

West Georgia Nightmare Fastpitch

Coach Expectations & Agreement | 2026-2027 Season

Coach Name: _____	Phone Number: _____
Email Address: _____	Team / Age Group: _____
Coaching Role: _____	Head Coach / Assistant Coach / Volunteer Coach: _____

Welcome

Thank you for serving on the coaching staff of West Georgia Nightmare. This organization was built with purpose, grit, love, and a commitment to developing young women through softball. It began with one team and grew because of the relationships formed among athletes, coaches, and families.

Coach Alex was an important part of the heart and history of Nightmare. He believed in loving people well, celebrating the little things, bringing joy to the field, and making athletes feel seen and supported. After losing Alex, Make Alex Proud became more than a phrase. It became our promise to carry his heart forward in the way we coach, lead, compete, and care for people.

You are not here only to run drills or make lineups. You are here to mentor athletes, protect our culture, communicate with families, model leadership, and coach in a way that builds confidence, accountability, connection, and joy. These expectations apply to every Head Coach, Assistant Coach, and volunteer working with a Nightmare team.

1. Coaching Standards & Professional Conduct

You represent West Georgia Nightmare at practices, games, tournaments, team events, online, and in the community. Your behavior sets the tone for your athletes, their families, and the coaches around you.

- Model maturity, composure, preparation, and professionalism.
- Hold yourself to the same standard you expect from your athletes.
- Do not belittle, mock, scream at, threaten, or intentionally embarrass an athlete.
- Correct behavior and performance with structure, clarity, and respect.
- Do not argue publicly with another Nightmare coach, parent, athlete, opponent, umpire, or tournament staff member.
- Do not coach while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, or any substance that affects judgment or safety.
- Bring serious concerns directly to Coach Bill instead of discussing them through gossip, side conversations, or social media.

2. Athlete Safety, Well-Being & Appropriate Boundaries

The physical and emotional safety of our athletes comes first. Coaches are expected to create an environment where athletes feel protected, respected, and able to ask for help.

- Take reports of pain, injury, illness, bullying, harassment, unsafe behavior, or emotional distress seriously.
- Never pressure an athlete to hide pain or continue when participation may be unsafe.
- Notify the parent or guardian and Coach Bill when a meaningful safety, injury, or behavioral concern arises.
- Avoid private one-on-one situations in enclosed or isolated spaces whenever possible.
- Keep communication with athletes appropriate, team-related, and transparent.
- Do not use physical punishment, humiliation, food restriction, or threats as discipline.
- Follow tournament, facility, league, and organization safety requirements at all times.

3. Human First: Human, Student, Athlete

Our coaching philosophy is Human, Student, Athlete. The human comes first, the student comes second, and the athlete comes third. Human connection is not separate from player development. It is the foundation of player development.

- Human first: Learn who each athlete is beyond softball. Build trust, notice changes in her energy or behavior, and make sure she knows her value is not tied to her batting average, position, or place in the lineup.
- Student second: Support school responsibilities, academic growth, and the habits that help athletes become responsible young women.
- Athlete third: Once trust is established, challenge her, hold her accountable, teach the game, and help her develop competitively.
- Build an appropriate personal connection with every athlete, not only the strongest players or the athletes closest to your family.
- Learn how each athlete responds to pressure, correction, encouragement, and competition.
- Check in when an athlete seems unusually quiet, upset, withdrawn, anxious, or disconnected.
- Do not ignore bullying, exclusion, cliques, or mean-girl behavior.
- Praise publicly when appropriate. Correct serious, personal, or emotional issues privately.
- Hold a high standard without humiliating the child. The athlete may forget the score, but she will remember how her coach made her feel.

4. Communication With Coach Bill & Other Coaches

One of our goals this season is for Head Coaches to confidently lead their own teams while keeping unnecessary day-to-day issues off Coach Bill's plate. Handle routine matters at the team level whenever possible, but never hide or delay information that could become a safety, disciplinary, roster, financial, legal, liability, or organization-wide concern.

