

# 2004 Dunn County 4-H Softball League Information/Form



**Motto: "It isn't whether we win or lose, but how we play the game that counts!"**

## Objectives Of 4-H Softball Are:

1. To teach boys and girls how to play ball well.
2. To develop sportsmanship.
3. To provide companionship.
4. To provide a place for meeting new friends.
5. To develop leadership in boys and girls.
6. To teach life-long leisure skills.
7. To teach understanding of others.
8. To learn to compete in a positive way.
9. To help youth with their physical development.

*"Whether he/she be a player, manager, captain, leader or parent, the best teacher demonstrates the action and attitude he/she wants youth to learn."*

**"Don't let poor sportsmanship  
ruin 4-H softball."**



**League Rules:** The rules below were set up and approved by the 4-H Softball Committee. All games shall be played in accordance with these rules.

## Eligibility to Play:

1. All clubs will be required to select one or more leagues and designate a coach's name and phone number to the Extension Office by May 5th. The club will also submit a list of 4-H members playing softball (any league) to the Extension Office by **May 5<sup>th</sup>**. A club playing a game with youth not on this list will forfeit that game. All youth on the club list do not need to be present at every game. All youth must meet the criteria listed below.
2. **Jr. League Eligibility:** All youth ages 6-12 years old as of January 1, 2004 who are enrolled in a Dunn County 4-H Club for 2004. Youth must have completed no more than 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Consent forms must be signed just like regular 4-H members. *Cloverbuds are eligible to play if a club needs them to field a team. Because of safety issues, however, Cloverbuds are encouraged to wait one additional year.*
3. **Intermediate League Eligibility:** All 4-H members ages 11-14 as of January 1, 2004 who were achieving members in a 4-H club in 2003 and are enrolled in a 4-H club for 2004. Youth must have completed no more than 8<sup>th</sup> grade. At the coaches' and parents' discretion, any younger youth may play on the intermediate league as needed.
4. **Sr. League Eligibility:** All 4-H members ages 13-18 as of January 1, 2004 who were achieving members in a 4-H club in 2003 and are enrolled in a 4-H Club for 2004. At the coaches' and parents' discretion, any youth may play on the senior

league as needed. Any youth not fitting these requirements must appeal, in writing, to the softball committee by May 20<sup>th</sup>.

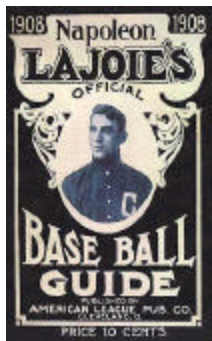
5. Any 4-H member who transfers from another community, county, or state will be eligible to play softball. A transfer of his/her membership will be done by letter from the agent in his/her former county.

**Note for Co-ed Leagues:** During games, there should be a 50/50 mix of boys and girls at bat and on the field when possible. **A minimum of three girls is needed to be on the field at all times**, for a regulation game. It is the coach's discretion if a player can be in one or two leagues. If three girls are not present at the beginning of the game, the team forfeits the game.

## General Game Rules:

1. **All managers/coaches need to have parent consent forms for all players before the first game.** The manager/coach needs to keep them in their softball file and bring them to each game in case they are needed.
2. Official starting time for games is 8:00 p.m. for Junior leagues and official start time for Intermediate and Senior league is 8:30 p.m. The home team pitcher and catcher may practice on the infield for 15 minutes starting 30 minutes before game time. 15 minutes prior to game time, the visiting team pitcher and catcher shall have the opportunity to practice on the infield. All batting and other throwing practice must take place in the outfield prior to the game. Any team may start the game with no minimum number of players (see league rules for explanations and exceptions). If a team refuses to start the game by 8:00/8:30 p.m., an automatic forfeit shall be called. The game may start at 8:30 p.m. if mutually agreed upon by both coaches.
3. **Junior league** will be "coaches pitch." The coaches of the team batting would pitch up to 8 pitches to a child. At the conclusion of the 8<sup>th</sup> pitch the batter is considered out if the ball is not hit into fair play. A defensive pitcher will play the position directly next to the coach (who does not field).
4. **Intermediate and Senior leagues will play 2 strikes for an out and 3 balls for a walk.**
5. **Any portion of the ball hitting the mat will be a strike** (example: when the ball deflects off the edge of the hard mat it is a strike).
6. The National Softball Pitching Rule will not be used. A pitcher who is removed can reenter a game as a pitcher, as long as he/she was not removed for discipline reasons.
7. Minimum pitching distances for 4-H softball: **all teams –40 or 46 feet** – with discretion of the pitcher and the umpire must be informed prior to the start of the game if they are pitching at 46 feet. They must stay at this distance for the entire game.
8. Pitching guideline: One foot must be on the pitching rubber at the beginning of the pitch **and when the ball is released.**

