

What to expect RUG Softball –

Greetings RUG SB Families – The below will give you an overview of the RUG season including what to expect and a general outline. The specific dates will change from year to year, but the outline should remain consistent.

Please bookmark this page to refer to as the season progresses.

If you have any questions, please contact softball@rugll.org.

Note: RUG is a fully volunteer led organization.

Early communication about interest in programs like Spring Season, All-Stars, Summer Ball & Emeralds will help us better prepare for the season to secure fields, coaches & if we will need to co-league with neighboring leagues.

Important Dates & Topics Timeline:

- Team formation & evaluations if necessary – January to early February.
- Welcome to RUG Softball Kickoff call - Late February to early March.
- Field prep + umpire training opportunities.
 - Various dates prior to jamboree, including online training for umpires.
- Softball Player Pool – Families are asked to register before games start (ideally).
- Softball Coach HH - Late February to early March
- Softball Pitching Clinics - Series of sessions with pitching coach (AA-Juniors)
 - Mid February to Mid March (normally around 5 sessions)
- Practices start – varies by division, see chart below.
- Jamboree and Opening Day – Late March at Will Stacey (Maple Leaf) Ballfields
 - Games Start for: AA, AAA & Majors. Juniors may have started.
- Dicks Discount Weekend – Varies by year normally near Jamboree.
 - Word to the wise – Buy a Softball Face Mask.
- RUG Day UW Softball Stadium - Varies, but normally late April
- Hit-a-thon/Photo Day – Early May
- RUG Championship Saturday & Home Run Derby – Early June
- District Tournament of Champions – Late May to Early June
- All-Stars – if participating, begins after D8 ToC and could go through end of July
- Summer Ball: Early July – Early August.
- Emeralds winter training program - December - February

Word to the wise: Log into 'Sports Connect' (login from the RUG site)>>Email Settings and make sure your preferences are set to 'Subscribe'. Opting in instead of out of emails seems new. There is a good chance you are missing messages sent from RUG directly.

What every team needs:

- Head Coach
- Assistant Coaches (>1 encouraged, hard to have too much help)
 - Dogout/Bench Coach
- Umpire

- Links to Umpire & Junior Umpire information:
<https://www.rugll.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2744363>
- There are also various umpire training events early in the season.
- Additional parent support:
 - Pre/Post game field preparation (home team).
 - This is invaluable to your coaches.
 - Field maintenance does not require a volunteer application.
 - Scorekeeper(s)
 - Juice Box/Snack Scheduler
- Gamechanger: The league uses the Gamechanger platform for scheduling. Families use this platform to indicate their player's availability and to communicate with their team.
- Plan to discuss this in your first team meeting/practice. Set your season up for success by having an assistant coach or parent brief the rest of the parents while the players are practicing on volunteer roles along with the practice schedule, what to expect at this level, and coaching philosophy.

Volunteer Link: <https://www.rugll.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2754699>

Link to Fields: <https://www.rugll.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2753679>

1. Information by level:

	A	AA	AAA	Majors	Juniors	Seniors
Age Range (League Age)	6-8	7-9	8-11	9-12	12-14	15-16
Approximate date for practices to start	Mid-March	Early March	Early March	Late February	Mid to late February	TBD
Approximate date for games to start	Early April	Jamboree weekend	Jamboree weekend	Jamboree weekend	Mid March - often before jamboree.	TBD
Expected day(s) for practices or games	Tuesday & Saturday	Wednesday OR Thursday & Saturday	Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday	Monday, Wednesday & Saturday Possible Friday - Max 2 days per week.	Monday, Friday & Sunday	TBD

*It is unlikely a Seniors team would have a regular season. However, an All Star team would compete in scheduled tournaments.

2. Softball Player Pool:

- Opt-in list of players who can fill in if a RUG SB team is low on players.

- Players & families are asked to opt in and have the player & parent name and parent contact information in a resource coaches can use to fill-in rosters on a spot basis if the need arises.
- Families will receive a request to play from the Player Agent assisting the coach of the team needing a player through contact information provided by families.