Head Coaches should normally handle the following without escalating every detail:

- Routine attendance notices and ordinary schedule conflicts.
- Practice planning, normal lineup decisions, defensive positioning, and game strategy.
- Minor athlete corrections, first-time behavior concerns, and normal coachable moments.
- Routine parent questions, team logistics, and low-level misunderstandings that can be resolved respectfully.
- Day-to-day communication with the other coaches assigned to the team.

Coach Bill must be looped in promptly when a situation involves:

- Athlete safety, a serious injury, medical emergency, bullying, harassment, threats, abuse, or inappropriate conduct.
- A coach or parent ejection, major confrontation, repeated disrespect, or conduct that could damage the organization.
- A repeated or unresolved parent complaint after the Head Coach has made a reasonable effort to address it.
- A recommendation to suspend or remove an athlete, parent, or coach.
- A roster addition, roster removal, permanent team-placement change, major staffing change, or significant tournament or schedule decision.
- Any parent or other adult who will consistently help coach, assist on game days, or work in or around the dugout but was not listed on the original coaching roster.
- A guest-playing violation, repeated no-show pattern, financial concern affecting participation, or social media issue involving the organization.
- A disagreement among coaches that is affecting athletes, families, or team operations.
- Anything that may create legal, insurance, liability, safety, financial, disciplinary, or organization-wide consequences.

When in doubt, ask yourself whether this is a routine team matter you are expected to lead or an issue that could grow beyond the team. Coach Bill does not need every small detail, but she should never be surprised by a serious situation.

- Do not undermine another coach in front of athletes or parents. Address disagreements privately and professionally.
- Ask for help when you truly need it. Protecting Coach Bill's workload does not mean struggling in silence or withholding important information.

5. Parent Communication & the 24-Hour Rule

Clear, calm communication with families is part of coaching. Parents should know what is expected, but game day is not the time for emotional conversations about playing time, lineups, or coaching decisions.

- Enforce the organization's 24-hour rule for non-emergency concerns.
- Do not debate playing time, lineups, or strategy during games, immediately after games, or in front of athletes.
- Keep team announcements organized and timely, including schedules, arrival times, uniforms, location changes, and required equipment.
- Use respectful, factual communication. Avoid sarcasm, public callouts, or emotionally reactive messages.
- Direct unresolved parent concerns to Coach Bill after the Head Coach has had an opportunity to address them.
- Protect confidentiality. Do not share another athlete's private information, family circumstances, discipline, or medical details.

6. Athlete Communication, Self-Advocacy & Independence

As athletes get older, they should take greater ownership of their development and responsibilities. Beginning at 12U, athletes should be encouraged to communicate directly with their Head Coach before a parent intervenes regarding playing time, positions, goals, development, or feedback.

- Answer athlete questions honestly and respectfully.
- Help players learn how to ask for feedback, understand their role, and advocate for themselves appropriately.
- Keep parents informed while still allowing athletes to build independence.
- Expect athletes to pack, carry, and manage their own equipment whenever age appropriate.
- Communicate game time, uniform, warm-up expectations, and responsibilities directly to older athletes as well as parents.

7. Practice Planning & Organization

Practices should be purposeful, organized, age appropriate, and active. Coaches may create their own plans, but every practice should have clear objectives and enough structure to keep athletes engaged.

- Arrive early enough to prepare the field and equipment before athletes begin.
- Plan practices in advance instead of deciding everything after players arrive.
- Balance offensive development, defensive development, base running, pitching, catching, game situations, and conditioning.
- Limit standing in lines. Use stations, small groups, and competitive drills when possible.
- End practice with a clear team message, review, or breakout.
- Ask Coach Bill for drills, plans, or support whenever needed.

A recommended weekly rhythm is one practice with a stronger defensive focus and one practice with a stronger offensive focus, while still including throwing, movement, and competition at both.

