

# COBB COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT MEN'S & COED LEAGUES

## 2020 Adult Softball League Rules and Regulations

**\*\*\*UPDATED February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020\*\*\***

### I. LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

- A. Cobb County PARKS Department is the governing body of this league.
- B. USA slow-pitch rules shall be strictly adhered to unless superseded by the following rules and regulations. Cobb PARKS reserves the right to rule on anything not covered by the USA Softball rulebook.
- C. The league shall consist of the following divisions: Men's and Coed leagues. There can be up to four games per night at 6:30, 7:30, 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. on each field.
- D. All leagues are subject to doubleheaders.
- E. Each team is responsible for checking the website for schedules, standings and make-up game information. We will post this information to the website as soon as it comes available.

### II. GAME RULES

- A. **All teams must have at least seven (7) players to start a game.** If a team fails to field at least seven (7) at game time, that team shall forfeit. If neither team can field seven (7) at game time, it shall be ruled as a double forfeit.
  - 1) A team can start the game with seven (7) roster players **but** they have until the top of the **4<sup>th</sup> inning or 30 minutes** to field **eight (8)** roster players. If a team fails to do so the game will be ruled a forfeit. (No matter the score)
  - 2) Pitcher and catcher positions must be occupied.
  - 3) If a team starts a game with 9 or more players and falls below that number at any time, it will be credited with an "out" each time a vacant slot comes to bat.
  - 4) A team that falls below 8 players, after the grace period, will forfeit the game.
  - 5) **Any player listed on the line-up that is not available to bat for their turn in the line-up will be credited with an out.**
  - 6) If a team starts with less than 10 players, late-arriving players must be added at the end of the lineup.

B. Games will start at the scheduled time.

- 1) A ten (10) minute grace period is allowed only on the first game on the night. **The grace period is considered as a part of the game time.** However, if a team has seven (7) players the game will start immediately or as soon as the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) player arrives. Grace period time counts as game time.
- 2) **TIME LIMIT** - No new inning will begin after **1-hour and five minutes**, unless the game is tied. The sixty-five (65) minute game time will be displayed on the scoreboard. If the scoreboard is not working the field supervisor will keep the time on a digital clock. The clock will start when the home team and umpires take the field. **EXCEPTION:** The game can end prior to the 5th inning if a team is ahead by 20 runs or more and 65 minutes has been played, the game will be called regardless of which team is at bat.
- 3) Line-ups should be turned into the scorekeeper ten (10) minutes prior to the start of each game. Proper line-ups consist of first and last name and jersey number. The game clock will begin at the appropriate time whether a lineup has been submitted or not.
- 4) No altered lineup cards are allowed once games have started.
- 5) **RUN RULE** - There will be a 20-run rule after 3 innings, 15-run rule after 4 innings and 10-run rule after 5 innings.
- 6) **FLIP FLOP RULE** – If the home team is losing by 7, 8, or 9 runs after the 6<sup>th</sup> inning, the bases will be cleared and the home team will remain at bat to start the 7<sup>th</sup> inning.

C. **PITCHING** - The pitching arc is **6 feet to 12 feet from the ground**.

- 1) **PITCHING DISTANCE** is 50 feet. A pitcher's box consisting of an area from the front of the pitcher's plate and extending back six feet perpendicular to the pitcher's plate shall be used. The pitcher must release the ball after coming to a complete stop with one foot or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate or within the pitcher's box. Pitching with one or both feet on the line is considered legal. This box allows the pitcher to release the ball from 50 feet to 56 feet from home plate.

D. **BATTING**

- 1) **3 balls** will result in a walk and **2 strikes** will result in a strikeout. One foul on the 2<sup>nd</sup> strike is allowed.
- 2) Teams can bat as many players as are in attendance at game time, with any 10 playing on defense at any one time. If additional players show up after the game has started, they can be added to the bottom of the line-up.
- 3) If a team chooses to bat all its players, then an out will be charged if a player is injured or chooses to leave the game for another reason and no substitute is available.
- 4) **EXTRA HITTER** - If a team chooses not to bat all its players, then the extra hitter rule will be in effect. Teams can have 11 hitters and can play any 10 of them on defense at any time (with the exception of Coed where they may have 12 hitters in accordance with Rule

IV-D).