3. Player Evaluations if necessary:

- For player pitch divisions (AAA and above), RUG may elect to hold evaluations to ensure skill levels spread across each team.
 - Evaluations would be held early to mid-February.
 - Each player will execute a series of drills and will be scored by all coaches in that division.
 - Scores are compiled & a draft is scheduled.
- As a result of evaluation scoring, a player may be asked to play up or down a level to better suit that player and fill out rosters.
 - All players will be on a team!
 - Players on all teams will be league age appropriate.
 - While we do try to honor friend & coach requests, it is not always feasible. This is often a good way for players to expand their social circle!

4. Team Formation:

RUG Little League is obligated to provide balanced rosters across all teams in a division.

- This means that keeping a cohort of players and coaches together cannot be an expectation from season to season.

Per the RUGLL bylaws “efforts will be made to honor teammate/carpool requests, but not at the detriment of overall team balance in the division”

Player Draft:

When it is necessary to hold a player draft, the head coach and one assistant coach for each team will meet with the Player Agent to draft a team based on evaluation results.

The kids of both the head coach and one assistant coach are automatically assigned, and that team will not draft in the round associated with the eval score of each child.

Once all players are drafted; coaches are allowed to ‘trade’ players to match up friend requests, or carpool needs or similar. Trades must be approved by all teams & the Player Agent.

- In most recent years a draft has occurred starting at the AAA level.

During team formation every year, RUGLL attempts to honor as many friend and coach requests as possible. We make every effort to ensure kids are paired with 1 or more players from the previous season or school. This is not always possible.

I understand leagues for other sports allow teams to stay together year after year. Little League has chosen to mandate equal skill levels for all teams in a division.

One exception: Should a family recruit a new player, that player will be on the same team. That exception is for the first season only.

5. Hit-a-thon/Photo Day:

Hit-a-thon: This tends to get lost in the mix a bit as the season progresses.

- This is the largest RUG fundraiser every year. Players are encouraged to solicit pledges based on how far they can hit a ball off of a hitting tee..
 - Ex: \$0.75 per foot or a flat amount. Like elementary school walk-a-thons.
- Fundraising helps to cover costs for training and league operations.
- Prizes are awarded based on distance hit per team & largest fundraiser.
 - Request that when possible, families fundraise a target of \$75 per player. These donations are used for RUG to continue to offer training opportunities.

Photo Day

- Annual team pictures and individual player photo opportunity. Pictures delivered through coach when available.

6. RUG Championship Saturday:

RUG Championships:

- Player & often Hybrid Player pitch divisions with at least two teams will play for RUG Championships by division. There is even a trophy!
 - Should a division have >2 teams, there will be a play-in tournament before the Championship Saturday.

Home Run Derby:

- The Softball Home Run derby is an age based competition. Home Run distance changes based on player league age.

7. District Tournament of Champions:

Tournament of Champions (TOC)

- Unique to Softball, AAA & above will participate in the District 8 TOC.

- Expect players to participate in between 2 and 6 games in early-mid-June.
- League & District schedulers try to maintain consistent days of the week by division.
- TOC ends before the All-Stars tournaments begin, but may overlap with practice.

*Coaches – often the district TOC has two levels of competition; competitive and recreational.. If so, you will be able to choose the bracket for your team to participate.