8. Core Mechanics Philosophy

Consistency across teams helps athletes develop. Coaches should reinforce the organization's core language while allowing qualified instructors and position coaches to handle advanced individual adjustments.

Throwing fundamentals:

- Elbows up and body in an athletic throwing position.
- Point or lead with the glove side.
- Finish the throw and tuck after release.
- Use proper footwork and create momentum toward the target.

Hitting fundamentals:

- Understand the load and maintain balance.
- Create a strong front side.
- Allow the hips to fire before the hands.
- Work through contact to full extension.
- Keep the head steady and eyes on the ball through contact.

Game day is not the time to completely rebuild mechanics. Use encouragement, energy, and short cues during competition. Save major mechanical changes for practice or individual work.

9. Game-Day Conduct & Composure

Your athletes will match your emotional temperature. Coaches must remain competitive without becoming reckless, disrespectful, or chaotic.

- Know the lineup, substitutions, tournament rules, pitching plan, and defensive responsibilities before the game begins.
- Communicate with your coaching staff so athletes do not receive conflicting instructions.
- Do not allow frustration with an umpire, opponent, parent, or player to become the focus of the game.
- Ask questions of umpires respectfully and return your attention to the team.
- If you are too frustrated to communicate appropriately, step away and allow another coach to handle the situation.
- Create energy in the dugout without making the game chaotic or embarrassing.
- Do not publicly criticize an athlete immediately after an error. Give a short cue, reset her, and coach the next play.
- Use the two-error guideline with judgment. As a general rule, consider a defensive change after an athlete commits two errors in the same inning, not after a single mistake. Not every difficult or high-effort play should be counted as an error. Read the athlete's body language, attitude, effort, confidence, and ability to reset, then use your best judgment.
- Never yank an athlete immediately after one mistake. We are teaching resilience and how to recover when something goes wrong. If a defensive change is needed, make it calmly, coach the athlete privately, and return her when appropriate. The goal is to help her reset and grow, not to punish her publicly.

10. Pool Play Philosophy

Pool play is where we develop players, evaluate combinations, and prepare for bracket play. Unless Coach Bill communicates otherwise, every team will use a continuous batting lineup in pool games when tournament rules allow.

- All available roster athletes should be included in the continuous batting lineup.
- Pickup players should be placed after all present roster athletes in the batting order.
- A pickup player should not bat ahead of a present roster athlete unless that roster athlete has established a pattern of uncommunicated absences or consistent no-shows and the Head Coach has addressed the situation.
- Everyone should receive a reasonable opportunity to play defense during pool play, considering safety, readiness, and game circumstances.
- Athletes may be placed in positions they are learning or developing.
- Pitchers should be allowed to work through manageable adversity when appropriate.
- Warm up at least two pitchers when possible so the team is prepared for changes.
- Use pool play to track performance, effort, communication, readiness, and response to coaching so bracket decisions are informed and fair.
- Development does not mean lowering standards. Require hustle, communication, preparation, and team-first behavior from everyone.

11. Bracket Play Philosophy

For 10U and older teams, bracket play is competitive and lineup spots are earned. The goal is to compete to win while still treating athletes with respect and communicating roles clearly.

- Coaches may bat the tournament minimum, add extra hitters, or bat the full roster based on rules, team needs, and pool-play performance.
- Coaches are encouraged to use the strongest available defense and all legal strategic options, including substitutions and DP/Flex when applicable.
- Substitutions may be made more quickly in bracket play when performance, effort, matchup, or game situation requires it.
- An athlete who struggled significantly in pool play is not automatically guaranteed a bracket lineup spot.
- Playing time decisions must never be based on favoritism, parent pressure, retaliation, or personal relationships.
- Use your best judgment, communicate with your staff, and be prepared to explain decisions professionally if asked after the 24-hour period.

8U remains development focused. Competitive decisions may still be made, but the coaching staff should prioritize participation, learning, and confidence at that age.

