. The older **STARS** teams also mentor the younger **STARS** teams.

*The Maryland **STARS** host a summer camp focused on the instructional league and in-house players. Most of the camp instructors are current and former **STARS** players

volunteering their time.

*One of the requirements for the **STARS** scholarships is that the player must complete a community service activity that helps the **STARS** and fastpitch softball.

FICTION: **STARS** coaches are just parents off the street.

FACT: The **STARS** require coaches to attend clinics, be mentored by veteran coaches, and to learn about the game on their own. The organization does have some coaches who no longer have—or have never had—a player in the program. All **STARS** coaches are subject to background checks, and are monitored to insure they remain focused on the program's philosophy and goals.

FACT: If you have the heart, desire, will, and love for the game of fastpitch softball, you, too, can play for the Maryland **STARS**. Being part of a team has so many more perks than just playing a game. It teaches kids lessons and gives them experiences that benefit them their entire lives and memories and often friendships they can cherish for the rest of their lives.

Go **STARS!!!!**

www.marylandstars.net