



Greenway Giants Baseball & Softball Club
PO Box 7, Cherrybrook, NSW 2126

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1. What sports are offered at the Club?

The Greenway Giants offers two sports – Baseball and Softball. Baseball is played by boys and girls, men and women, although most girls and women at the Club choose to play Softball. Softball is purely a sport for girls and women as offered at our Club.

Both sports use a progression of modified rules to teach children the skills of the game to maximise the learning and safety of the players.

The following table is useful to understand the major differences between the sports.

Baseball	Softball
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ball is smaller and more dense	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ball is bigger but less dense
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ball is pitched overarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ball is pitched underarm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The distance between bases varies up to a maximum of 90 feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The distance between bases is fixed at 60 feet
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The distance the ball is pitched varies up to a maximum of 60 feet, 6 inches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The distance the ball is pitched is fixed at 43 feet

Baseball is offered in the club from U7s through to open division (average age mid 40s, but player ages range from 15 to sixty-something!). Softball similarly offers a sport for all ages, ranging from U10s through to open division.

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2. What rules are modified for young players?

The modification of rules falls into three categories:

- a. Pitching Modifications – this includes the following
 - i. Playing Teeball (where the batter hits the ball off a tee rather than being pitched at by a Pitcher) to ensure a fast moving game at an age when Pitchers would not be able to control a pitch adequately – this generally results in a fast moving, high scoring game in which the fielders receive plenty of practice learning to field ground balls and fly balls
 - ii. Playing Zooka or Modball – to help slightly older players to get used to hitting a moving ball, without having to contend with changes in velocity and location of pitches. A “Zooka” is a machine which mechanically pitches a ball to the batters of both teams, in a location and at a speed enabling players to face (and hit) the ball with no fear of being hit themselves.
 - iii. Pitching Limits – limiting the number of pitches any one Pitcher can throw in a game, which both protects young arms from being over-used, and encourages coaches to develop a number of Pitchers in a side.
 - iv. Restrictions on Pitch Types – one of the other cornerstones of being a great Baseball pitcher is being able to control a variety of pitches to batters for strikes. A good Major League Baseballer will throw 3-4 substantially different types of pitches, each with a couple of variants, all designed to keep batters off balance. Some of these pitches place great stress on young arms, however, and are therefore prohibited from play until the U16 age group.



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Young Pitchers at Greenway are generally taught two varieties of a fastball, plus a change-up which while looking like a fastball, travels at about 90% of the speed of a fastball.

- v. Pitching Distances – one of the cornerstones of all pitching is being able to control the pitch and throw it for strikes – something that younger Pitchers struggle with more than more experienced Pitchers. Therefore, when Pitchers first throw to batters, they will generally throw 42 feet from Pitching Plate to the back of Home Plate. This distance increases slightly as Pitchers develop, until the open division pitching distance of 60 feet, 6 inches is reached by the time that Pitchers reach the U16 age group.
- b. Playing Field Dimension Modifications
 - i. Pitching Distances
 - ii. Base bath distances – in Baseball, to reduce the stress on young arms, without impacting the spirit or design of the game, young players play on smaller diamonds. As they grow older, the diamond size is gradually increased to make the game more like the real thing – always with the development and safety of the young players in mind.
- c. Modifications Designed to Provide Encouragement and Focus on Skills
 - i. Base Stealing – While stealing of bases is one of the great features of Baseball, scoring runs overwhelming due to the errors and inability of the side in the field is no fun for anyone. With this in mind, a range of rule modifications are in place at younger ages, ranging from total prohibition on stealing, to not being able to steal until the pitched ball reaches home plate, to not being able to steal home, to only being able to steal a single base on any single pitched ball.
 - ii. No Balk Rule – While rules exist in open play to prevent the pitcher from overtly deceiving base runners for advantage, they obviously do not apply in age groups where base runners are prevented from taking a lead prior to the pitch. In addition, when young Pitchers first have to contend with base-runners taking leads, the rules of our league allow for a year of learning the balk rule, where umpires will provide guidance to Pitchers about the many intricacies of the rule.
 - iii. Batting Tee after 4 Balls – Used as a means of providing a fielding team with the ability to make an out, rather than awarding the batter-runner first base as the rules of baseball call for. Used in the first years of live pitching as a means of making both sides work for runs and outs, and to reduce the pressure on young Pitchers.
 - iv. 6 Run Rule – to prevent lopsided scores, which are no fun or value for either side

These capture the reasoning behind the major modifications to rules however we encourage all Coaches to brief parents at the commencement of any season to brief parents on new rules and relaxation of previous rules pertaining to the age group.