12. Playing Time & Position Development

Equal playing time is not guaranteed, but every athlete deserves honest coaching, a development plan, and clarity about what she can improve. Talent alone does not outweigh commitment.

- Base playing time on attendance, reliability, effort, attitude, preparation, coachability, performance, sportsmanship, and team needs.
- Do not consistently start an athlete who repeatedly misses practices, games, or tournaments over athletes who consistently show up and honor their commitment, even when the frequently absent athlete is considered one of the best players.
- Reasonable exceptions include school obligations, illness, injury, family emergencies, or other circumstances that were communicated properly.
- Athletes who consistently attend should see that their commitment matters. Do not teach players that talent excuses a repeated lack of reliability.
- Pickup players are present to fill a legitimate roster need. They should not receive preferred batting-order positions, defensive roles, or major opportunities ahead of committed roster athletes without a legitimate safety, attendance, or competitive reason.
- Develop athletes at two or more positions whenever possible. Specialization should come later unless safety or skill demands require it.
- Do not permanently label a young athlete based on one bad weekend or one difficult stretch.
- Give meaningful feedback and specific next steps instead of vague criticism.
- Avoid promising positions, innings, batting-order spots, or playing time that cannot be guaranteed.

13. Pitching, Catching & Athlete Health

- Use pitchers and catchers responsibly and pay attention to fatigue, pain, mechanics, workload, and recovery.

- Do not ask an athlete to continue pitching or catching through concerning pain.
- Communicate with parents and Coach Bill about known injuries, restrictions, or workload concerns.
- Make reasonable efforts to prepare more than one pitcher and catcher for each event.
- Do not allow short-term game results to outweigh long-term athlete health.

14. Discipline Through Structure

We do not shame children into compliance. Coaches may be firm, demanding, and direct, but correction must be purposeful and appropriate.

- Use clear expectations, immediate correction, team resets, loss of a privilege, reduced role, or age-appropriate conditioning when appropriate.
- Do not use excessive running, dangerous exercise, or public humiliation as punishment.
- Do not punish an entire team repeatedly for the behavior of one athlete when individual accountability is more appropriate.
- Praise publicly when appropriate. Correct serious or personal issues privately whenever possible.
- Document repeated behavioral issues and communicate with the athlete, parent, and Coach Bill.

15. Protecting Team Culture

Nightmare culture must be protected intentionally. We do not allow bullying, exclusion, disrespect, gossip, parent drama, or coach conflict to become normal.

- Address problems early instead of hoping they disappear.
- Do not participate in negative conversations about athletes, families, or coaches.
- Do not allow one talented athlete or influential family to control the team environment.
- Support every athlete, not only the strongest players or the athletes closest to your family.
- Bring culture concerns directly to Coach Bill and allow the organization to help resolve them.

16. Dugout, Parent, Volunteer & Equipment Boundaries

- Parents are not permitted in or around the dugout during games unless invited by a coach or needed for an emergency.
- Parents should not coach from the stands, behind the backstop, or outside the dugout.
- Parents may bring food, drinks, medication, or necessary items to their athlete, but should not remain around the dugout.
- Athletes should pack, carry, and be responsible for their own equipment whenever age appropriate.
- Do not allow a parent or other adult who was not listed on the original coaching roster to consistently coach, help on game days, or work in or around the dugout without prior approval from Coach Bill.
- This applies even when the person is only volunteering or informally helping. From a liability standpoint, anyone serving in a recurring coaching or dugout role must be approved before participating in that role.
- Coaches should reinforce these boundaries consistently and respectfully rather than allowing exceptions that create confusion.