8. All-Stars:

- The All-Stars Tournament starts in mid- to late June. This is a chance for eligible players who are looking for tournament level experience to represent the RUG league after regular season ends.
- If an All-Star Team is successful, they will play games over several weeks. This could lead to state and regional tournaments, culminating in the Little League World Series. In 2024, the RUG/Magnolia All-Stars Team won the WA State tournament and proceeded to play in the Regional Tournament in Arizona.
- Eligibility:
 - Unlike the regular season All-Stars is age based, not division based.
 - 8/9/10s Team: League ages 8, 9, 10 are eligible
 - 9/10/11s Team: League ages 9,10,11 are eligible
 - Majors (10/11/12)s Team: League ages 10,11,12 are eligible
 - Juniors Team: League ages 13,14 are eligible
 - Seniors Team: League ages 15,16 are eligible
- Each interested player is required to fill out a RUGLL All-Stars Letter of Intent and Waiver, which states the commitment, requirements, and expectations.
- If there are not enough player applications to form a full competitive team, RUG may elect to combine with another league for a particular age.
- All Stars rosters are limited. It is important that All-Star players can commit to the dates necessary. Many families who plan to play All -Stars will delay their vacations depending on the age level and expected tournament dates. This is often a short term commitment, but participating in All-Stars can be time-consuming.
- The RUGLL Board of Directors will select players for the All-Stars teams based on watching games and feedback from coaches in the relevant divisions. Players will be selected following the League By-Laws and the following selection process:
 - Once all of the player applications are received an All-Stars selection committee from the league's board of directors chooses the All-Stars roster and managers for each team.
 - **A try-out may or may not be held**, and the committee will solicit input from coaches of each regular season team in the relevant age group.

- o For selection of the All-Stars managers, applying managers will not be part of the manager selection committee, but may be part of the player selection committee.
- o To determine an All-Stars roster of 12, the Coaches of each relevant division will rank players based on talent and performance observed during the regular season. Based on the outcome of these rankings, the top 9 players will be offered a roster spot to the team they were selected for.
 - For example, a 10-year old player may qualify for the 11-year old team based on talent/performance, but may elect to defer and play on her league age appropriate team.
- o Once these top 9 players are selected, All-Star Coaches will select the remaining 3 players to fill their rosters. For these remaining players, only players at that appropriate age may be selected.
 - For example, a talented 10-year-old may not play for the 11-year-old team if she was not ranked within the top 9 players that year, unless there is no RUG team at the 10yo level.
- Communications will start mid-April to gather interest levels.
 - o All players & coaches wishing to participate will need to submit an All-Stars application.
 - o Applications are due in early May.
 - All Star practices can start early June.
- Cost: RUG covers the cost of uniforms, fields & district tournament registration.
 - o Should an All-Star team progress beyond the district: additional fees, including travel will be the responsibility of the team.
 - o RUG can offer some fundraising support & opportunities.

* Coaches – be sure to note the skill level of your players and other RUG players during the season as well. This is an input into All-Star selection. ...Also, All-Star teams need volunteer coaches as well!

All Stars tournament dates: <https://www.llwadistrict8.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2227930>

9. **Summer Ball:** Summer ball is a great way to keep players engaged and active during the summer. Summer Ball works on a 'Sandlot style'. Sandlot means you divide up the attending players into two teams and have a game.
 - 5- 6 Weeks July to August. Weeknights only.
 - No expectation that players will attend all games.

Registration dates will be announced.

10. **Emeralds Training Program:** This is indoor group softball training to build skills and keep learning the game. This is offered in the winter, typically between December and February, and will take place 1 day per week for 8-10 weeks.
 - Registration in the fall.

11. FAQs:

Q1: Why does RUG sometimes co-league with other leagues?

A2: This is done to ensure that more kids can play ball. It comes up that RUG or other leagues will have uneven numbers of players at different divisions. Combining allows for more team formation and more softball.

For All-Stars, it can be necessary to combine with other leagues to secure coaches by level as well.

Q2: When does my player get their uniform?

A2: Expect uniforms to be handed out at practice in Mid March.

Q3: As a coach, can I schedule additional practices for my team?

A3: Yes, as the season progresses you will have access to an open field resource. You can secure a field for practice & view other coach resources here: [Coaches Corner](#) Here in NE Seattle we are restricted by the number of fields. RUG will make facilitating games the highest priority, but open fields can be scheduled for additional practices.

Q4: Can my player be on a team with all their friends?

A4: RUG will make every effort to honor friend & coach requests. However, it cannot be the expectation we will be able to accommodate all requests for players & coaches.

Q5: Who needs to fill out a volunteer application?

A5: Any adult who will be on the field or dug out interacting with children beyond their children. Field prep & scorekeeper do not need to fill out a volunteer application.