9. Seven innings shall constitute a game for all leagues. At least 4 innings constitute a complete game in case of rain. Ties must be played out. **No new innings will begin after 10 p.m. unless both coaches agree to play longer before the game starts.**
10. **Twenty-run rule:** For all leagues, when the fourth inning is completed and both teams have been up to bat an equal number of times, and one team is 20 or more runs ahead, the leading team wins and the game is over. If both teams mutually agree to continue, they may, however, continue play if it is for fun and will not influence the result of the game.
11. There is a limit of ten runs per inning/per team.
12. Any of the ten starting players may withdraw and reenter later in the game. **This rule is invalid if a player is removed because of behavior problems.**
13. All players must wear tennis shoes or rubber/plastic spiked shoes. **Metal core spikes and sandals are not allowed.**
14. Only official softball bats are to be used. No double wall or little league baseball bats allowed!
15. A team should use ten players in the field, if available. All team players must be placed in the batting order even if they aren't playing in the field. Players must bat in order.
16. There should be an orange cone (supplied by home field) set up halfway between third base and home plate. If a runner runs past the cone, he/she must continue to go home and the play is a force out (not a tag out).
17. No player, coach, parent, umpire, scorekeeper, or spectator shall have and/or use laser lights during softball games.
18. Alcohol and tobacco is prohibited on the playing field by players, coaches and spectators during game or ejection will result. Any player under the influence will be ejected. Spectators under the influence may result in a forfeit.
19. Ball diamonds used are considered youth athletic fields during 4-H softball games and therefore shall be tobacco-free.
20. **No player, coach, umpire, parent, or scorekeeper shall do the following:**
  - Use profane language
  - Harass players, coaches, umpires, or scorekeepers
  - Use name calling
  - Wear clothing with words, letters, pictures and/or symbols that are offensive to the 4-H Program (themes related to drugs, alcohol, violence, and tobacco products and/or are sexually explicit in nature.)
21. Only players, coaches, scorekeepers, and umpires may be inside the fence and on the field during the game.
22. Home plate and first base should be umpped the same. Coaches should advise their catchers to not block home plate. Runners who run over catchers (who are not blocking the plate) should be called out. The runner and catcher are encouraged to use common sense. If a play is in front of the plate the catcher should use the plate and the runner the mat for home, on a play behind the plate, the catcher should use the mat and the runner should use the plate. This is to avoid contact.
23. Batters shall not be called out if the batter steps on the plate in his follow-through of the swing. Any obvious jumping out of the batter's box will be called out.
24. All players must play at least two innings in the field.
25. There shall be no infield fly rule for all leagues.



### Specific Slow-Pitch Rules:

1. There must be a minimum of a six-foot arc and maximum of a 12-foot arc with the pitched ball. If the ball is high or low, the umpire will yell "high" or "flat." If the batter swings, it will be a live ball.
2. If the umpire yells "no pitch" it is a dead ball and play stops. Slow-pitch strike mats will be supplied as agreed upon by the coaches (9-15-94). Mats will be kept at each field with the bases.
3. In slow-pitch, **there is no stepping off base until the ball is hit. There is also no stealing.** It will be up to the umpire to call the player out.
4. Sliding is permitted on all bases.
5. A batter who hits a foul on the second strike is out.
6. Home base should be considered both home plate and the mat.
7. The softball to be used for games needs to be a standard red or blue dot.

### Team Responsibilities:

1. All teams shall furnish a leather, official softball for each game. It must be in good condition acceptable to both teams.
2. More than one Dunn County 4-H Club may combine to form a softball team.
3. **Each team will play as scheduled.** Any postponement will have to be approved by both teams, except in the case of bad weather or a muddy field. All postponements must be made up as soon as possible. Make-up games must not conflict with any scheduled games. Make-up games should be played at the scheduled field if possible.
4. If a cancellation is necessary, notify the opposing manager/coach and ball-field manager as soon as possible.
5. When a game is postponed, both managers/coaches must agree on the time and field of the make-up game. The host field must be notified immediately. Failure to comply shall result in a forfeit for both teams. Every scheduled league game should be completed by the scheduled All-Star game. All other games will be cancelled. In case of a tie in a league, a playoff will decide the championship.
6. **Each team is responsible for cleaning up after themselves.** Coaches and parents should make sure the players do not leave before things are cleaned up.
7. It is the responsibility of the home team to make sure that the fields are clean and suitable for play.
8. Each team must have one or more adults in charge of the team to be responsible for the players and the team's actions. **Each team must provide an adult who is capable of being an "unbiased" umpire.** A home plate umpire and at least one base umpire are a must! The team managers/coaches will set up the ground rules before the game. Junior League umpires must have completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Intermediate and Senior League umpires must be over 18 years of age.
9. It is the responsibility of the **winning** team to contact Chris at the Extension Office with the final score. **This contact shall happen before the team plays its next game.** To reach Extension Office personnel, contact the office Monday-Friday from 8 am – 4:30 pm at 232-1636 or e-mail @ chris.viau@ces.uwex.edu