17. Tournaments, Rosters, Pickup Players & Team Administration

- Confirm attendance early enough to manage lineups, pitching, pickup-player needs, and tournament fees.
- Head Coaches are expected to make a reasonable effort to find their own pickup players. Coach Bill is willing to help when needed, but should not be the first or only person responsible for locating them.
- Pickup players should only be added to fill a legitimate roster need. Do not add so many pickup players that the team has more than 12 total athletes for an event. Twelve is the cap unless Coach Bill gives prior approval.
- Pickup players must still follow the pool-play batting-order and playing-time expectations stated in this agreement. Committed roster athletes who show up should be prioritized.
- Do not add pickup players, promise roster spots, remove athletes, or make permanent roster changes without communicating with Coach Bill.
- Keep GameChanger or the organization's selected scoring platform accurate and updated when assigned.
- Submit tournament plans, roster needs, hotel information, and schedule changes promptly.
- Do not collect or spend organization money without authorization and clear documentation.
- Protect player information, contact lists, and internal organization documents.

18. Social Media & Public Representation

- Use social media to celebrate athletes and represent the organization positively.
- Do not post complaints about players, parents, umpires, opponents, tournament directors, or other Nightmare coaches.
- Do not share private team matters, discipline, injuries, family circumstances, or internal disagreements publicly.
- Coordinate official roster announcements, recruiting posts, major team news, and sensitive responses with Coach Bill.
- Remember that screenshots and recordings can outlive the original post or conversation.

19. Older-Team Recruiting Support

Coaches working with high-school-age athletes should support recruiting honestly and responsibly. Recruiting communication should be coordinated with Coach Bill or the organization's recruiting coordinator.

- Do not promise college offers, roster spots, scholarships, or recruiting outcomes.
- Provide honest evaluations and help athletes understand the work required to reach their goals.
- Protect athlete academic, personal, and contact information.
- Support filming, profile updates, communication, and exposure opportunities when assigned.

20. Birthdays, Breakouts & Nightmare Traditions

Celebrating athletes helps them feel seen and connected. Traditions should have meaning and should strengthen the family culture of Nightmare.

- Birthday gifts are optional. Coaches may recognize birthdays with a small snack, candy, or drink, and approved purchases may be reimbursed when a receipt is provided.

- Sing Happy Birthday as a team when practical, even if the celebration is a few days early or late.
- Allow the birthday athlete to choose the team breakout when appropriate.
- Teach FOE, meaning Family Over Everything, as a core Nightmare tradition started by Coach Alex.
- Use Night Night as a celebratory breakout after wins and occasionally after practice when it fits the moment.
- Teach athletes that Make Alex Proud means competing with heart, treating people with kindness, celebrating the little things, and leaving people better than we found them.
- Wins and championships matter, but never more than the human being wearing the jersey.

21. Open-Door Policy & Coach Support

You do not have to struggle in silence. Coaching can be rewarding, but it can also be stressful. Reach out when you feel burned out, overwhelmed by parent issues, unsure how to reach an athlete, or need help with tournaments, practice plans, staffing, or strategy.

Coach Bill will support you, but support depends on honest and timely communication. Asking for help is responsible leadership, not weakness.

22. Accountability & Removal From Staff

These expectations are not suggestions. Coaches who fail to uphold them may receive direct feedback, a written improvement plan, reduced responsibilities, suspension, or removal from the coaching staff depending on the seriousness and frequency of the issue.

Immediate removal may occur for behavior involving athlete safety, abuse, threats, harassment, discrimination, intoxication, theft, serious dishonesty, retaliation, or conduct that places athletes or the organization at significant risk.

Most athletes do not fall out of love with softball because of the game itself. They often fall out of love because of how someone made them feel in it. Be the coach they remember for the right reasons.

Coach Agreement & Signature

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the West Georgia Nightmare Coach Expectations & Agreement for the 2026-2027 season. I agree to uphold these standards, communicate honestly, protect athlete safety, support the organization's culture, and accept accountability for my conduct and coaching responsibilities.

Coach Printed Name

Team / Age Group

Coach Signature

Date

Coach Bill / Organization Director

Date

Emergency Contact Name

Emergency Contact Phone

WHERE GRIT MEETS JOY | FOE | MAKE ALEX PROUD