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3. What competitions does the club compete in?

We compete in the following associations across Baseball and Softball:

- a. Softball – we participate in a Junior and a Senior competition organised by the Hornsby District Softball Association. For more information, see the Greenway Giants Softball website (www.greenwaygiants.softball.net.au) and the Hornsby District Softball Association (www.hornsby.softball.org.au).
- b. Baseball – we participate in competitions organised by three associations, all of which operate under the auspices of Baseball New South Wales (www.nsw.baseball.com.au):



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- i. Ryde Hornsby Baseball League (RHBL) – for Junior Baseball competitions from U7s through to U19s. For more information, see www.rhbl.com.au. These competitions are scheduled for play on either Friday nights (mostly for A competitions in U12As, U14As and U16As) or Saturday mornings.
- ii. New South Wales Womens Baseball League (NSWWBL) – for senior women-only Baseball. For more information, see www.nswwbl.baseball.com.au
- iii. Pacific Coast Baseball League – for seniors baseball for men and women. For more information, see www.pcbaseballleague.org

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4. What will Baseball or Softball offer my child compared to other sports?

Some of the benefits of playing Baseball and Softball versus other sports include:

- a. Both are highly participative, team sports in which every player on the team must bat multiple times in a game. Rules for younger children are modified to encourage the development of throwing, catching, batting and base-running skills.
- b. Both are very inclusive games, particularly at the youngest age groups. It is a game that through to the age of 10 is generally played where all players rotate through all positions on the field – both infield and outfield. From that age, specialisation increases, both in terms of fielding positions and batting order.
- c. The game is over in less than 2 hours – all junior games are played to a time limit, meaning that you can schedule your day knowing when the game will start and finish. The youngest age divisions (6 year olds) play for one hour, and the oldest age divisions play for two hours.
- d. The game is played at close quarters relative to some other Australian sports, leading to an excitement level that simply cannot be matched. With this closeness of the crowd comes responsibilities, however, so we ask all parents and friends to be supportive of good play, whether by the child/team you are supporting or not.
- e. Travel is limited. In the case of Softball, you will play at the same ground (Hayes Park) every week. In the case of Baseball, younger age groups will generally play at grounds within 25 minutes drive of Greenway Park. In older age divisions, travel increases somewhat, with occasional games as far away as Balmain and Five Dock.

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5. Do adults play Baseball and Softball?

Yes. The Greenway Giants have many teams playing in Senior competitions of both Baseball and Softball. Both sports offer a range of options, so whether you would like to take part in a social competition or something more serious, we can help you out. Please refer to the Contacts section of the Greenway Giants website (www.greenwaygiants.org.au), where you will find the details of Senior Baseball and Senior Softball Coordinators.

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6. How can I stay in touch with important upcoming events?

The simplest and most convenient starting point for all items matters related to Baseball and Softball is the Greenway Giants website (www.greenwaygiants.org.au). This site has links to all relevant association websites, and includes details of upcoming social events and development opportunities. Also, the club publishes a magnificent newsletter each week called *The Infield Flyer*, which promotes upcoming events,



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includes competition standings tables, match reports, and an array of terrific photos showing the action from around the diamonds. It is a terrific read for parents and youngsters alike.

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7. How can I help my child get more out of playing Baseball or Softball?

There are three things that all parents of junior players can do to ensure that their children's enjoyment and development is maximised – get involved at home, get involved in their team, and get involved in a team of your own!

Getting involved at home means nothing more than getting out in the backyard once or twice a week with a ball and gloves, and playing Catch. Playing Catch not only builds coordination, but builds arm strength too – even when throwing with Mum or Dad.

Getting involved in the child's team is another way that you can demonstrate interest and develop knowledge that will assist your child to reach their full potential. Whether you volunteer as a Coach, Assistant Coach, Manager, Umpire, Scorer or just help out at practice, children will respond to the interest shown by a parent helping not just them, but their team as well.

The final thing you can do, and it is included with the knowledge that it is not for everybody, is to learn to play yourself. There is no better way to develop knowledge of the game that can help your child than to play yourself. It is also an invaluable way of developing empathy for your child, which sometimes lacks when sitting on the sideline. So consider joining a Seniors team, and watch the smile on your child's face when you tell them.