10. Teams need to notify the Extension Office as soon as possible if a softball problem arises. This will allow the softball committee to act in a timely manner.
11. Any team not complying with the rules in this handbook shall forfeit the game.
12. Teams must use coaches that have completed the 4H volunteer orientation process and who are currently enrolled as 4-H leaders.

**Rights and Responsibilities of Umpires:**

1. Although it is expected, the umpires will do their best to use and enforce all rules in this handbook; **all youth and adults need to remember that umpires are people too and are not perfect.**
2. **All adults and youth must respect the umpires.**
3. **Umpires need to be encouraging and pay attention while the game is being played.** Umpires should remain standing while the game is being played. Umpires should not block game plays.
4. The umpire and managers/coaches have the duty of expelling any player after a warning for using any unsportsmanlike conduct. (See #17, 18 &19 under General Game Rules.)
5. The umpires have the right to expel any team whose players, coaches, parents and/or fans who excessively use unsportsmanlike conduct. (See #27, 18 &19 under General Rules.) Any team expelled will automatically forfeit that game. If umpires expel a team, they need to contact the Extension Office as soon as possible and describe the situation(s) that led up to the expulsion.
6. If a coach is concerned with a particular call an umpire is or is not making, he/she may ask to speak to the umpire about this call. This shall be done in a non-confrontational way and the opposing team's coach needs to be invited to hear the conversation.

**League Awards:** Will be determined at the spring's coaches meeting.

**1<sup>st</sup> Aid Kit:** Each team will be responsible to work with its club to provide its own 1<sup>st</sup> Aid Kit This rule is for safety reasons and cannot be ignored. For suggestions of supplies that should be included, contact the Extension Office.

**Costs:** Each team will pay \$8 per game for the use of the fields and lights. Fees must be paid by the date indicated on the club's invoice sent by the Extension Office. The invoice will be sent at the conclusion of the softball season. **Teams not paying these fees by the due date are in jeopardy of losing their rights to participate in softball and other 4-H events.** The Leaders Federation will then pay Little Elk Creek, Sneen, and Segar Fields. Colfax Fields may also be eligible for payment. Clubs will not be expected to pay for cancelled games as long as they contact the Extension Office within 24 hours of the cancelled game.

**Other Notes:**  
It has been deemed that eight games per season per team is a reasonable goal. Too many more than 8 games make the season too long.

**All youth playing softball must complete this form and return it to their coach before the start of the softball season.**

**Dunn County 4-H Softball Consent Form**

While the 4-H adult volunteers and coaches will do everything possible to assure the safety of all the participants, the activity your child will be participating in presents some potential danger of physical harm. The possibility of injury results from the inherent danger, which comes from participating in the activity.

Parents are asked to consider the abilities of their child, along with activity they will participate in and determine whether or not consent shall be granted for their child to participate.

I hereby authorize (4-Her's name) \_\_\_\_\_ of  
 the \_\_\_\_\_ 4-H Club to participate in 4-H softball for 2004. The name of the team he/she will be playing on is \_\_\_\_\_. I also understand there is a chance that he/she may be selected to play on an "All Stars" Team. His/her age as of January 1, 2004, was \_\_\_\_\_. He/she will complete \_\_\_\_ grade this school year (2003/2004). I authorize him/her to play on the \_\_\_\_\_ league(s).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

## DIRECTIONS TO BALL FIELDS:

**Colfax:** The field is located just west of Colfax on the north side of Hwy 170.

**Little Elk Creek:** Take Hwy J east of Menomonie about 4 miles. You will be able to see the field from "J."

**Segar Field:** Take Hwy 25 south of Menomonie to Downsville Bridge and take a right on Hwy 72. Take a left on Co. Rd C. Drive about 1/2 mile and turn right on Hwy Z. Continue to follow the signs and drive about 6 more miles.

