

Ralston Area Baseball Association



2009

Ralston Rams

*Player, Parent & Coaches
Guidelines & Responsibilities*



Adopted by the RABA Board of Directors November 2008
Last Revised November 2008

Ralston Area Baseball Association

Ralston Rams Team Policies and Guidelines

For 2009, 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, and with Metro Area Baseball League (MABL) for age groups 15 & up.

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- Middle of the pack competitive teams.

AA Division- Teams that have restricted rosters or drafted players.

A Division- Recreational League teams only.

RALSTON RAMS

- **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 Team is optional*
- **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 16's** -- for players who are 15 or 16 years of age as of April 30 of the year in which they will compete; *MABL Sanctioned*
- **Ralston Rams 18's**-- for players who are 17 or 18 years of age as of April 30 of the year in which they will compete; *MABL Sanctioned*

RALSTON RAMS TEAM OBJECTIVES

1. Build players personal and social skills by emphasizing sportsmanship, discipline, independence, responsibility and teamwork.
2. Develop players' 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 Team Manager/Head Coach of each Team, selects their players during July and August in the year preceding the playing season, from a competitive try-out process managed by the Vice President of Select Teams. Ralston Rams Team coaches/managers operate under the Ralston Area Baseball Association (RABA) By-Laws and guidelines, and are supervised by the Vice President of Select Teams whom reports to the RABA Board of Directors. The Team Manager/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 Team Manager/Head Coach - 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.
- 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 Team Manager/Head Coach. RABA funding to each Ralston Rams Team is minimal to the cost of operating each team during a season.
- 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 Team Manager/Head Coach in advance. Unexcused absences may subject the player to disciplinary action by the Team Manager/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 of their players to be ready to step in at any time due to injury or illness.

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

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, sportsmanship, and commitment to the team.

Everyone involved with Ralston Rams Teams must clearly understand the bounds 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 Team Manager/Head Coach and Business Manager. **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.

The use and/or consumption of alcohol, tobacco, 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, or illegal or controlled substances may be suspended from the team. Any player convicted of an offense involving alcohol, tobacco, or illegal or controlled substances may be dismissed from the team. The use and/or consumption of alcohol, tobacco, 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 Team Manager/Head Coach regarding infractions of these guidelines may be appealed to the Vice President Select Teams and the RABA Board of Directors. (Reference: Article VI of the RABA Bylaws).

HEAD COACH SELECTION

Each Ralston Rams Team will have one Team Manager/Head Coach. All prospective Team Manager/Head Coach candidates will submit an application to the VP of Select Teams prior to

the June/July Board of Directors Meeting or by a specified date determined by the VP of Select Teams. The VP of Select Teams will interview all candidates and recommend a selection to the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee for approval. A selection will occur at the June/July meeting or scheduled special meeting called by the President of RABA and Vice President of Select Teams. 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 VP of Select Teams and the RABA Board of Directors.

Each prospective Team Manager/Head Coach should 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 Team Manager/Head Coach for each team. The VP of Select Teams will select by June 1st, the Head Coach for the Ralston Rams 16's and Ralston Rams 18's teams.

TEAM SELECTION

RABA Ralston Rams Teams, age groups 10's through 14's, shall not consist of more than 15 players. Ralston Rams Teams, age group 16's & 18's, may have more than 15 players if needed. 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 VP of Select Teams and approved by the RABA Board of Directors, 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 Executive Committee of the RABA Board of Directors. Each Team Manager/Head Coach shall have a Player Selection Committee for the Ralston Rams Team tryouts, with the advice and guidance of the RABA VP Select 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.

<p>It will be the Team Manager/Head Coach's final decision as to the players selected for their team.</p>
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COACHING STAFF

AFTER players have been selected for the team, the Team Manager/Head Coach may select Assistant Managers/Coaches and Business Managers subject to RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee approval. The minimum coaching staff for the Ralston Rams Teams are:

- Team Manager /Head Coach
- Assistant Manager/Coach - (assist with base coaching & bench)
- Assistant Manager/Coach - (assist with base coaching & bench)
- Business Manager

Adult coaches must be in uniform dress as specified by USSSA, MABL, and RABA rules. Players, Managers/Coaches shall remain in the dugouts, on benches or in their proscribed areas throughout the game. The Team Manager/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 Manager/Coach selection, Business Manager selection, scheduling; approved purchases of equipment; equipment maintenance and most importantly, player development.

