



**Apex Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources
2021 SPRING SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES
INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION**



GENERAL:

1. The goal and objective of the league shall be to provide enjoyment and instruction of the game of **modified softball**. Good sportsmanship and basic fundamentals should be stressed by all coaches. The role of winning should be played down. An atmosphere of learning and fun is the objective of this program.
2. All matters concerning the league of rule interpretation shall be administered by Apex Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources (APR&CR) Department.
3. All volunteer coaches shall be selected by the Apex Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Department.
4. All new players shall be selected by the coaches at the pre-season draft. All players returning from the year before have the option of remaining on the same team or going into the draft.

Exception: New head coaches may option their child (children) and one assistant's child (children) onto their team.

5. Sisters shall be placed on the same team by means of a sister option in the draft.
6. All coaches shall attend each practice or have his/her assistant attend in his/her place. Players are not allowed to practice without APR&CR approved adult supervision.
7. No player shall be dropped from a team without the approval of the APR&CR. Coaches shall report to APR&CR any player that misses practice repeatedly. For safety reasons, playing time may be reduced for not attending practices.
8. If a team roster drops below 13, the first player on the waiting list may be placed on that team by APR&CR.
9. **All rules not addressed in these rules will follow NC High School Rules.**

OPERATING GUIDELINES

Registration

Player registration during the designated time period shall be coordinated and conducted by APR&CR. Under unusual circumstances, individuals may be added or deleted to/from the program at the discretion of APR&CR. This shall be done only after taking into consideration those involved and the impact on the entire league.

Scheduling

Schedules for all regular practice, game and makeup game situations, shall be coordinated through APR&CR, taking into account field availability and holidays.

Pre-season

- Each team will be provided the same number of practice opportunities per week.
- Any deviation from allotted schedule must be cleared through APR&CR and attendance may not be a player requirement.

In-season

- Teams will be offered the opportunity to practice based on facility availability
- Teams may not reserve fields for more than one week at a time and may not do so before **8:00am on Thursday of the week before** they wish to practice.

Instructional Draft Procedures

Organized and operated by APR&CR and the league coaches under the following guidelines:

1. Teams shall draft in order determined by a blind draw.
2. All teams will be age balanced.
3. **No player trades will be permitted.**
 - Each team shall be permitted to keep returning players and daughters of coaches (maximum of 2) under the following conditions:
 - Based on the total number of players needed to equalize the number on each team, each coach will draft until he reaches his maximum number of players then withdraw from the draft.
 - Exception: When a team reaches 6 players on their roster, that team must hold until all other teams reach 6 players.
 - Note: any team that returns 6 or more players will receive a first round choice, and then have to hold until all other teams have the same number of players.
 - If after registration and the draft, a player wishes to be placed on a team, this shall be done at the discretion of APR&CR and the player shall be treated as a new resident in the area. Appointments shall be made per draft order.
 - Options may be awarded to a manager and/or coach's child who has registered to participate. All options on **8's** will be protected through **the second round**. All options on **7's** will be protected through **the third round**.

- Note: a team may not have more than **two option players** on its roster during a season.
 - A team entering the draft with two option players must take them in rounds 2 & 3.
 - Sister options will be drafted in the last round of the draft.
 - Pre-Draft: Teams that do not have any returning players will be given a pre-draft pick. If a team receives a pre-draft pick, they will pick last in the 1st round and then return to their normal draft order beginning in the 2nd round.
4. Expansion of league shall be conducted in the following manner:
- The new team(s) shall assume the number one (and/or two) draft pick. Flip of a coin shall determine number one position when adding more than one team.
 - Each new expansion team shall be awarded one pre-draft pick. Selection will be on a rotation basis with two or more expansion teams.

Length of Games/Tie Breakers

- Length of games: **3 innings or 1 Hour Dead Stop**
- **Game Start Times:**
 - The clock will start for the first game of the day/night right at its scheduled start time. All of the following games will start 12 minutes after the last out is called of the previous game or the scheduled game time, whichever occurs last.
 - **No games will start early.**
 - Note: field supervisors are in charge of the clock. Please address the field supervisor if you want to know how much time is left.
- Play must stop immediately after the 60 minute mark.

