

Why You Should Join the NFCA

I recently returned from the NFCA (National Fastpitch Coaches Association) annual convention held in Las Vegas. I have been a member since 1985, and even though I retired from coaching after 30 years at St. Louis CC/Meramec, after the 2004 season, I still learn something every time that I go.

If you do not belong to this organization, you really are missing out on a ton of information about our sport of softball and you are also denying your team some great awards. This is the organization that caters to all divisions of softball: Division I, II, III, NAIA, NJCAA, Cal JC's, Affiliates, Travel Ball coaches, High School coaches, umpires, businesses, clubs and sponsors.

When you join the NFCA, you receive the Fastpitch Delivery Newspaper, which is full of the latest happenings in all aspects of softball, including what is happening with USA Softball and international softball. All rules changes that occur within the NFCA, ASA, NCAA, NJCAA, NAIA, and NFHS organizations appear in the Newsletter when they occur. It also includes coaching articles, drills, human-interest stories, current events, award winners in every category and much more.

As a member, you can win many awards, such as Coach of the Year in the different divisions and regions, an award for every hundred wins, and special awards. Players can also win awards in academics and athletics, team awards in academics and athletics and more. This is great for the players; and the awards are divided by regions, districts and then the national awards—so a lot of players are honored.

As a coach, you can also be on a committee with coaches from every division. This is great for networking and learning what softball is like in other parts of the country and the world. This year at the convention, there were coaches from Russia, Chinese Taipei, the Netherlands and other countries.

In order to receive the newsletter and be eligible for the awards, you do not have to go to the convention but it really is a nice event. What's nice is that any coach can talk with coaches from other divisions. Hall of Famers can talk to first-year coaches, four-year coaches can sit and talk to high school coaches, etc.—and that is a great learning experience. Clinics are given at the convention by some of the most experienced coaches and also by members of the USA National Program.

During the convention there are also luncheons, brunches and banquets to honor coaches in every division for their accomplishments from the previous year.

1. Easton Victory Club luncheon honors those coaches who, during the previous season, passed a hundred-victory milestone. Those from 100-1,300 wins were honored.
2. The Coach of the Year brunch honored those coaches who were chosen as the National Coaching Staff of the Year in all divisions.
3. The Hall of Fame Banquet honors those coaches chosen to become a member of the NFCA Hall of Fame. In my opinion, this is one of the most prestigious awards in our sport, since a coach in any division can be chosen as a Hall of Famer by their peers.

A coach does not have to be in attendance at the convention to win an award, but it is presented to them at the convention if they are there.

There are socials and breakfasts sponsored by some of the companies that are in attendance at the convention. Also featured is a vendor's exhibition hall, two days during the convention, where coaches meet representatives of over 300 companies providing the newest information and technology in softball. There are many contests and giveaways going on during that time in the exhibition hall. This is also a good time for the coaches to get "good deals" for equipment, uniforms, recruiting and scouting tools and more.

Checkout the NFCA web site www.nfca.org for more information and PLEASE consider joining this organization. This is the place for information and also to have a voice in our sport. This is the place to showcase your athletes and what they have done for your program and the place that a high-school, junior-college or summer coach can help find their player a school to attend to further their education.

Check it out, coaches!!

Look for Celeste's article next month.