Each team's Business Manager shall be 21 years of age or older and shall be selected by the Team Manager/Head Coach and approved by the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee. The Business Manager shall share in the responsibility for the conduct of players and handling the business affairs of the Ralston Rams Team. This includes but is not limited to arrangements and responsibilities for all financial matters, the acquisition and handling of birth documents, medical release forms, evidence of accident insurance and eligibility affidavits. The Business Manager, if present in the dugout, bench area, or on the playing field, shall be in uniform dress as specified by USSSA, MABL, and RABA rules. The Business Manager is the steward of the RABA and parents funds and shall work in concert with the Team Manager/Head Coach to manage expenditures. **The Business Manager may also serve as Assistant Manager/Coach, but may not serve as the Team Manager/Head Coach.**

Each RABA Ralston Rams Team Manager/Head Coach **may** be remunerated a stipend determined by the RABA Board of Directors Executive Committee. The positions of Assistant Manager/Coaches and Business Manager shall be volunteer positions.

It is mandatory for each RABA Ralston Rams Team to have a representative at each monthly RABA Board of Directors Meeting representing their respective Team. The Team Manager/Head Coach shall be at all RABA Board of Directors Meetings. If the Team Manager/Head Coach is unable to attend the monthly meeting, the Team Manager/Head Coach shall designate a team representative to attend. It is recommended that the Business Manager attend in their absence if available. It is highly recommended that the Team Manager/Head Coach refrain from scheduling or rescheduling games on RABA Board of Directors Meeting dates. These dates are available in advance of any scheduling during the season.

TEAM FINANCES and FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Business Manager is responsible for the financial as well as the general management of the Ralston Rams Team. The Business Manager is a steward of RABA and the Ralston Rams Teams monies and shall report monthly to the VP of Select Teams and the RABA Treasurer, in a manner specified, the financial status of the Ralston Rams Team throughout the season.

UPON ACCEPTANCE ON A SELECT TEAM IN AUGUST, the player's registration fee is due. 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. RABA Ralston Rams Teams are intended to be self-supporting through registration fees, sponsorships, and fund-raising events with minimal financial support from RABA. RABA's contribution to each team may be used toward umpire fees. Parent(s) are expected to equally and fairly participate in Ralston Rams Team fund raising and adhere to any deadlines imposed by the Business Manager 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, food or meals during out-of-town trips, and post-season party. **Lodging at season out-of-town games and tournaments is the responsibility of each player's parents and will not be reimbursed.** Post-season tournament lodging may be reimbursed equally to each family using Team funds or any post season fund raising.

No money will be refunded to parent(s) of players once the player and parent(s) have accepted a roster position. Any excess funds at the end of the season will go to the RABA General Fund.

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. If there is an overage, it will be deposited in the RABA General Fund for field maintenance and field equipment purchases. The amount initially and to be retained in each checking account at the beginning and end of each season is as follows:

- Ralston Rams 10's - **\$500**,
- Ralston Rams 11's, 12's, 13's, 14's - **\$750**.

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

The **Ralston Rams 10's Team** suggested schedule limit is 35 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games, and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Select Teams. This number does not include post-season State, Regional, and World Series play. The Ralston Select 10u 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 Select Teams and RABA Board of Directors.

The **Ralston Rams 11's Team** suggested schedule limit is 55 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Select 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 55 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Select 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 65 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Select 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 65 games, to include USSSA regular season games, league games and tournaments, unless approved in advance by the Vice President of Select Teams. This number does not include post-season USSSA State, Regional, and World Series play.

The **Ralston Rams 16's & Ralston Rams 18's Teams** suggested schedule will be in the 24-35 game range. The Team Manager/Head Coach, coaching staff and VP of Select Teams will determine the actual number of games and tournaments played for each team.

TEAM PRACTICES

As previously stated, practices after Jan 1st are mandatory for all players in the Ralston Rams Program. The players' school sports & school activities are exempt from this mandate. Other exceptions to this rule may be made on a case-by-case basis by the respective Team Manager/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.

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. State Tournament entry, both USSSA and MABL, 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 or MABL, 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 Select Teams, in collaboration with Board of Directors Executive Committee, will determine the color, style and logo for all Ralston Rams Team's uniforms from an approved vendor. No jewelry will be worn during games, as this violates most league and tournament play.

All RABA Select Team players with bats in hand or on bases will wear helmets with face guards during all practices and games while they represent RABA. This includes players in the on-deck area.

Each player will be responsible for the purchase of an approved batting helmet with face guard. The team will purchase this and cost may be covered by team funds as determined by the Ralston Rams Team's Business Manager.

PLAYING TIME

It is one of the objectives of each team is to develop the baseball skills of all players through participation in both practices and games. However, it is the decision of the Team Manager/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 Team Manager/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 Team Manager/Head Coach in a timely and professional manner. **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 Team Manager/Head Coach, the Vice President of Select Teams will be asked to make the decision, mediate the situation, or recommend the Executive Committee of the RABA Board of Directors review the situation.