- 5) When making substitutes, the batting order must always remain the same.
  - 6) **RE-ENTRY RULE:** Any starter or substitute may be re-entered once. Players must occupy the same batting position whenever they are in the line-up.
- E. **COURTESY RUNNER** – Teams are allowed to utilize a courtesy runner **once per half inning. You can use anyone in the line-up or use a legal substitute. If the runner you use is on base when his at bat comes up, he will be an automatic out.** NOTE: In coed play, both a male and a female courtesy runner may be used once per half inning. The courtesy runner must be of the same gender.
- F. **BASE DISTANCE** – the distance between bases is 70 feet
- G. **INCLEMENT WEATHER:** Games delayed by rain for at least 30 minutes will be rescheduled if necessary, based on the criteria below.
- 1) In the case of rain/lightening, 5 innings will constitute an official game or 4 1/2 innings if the home team has the lead.
  - 2) In the case of rain with a game tied after 5 innings, the game will be resumed from the point when it was suspended. If the required number of innings has not been played, the game will be replayed from the start.
  - 3) In the case of light failure, equipment failure or serious injury causing a delay of at least 30 minutes, the game will be suspended and resumed at a later date from the point when it was interrupted. This will prevent succeeding games from running unreasonably late.
- H. **HOME RUN LIMITS:** A homerun is an untouched fair ball hit over the fence.
- Competitive = 3 homeruns (All homeruns in excess of the limit will result in an out)  
Rookie/Recreation = 1 homerun (All homeruns in excess of the limit will result in an **inning-ending out.**)
- I. Teams will not run out home runs.
- J. An appeal play can be made during any dead ball by any player on the field. All appeals can be made by addressing the umpire and explaining the appeal. All appeals **must** be made before the next live ball.
- K. To prevent injury and protect the defensive player who attempts to make a play on a base runner, the base runner will be called "out" if he remains on his feet and, in the umpire's judgment, crashes with great force into the defensive player who is holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. If the act is judged to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected. A runner may slide into a defensive player. Contact between a base runner and a defensive player does not necessarily result in the base runner being called "out."
- L. League rules prohibit players or coaches who are bleeding from further participation until the bleeding has been stopped. All teams are encouraged to maintain a first-aid kit that contains supplies to stop, contain or cover bleeding. The umpires' judgment will be final as to whether

further participation will be allowed.

- M. **EXTRA INNINGS** - In the event of a tied game after 7 innings **or** after game time has expired; extra innings will be played as a 1-pitch format. In coed play, if a man is walked the next female must bat regardless of the number of outs.

#### N. **PITCHING SCREEN**

- A. Pitching screens will be used in all adult leagues on all fields for the safety of the pitchers. The screens are not optional and shall not be removed by anyone. (No Exceptions).
- B. There will be a three-foot buffer zone in front of the pitching rubber that the screen must be placed. The pitching screen may only be adjusted left or right during a game when there is a pitching change (The screen must cover approximately half of the pitching rubber). Pitchers are allowed warm up throws to determine their screen placement.
- C. First contact per batter per at bat with the screen is a net foul ball regardless of the regular foul count or strike count. Second contact per batter per at bat with the screen is an out.
- D. No runners may advance any time a batted ball hits the screen. If a thrown ball hits the screen at any time it will be considered live unless an umpire has already signaled dead ball prior to the ball hitting the screen.
- E. Contact is considered to be the ball touching any part of the pitching screen no matter if in direct flight or from the ground.
- F. Once the ball is in play the pitching screen cannot be moved in any way. If it is moved then all runners will be awarded the next base.

### III. **BALLS, EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS**

- A. **GAME BALLS** - The Dudley Hycon (COR .52 or 300 compression for men, COR .52 for women) is the official league ball. The 12" Dudley will be used for the men's leagues and the 11" for the female batters in the coed leagues. **Each team will be given 12 new game balls.** It is **BOTH** teams' responsibility to retrieve homerun and foul balls. **COED** – The PARKS Dept will provide the 11" women's balls for each game.
- B. **HOME TEAM** is responsible for supplying **1 new ball and 2 used balls each game.** If home team does not supply the balls and the visitor team supplies them, then the home/visitor for the game will swap. During all playoff games, both teams will supply 1 new ball and 1 used ball.
- C. **BATS** - USA approved bats are the **ONLY** bats allowed for Cobb PARKS league play. All bats **MUST** have a legible, ASA certified stamp – **NO EXCEPTIONS.** If the bat has an ASA stamp but is on the Non-Approved Bat List, you **CANNOT** use it. A batter that uses a non-approved bat will be called out, all runners will return to the base last occupied and the batter will be ejected. A current list of all ASA approved and non-approved bats can be found at <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball> (**EQUIPMENT**) Note: this includes altered bats as well as non-approved ASA bats.