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8. What development programs exist for my child?

The most fundamental development programs are the weekly training sessions and games that are arranged for your child's team. Attendance at team practice and games is essential, not just for team effectiveness, but for ensuring that your child continues to develop at the appropriate rate for his/her age.

In addition to the weekly training sessions and games, the Club looks to sponsor or promote Development Clinics – either for general skills such as batting, or specific positional skills such as Catching or Pitching. These Clinics will generally be promoted on the website and through team management.

Participation in team Gala Days is another form of development for both player and team. There are several offered throughout the season by clubs not too far from Cherrybrook, generally in the U9s through to U12s age groups. Please be prepared to participate in one or two of these Gala days every season, as the tournament format leads to dramatically improved player development and team cohesion.

During the off-season, Winter Development programs are offered by both Ryde Hornsby Baseball Association and Baseball NSW for U11 through to U16 year olds for the season to come. These programs are an invaluable way of accelerating player development, as well as opportunity for children to get to know players from other Clubs and Associations across the Sydney Metropolitan area.



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The good news is that apart from Winter Development programs, all of the above development programs listed above are sponsored by the Giants, and are included as part of your child's registration.

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9. What is the difference between the Teeball offered by Baseball and Softball?

The offerings of Baseball and Softball are very similar, providing an inclusive, fast-paced and fun introduction to Baseball and Softball via a modified rules format in which batters hit the ball off a tee rather than hit a pitched ball. The major differences are:

- The Softball version is exclusively for girls, whereas the Baseball version is for boys and girls.
- The Baseball version runs two versions of Teeball – Lightning League for U7s, which awards points for mastering the key skills of the game by allocating points to a team for good plays by its players (e.g. 1 point for fielding a ground ball cleanly); and full blown competitive Teeball in U8s.
- Softball Teeball is played right up through U10s, whereas in Baseball, U9s and U10s progress to either Zooka ball (where batters learn to hit a moving ball launched in a controlled fashion by a machine) or Live Ball (where players begin to pitch the ball).

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10. How can I get involved in helping the Club?

The most fundamental way that you can assist the club is by helping out with one of the roles required to make your child's team function properly. In addition to providing substantial benefits to your child's development, acting as Team Manager, Assistant Coach, Umpire or Scorer will allow you to see what makes a Baseball or Softball team function properly. By extension, what you learn will provide insights into what makes the club function optimally. If your child is enjoying your involvement over a season or two, and your passion for the game is growing, you may wish to increase your involvement in the club by taking on an administrative position.

The club's Executive Committee is restricted under our Constitution to being in a particular role for no more than three years, meaning that there are regularly roles available. These roles are always promoted on the club's website (www.greenwaygiants.org.au) with simple job descriptions, so you will get an idea of what each role entails by way of commitment.

In addition to positions on the Executive Committee, there are always positions on the club's General Committee available, which do not require the extent of commitment that a position on the Executive Committee requires, but which are vital to the effective running and growth of the club.

In recent years, our club has unfortunately relied too heavily on a small number of people and families who hold down multiple positions on the Executive and General Committees. We view this as a weakness and it is therefore something that we are determined to address, as better spreading of work load and decision

making will lead to less burn out of key individuals, and provide better continuity of stewardship for the club into the future. In short, we aspire to have “more people doing less” than we have today.

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11. What equipment should I buy for my child?

Probably the best answer to this question is that it depends on your child's age and stage of development. At the earliest ages, the only equipment that players require are of a personal protection nature (mouthguard, shin pads and protective cup), a glove to be worn on the non-throwing hand, and a pair of soccer boots or Baseball/Softball cleats with moulded rubber studs (metal studs are not allowed until players are much older for safety reasons). For first time Teeballers, a playing glove is included in the registration fee. All other playing equipment, including bats, balls, batting helmets, catching equipment and bases are provided by the club.

As players develop and progress through the age divisions, there is a tendency to invest more in items of personal playing equipment, including batting helmets, bats and Catchers protective gear, however the club is aware that such equipment is expensive, so we continue to provide basic equipment in all kits for juniors and seniors.

Should you have any further questions regarding equipment, they should be addressed to the coordinator for the relevant sport and age group, or the player's Coach.

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12. What standards of behaviour does the Club expect of its players and parents?