Cancellations/Inclement Weather/Make-up

1. In case of inclement weather, **a decision will be made by APR&CR at 4:00 pm** on the day the game is to be played (8:00am on Saturdays). Information may be obtained by calling APR&CR's

INFORMATION HOTLINE: (919) 249-3348

2. Make-up Games

- The department will reschedule games within 3 working days. Please contact us if you have not received your notification within this time period.
- If at all possible, all games that are canceled due to weather or other conflicts approved by APR&CR will be made up.
- If extenuating circumstances occur, APR&CR reserves the right to designate which games will be made up.
- It is the responsibility of the coach to notify his/her players of the makeup date. APR&CR is not responsible for contacting players on an individual basis.

Speed-Up Rule

The catcher must bat in one of the top three (3) batting positions for each team.

Injured Player Substitution

In the event of an injury, the injured player may be replaced by a player who has already been in the game if no other player is available.

Forfeits

Game time is forfeit time. A team must have at least 6 players at game time to be able to play.

Shortened/Postponed Games

If a full inning is completed, the game will be considered official. If the game must be stopped due to weather after both teams have had a chance to bat, it will not be rescheduled. Any game postponed prior to completing one full inning will be restarted from the beginning (if it can be rescheduled).

6-Player Rule

A team may start with **6 players**. No out shall be awarded for the missing batting position. If another player arrives she must be added immediately upon arrival and must occupy the last spot in the batter order.

Dugout Area

1. The only personnel permitted in the dugouts are:
 - Players
 - Head coach
 - 3 assistant coaches
 - Scorekeeper
 - Note: no batboys/batgirls
2. **No cell phones are allowed on the field or in the dugouts at any time.**
3. **Consumption of tobacco products (including e-cigarettes) or alcohol is prohibited in the vicinity of any Town-sponsored athletic event, including on the field and in the dugouts or bleachers.**
4. All dugouts should be cleaned out by the team that occupied them at the end of the game. This is the responsibility of the head coach.
5. Coach Positions:
 - Defense Coaches:
 - 2 in the outfield area
 - 1 behind the catcher
 - Offense Coaches:
 - 1 as the pitcher
 - 2 as base coaches
 - 1 outside dugout near the on-deck batter

Conduct

1. Players will be allowed to cheer for their own team but not jeer the other team, i.e. loud songs, cheers, are unacceptable etc. No chanting allowed. No coach or player shall belittle or berate the players or coaches of another team. Phrases such as "can't hit," "can't catch," or "can't throw" will not be tolerated.
 - First offense: Warning
 - Second offense: Ejection from game of offending person and/or head coach.
 - Penalty: Any time a player, coach or spectator is ejected by an official or APR&CR staff member, they must leave the playing site immediately. That person shall be automatically suspended for a minimum of the next game the team plays in. More games can be added to the suspension at the determination of the Department. A suspended coach or parent may not be present at the playing site for the game(s) in which they are suspended. Failure to abide by this will result in further disciplinary action. A suspended player may be allowed to attend the game to support their teammates, at the discretion of the Department. Game suspensions may apply to regular season games, tournament play, and may, at the discretion of the Department, be carried over to the next season the player or coach registers for.
2. Harassment of the scorekeepers will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with this rule will result in immediate ejection of the guilty party and possibly forfeiture of the game. **No warnings will be given.**

Reminder: The purpose of this program is to teach softball, have fun, and learn sportsmanship. Players look to their coaches as role models and the thing players see you do leave lasting impressions as they continue to play the game in later years. We're all human, and as such we all make mistakes including scorekeepers, coaches and parents.

It's the kids' games so let them be the ones that benefit most!