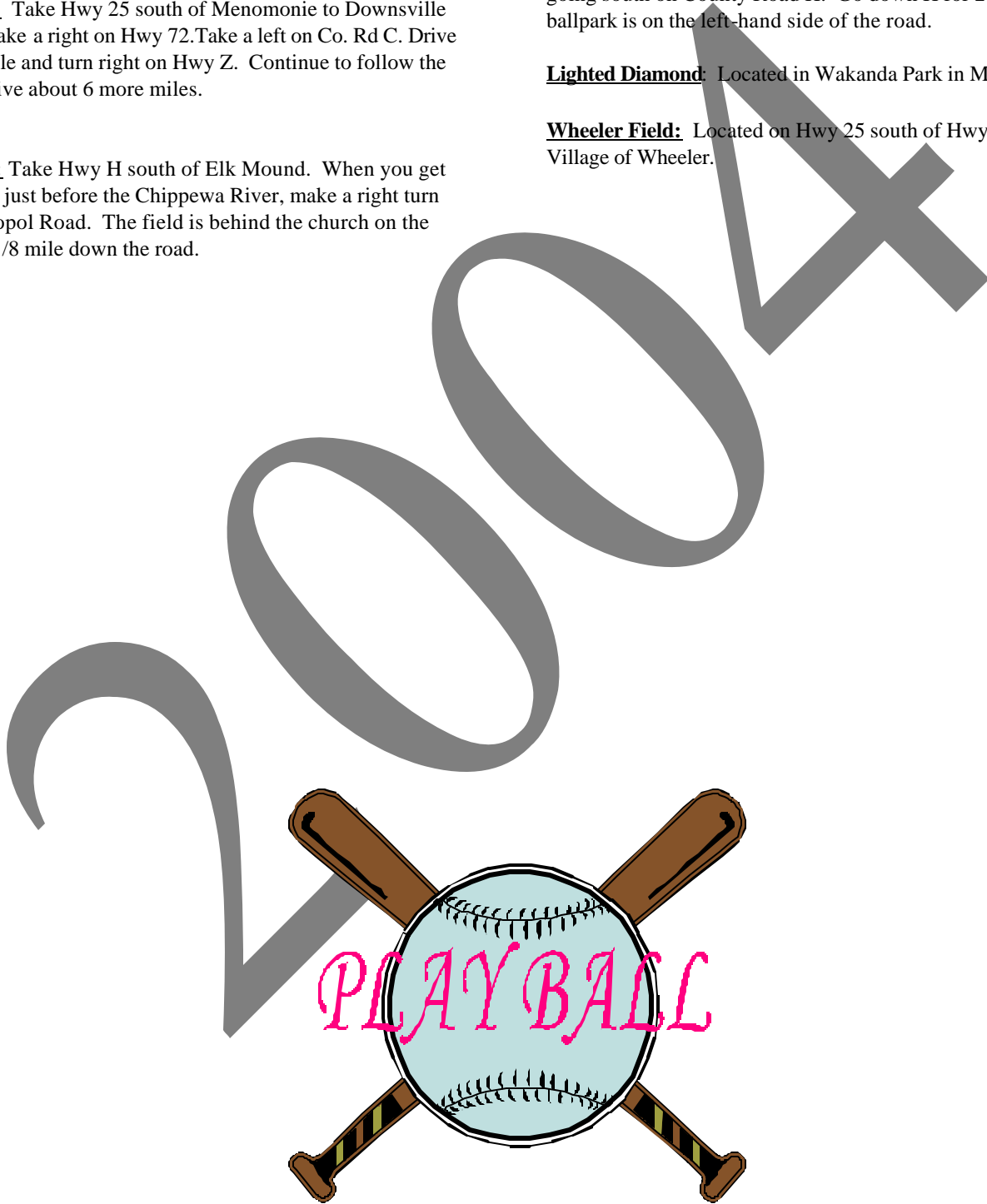
**Sneen Field:** Take Hwy H south of Elk Mound. When you get to the curve, just before the Chippewa River, make a right turn onto Sevestopol Road. The field is behind the church on the right about 1/8 mile down the road.

**Moose Lodge Field:** Located in Menomonie on 9<sup>th</sup> Street approx. 1 block south of Lammers Grocery Store.

**Rock Falls Rockets:** When you arrive in Rock Falls, take a left going south on County Road H. Go down H for 2 blocks. The ballpark is on the left-hand side of the road.

**Lighted Diamond:** Located in Wakanda Park in Menomonie.

**Wheeler Field:** Located on Hwy 25 south of Hwy 179 in the Village of Wheeler.



5/11/04