The club has a [Code of Conduct](#) that we are very proud of and take very seriously, and we expect all players, parents and spectators to do the same. Developing players to the best of their potential is a key objective of the club, but so is teaching players to respect opponents, officials and all spectators - regardless of race, creed, colour, gender or ability. For parents and spectators, that which makes the game special i.e. being able to watch from close quarters, brings with it enormous responsibility, and we therefore expect all parents to act accordingly. Please remember that:

- Children participate to have fun and that the game is for them, not adults – they are not playing for sheep stations!
- You should always be a positive role model for your child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for players, coaches, officials and spectators of both teams at every game. Unsportsmanlike conduct from parents and spectators, including booing, taunting, sledging or using profane language will not be tolerated.
- You can play a vital role in encouraging your child to play by the rules by learning the rules of the game and of the association yourself.



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- You play a vital role in teaching your child to treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect - regardless of race, creed, colour, gender or ability.
- Along with coaching staff, you play a crucial role in teaching your child that doing one's best is more important than winning. We encourage all parents to praise their child for competing fairly and giving their very best on the day remembering that every child (and adult for that matter) has the occasional bad day.
- You should NEVER berate any child (your own or any other) for making a mistake – even if it was decisive in determining the result of a game. Rather, it is healthy for your child to see you encouraging good examples of play from all players on the field.
- You play a critical role in teaching your child to respect the game's officials and their authority during games. You should NEVER berate or question an umpire's call – rather, you should direct any desire for clarification of an umpire's decision to your child's coach. Similarly, unless your child's coach has previously indicated that it is OK, you should refrain from confronting the coach at the game field, instead seeking a time and place away from the field to conduct a discussion about your child's development.
- You should consider playing the game to fully understand its challenges. Nothing develops empathy for the challenges of the game like having a go yourself, and your child will respect you for having a go.

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13. What support does the Club provide for the development of Umpires, Managers, Coaches and Scorers?

The roles of Coach, Manager, Umpire and Scorer are vital to the effective functioning of any team, and by extension, they are therefore vital to the effective functioning and future of our club. Identifying individuals who are prepared to fulfil these roles, and supporting their development appropriately, is a primary objective of the club.

Coaches & Umpires - it is a club requirement that Coaches and Umpires for both Baseball and Softball are qualified to a minimum standard of training and accreditation, the cost of which is borne 100% by the club. Higher levels of accreditation for Coaches and Umpires are available for those wishing to develop further or to use their skills in a representative environment, and the costs of this training is subsidised to the tune of 50% by the club.

Scorers – from time to time, and certainly at the start of every season, the club conducts a Scorers Information Night (both new Scorers and those interested in taking their skills to a new level). Over a cheese plate and a glass of wine, scorers discuss the intricacies of scoring at different levels of the game, and work through different scenarios likely to be encountered.

Managers – During every Summer season, the club conducts two Coaches and Managers meetings - one in late August prior to the commencement of the season, and another in February. These meetings provide an opportunity for less experienced Managers to hear what is expected of them in the role, and



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an opportunity for some of the more experienced Managers and members of the club to share learnings from previous years.

For more information on these roles, and the development opportunities for them, please see the relevant pages of the Greenway Giants website (www.greenwaygiants.org.au).

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14. How far will we have to travel to games?

For Softball, the answer is easy! Every game is played at [Hayes Park, Galston](#), irrespective of whether it is a home or away match. How good is that!

For Baseball, the answer varies with age division and grade, with lower age divisions/grades generally travelling less, and higher divisions and grades generally travelling more. That said, for younger age groups, games are generally no more than 20 minutes drive from Greenway Park (i.e. no further east than Wahroonga and no further north than Hornsby Heights). In older age groups, some games are scheduled in Concord, Balmain and Five Dock, but the nature of competition scheduling means that you will be travelling that distance only once every 4-6 weeks.

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15. Can my child get involved with Coaching and Umpiring in the Club?

Once children reach the age of 13, we encourage players in the club to “put something back” into the club by way of umpiring or assisting with coaching. The overriding principle in this process is to not put a child in a position where they can fail, so training must be completed, and a mentor established before the child is placed in competitive situations.

Interested players should approach the following coordinators for more information:

- Junior Softball Coordinator – for queries regarding Softball Coaching or Umpiring opportunities.
- Baseball Coaching Coordinator – for queries regarding Baseball Coaching opportunities.
- Baseball Umpiring Coordinator – for queries regarding Baseball Umpiring opportunities.

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