Protective Headgear

Protective headgear is required for batter, runner, on-deck batter, or any player warming up a pitcher. Chin straps are optional. **Any player intentionally removing their helmet shall be warned for the first offense and then removed from the game for the second offense.**

Pitching/Hitting Rules

Coaches pitch 3 tosses to each of their players/inning; if no legal hit occurs after 3 pitches the batter will use a tee. The batter will receive two attempts with the tee and if no legal hit occurs after two attempts they will not be able to advance to first and will return to the dugout. Home team will provide the tee.

Pitching Distance: **35 feet**

Base distance: **60 feet**

Ball: **11-inch Incrediball**

- Teams will use a **continuous batting order** throughout the game. Sides change after going through the complete batting order once per inning.
- If a batter cannot finish her time at bat, the next scheduled hitter will come to bat.

Special Base Running

- **No stealing or leading off**
 - Runners may only advance on a hit.
- In the event of an overthrow at first base, the runner(s) may only advance one base with the risk of being thrown out.
- **All runners on third may only advance home when the ball is hit.**
 - Note: the league goal is to play the game as real as possible by teaching the girls to watch their base coach as to whether or not to advance another base. Defensively we want the players to learn to play on the lead runner and to "not throw the ball around."

Fielding

Ten players play on defense each inning with no more than 1 catcher, 1 "pitcher-fielder," and 4 other infielders. Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield past the arc of the grass part of the field. Two defensive coaches are allowed in the outfield to verbally assist their players. All defensive players sitting on the bench should be substituted halfway through the defensive half inning (once half the other team's line-up has batted).

Participation

It is the philosophy of APR&CR that the emphasis of youth recreation should be on participation and skill development rather than winning or losing. Given this statement of philosophy the following guidelines will govern the **Youth Instructional Softball** season. Each child must bat in each inning of the game. No player should sit out more than one total inning on defense. When ruling on a protest concerning participation, the coach's intent will be taken into consideration by the program supervisor. It is quite possible circumstances may cause a player to not play the required time. The coach's intent is the determining factor in these situations. The following penalties shall apply to the head coach for failing to abide by the participation rules above:

- 1st offense: suspension of game
- 2nd offense: suspension for rest of season

Equipment

1. Bats:
 - Only ASA approved bats will be allowed in the league. The bat shall not exceed 34 inches in length nor exceed 34 ounces in weight. The bat shall not be more than 2 1/4 inches in diameter
 - Tape or sleeve may not exceed 15 inches in length from small end.
 - **A legal bat is one having a length to weight ratio no greater than -12**
 - Example: A bat that is 32 inches in length cannot weigh less than 20 ounces
 - **Penalty:** use of illegal equipment will result in a dead ball situation with the batter being declared out.
2. Gloves:
 - No top lacing, webbing, etc. shall be more than 5 inches in length.

- **All catchers must use a softball catcher's mitt.**
- 3. Head coaches can exchange and/or receive additional equipment if necessary.
- 4. All equipment issued to a team must be returned to APR&CR no later than ten (10) days after the last game.

Uniform

APR&CR will issue each player a shirt. **Parents are required to provide primarily grey pants for league play.** Each player must wear their entire uniform, unaltered, to each game. **A player not in uniform or in an altered uniform will be declared ineligible to play.** Each coach will be given extra shirts for emergency fill-ins.

Notes:

- Players keep their shirt issued to them each season
- An altered uniform is when a player defaces her shirt or pants in any way.
- Pants must be primarily grey in color.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- No Jewelry Allowed. Un-removable earrings must be taped over.
- Batting helmets must stay on until a player returns to the dugout.
 - Penalty:
 - 1ST offense: a warning will be issued
 - 2nd offense: player will be removed from the game

Sliding

If a runner is going into base and there is an attempted play being made on that runner, **she must slide or avoid collision with defensive player.** If defensive player fakes a play on runner without ball and runner slides, then runner is awarded the next base. If a player does not slide and a collision does occur, then the runner is called out.

Exception: When batter is going to first base.

- A bat may not be carried to 1st base or beyond.

Thank you for coaching, have a great season!