D. **USA BAT COMPRESSION TESTING** - All players will assume full responsibility to get their bat(s) tested, prior to game time, by the Cobb PARKS league coordinator or on-site field supervisor. While it is not necessary to have your bat(s) tested weekly if you knowingly have a legal bat, but it still remains the responsibility of the player(s) to have the bat(s) tested if there is any doubt, concerns or questions regarding the legality of the bat.

1) Each team is allowed (2) two opportunities (per game) to check an opponent's bat.

If the bat FAILS, the game will be forfeited. The batter will be suspended (2) two games.

If the bat PASSES (1<sup>st</sup> challenge), the protesting team will lose (1) one run.

If the bat PASSES (2<sup>nd</sup> challenge), the protesting team will lose (2) two runs.

2) If the bat being tested fails the compression test or is a non-approved bat then that player will be suspended accordingly to their number of offenses:

- a) 1<sup>st</sup> Offense – 2-game suspension
- b) 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense – season suspension (from all teams/games for spring or fall)
- c) 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense – 1 calendar year suspension from all softball leagues
- d) 4<sup>th</sup> Offense – player is banned from participating in any adult softball program offered by Cobb PARKS.

3) Cobb County PARKS Department reserves the right to check and test a bat at any time. Any player caught with a bat that does not pass will be suspended based on the above criteria.

E. Regulation rubber spikes, rubber-soled soccer shoes or tennis shoes are permissible footwear. No track shoes, golf shoes or football shoes may be worn. Players may not play barefoot. As for jewelry, players are allowed to wear only medical alert bracelets taped to the body, smooth wedding bands, post-type earrings and necklaces that are not visible.

F. **\*\*\* All players must wear similarly colored shirts, and each shirt must have a clearly visible number on the back. No duplicate numbers are allowed. Taped numbers are not permitted. A 2-week grace period will be in effect from opening day of the season. After that time, for each player that is out of uniform, the other team will receive one (1) run. Each team will be permitted to have one player out of uniform per game without penalty. Before the start of each game, staff will check uniforms and inform both managers how many runs will be awarded due to non-compliant uniforms. Teams have the option to wear supplied pinnies from the PARKS department to avoid the runs penalty. If they choose to wear pinnies they must let staff know before the start of the game. The umpires do not enforce this rule, Cobb PARKS staff will enforce uniform rule. (this rule may not be used to protest the outcome of a game.)**

G. Safety bases will be used at all parks. See ASA rulebook for detailed information.

H. Only authorized persons shall sit on the team bench. It is the duty of the field supervisor, umpires and each manager to keep unauthorized persons off the playing field and the bench.

- I. Only the manager is authorized to address an umpire concerning a rule interpretation.

#### IV. COED RULES

- A. To start a game, a team must have a minimum of **7** players (at least 3 must be male.)
- B. At no time can a team play more men than women. **EXCEPTION:** If a female is forced to leave the game and cannot be replaced, a male must sit out on defense, but may continue to bat with an automatic out being given for her position in the batting order.
- C. **DEFENSIVE POSITIONS:**
  - 1) There must be a man/woman combination in the pitching and catching positions at all times, regardless of the number of players (men or women) participating.
  - 2) Two women must play infield positions, and two women must play in the outfield.
  - 3) If a team plays with eight players, it must have at least one woman at an infield position and one woman in the outfield.
- D. Men and women must alternate in the batting order, unless more women than men are playing. In that case, women may bat back-to-back. In no case can men bat back-to-back. Men are not considered to have batted back-to-back when an automatic out is taken between their at-bats.
- E. If a male batter is walked, he is automatically awarded second base. The next female batter will bat. Exception: with 2 outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat. In extra innings, all batters must bat.
- F. Before the game begins either or both teams may elect not to hit the 11" ball. If neither team hits the 11" ball, the 12" ball will be used the entire game.
- G. When a woman is at bat the outfielders must play at normal depth. In most parks a 200' line is established and all outfielders must remain behind that line until the batter swings at the ball. If an outfielder is caught in front of the line prior to the swing, the umpire will call a "delayed dead ball" and the batter will have the choice of accepting the results of the at bat or batting again.

#### V. WEDNESDAY SOCIAL RECREATION LEAGUE SPECIAL COED RULES

- A. 10 players on the field maximum including 6 males/4 females. Can also play 5/5 in the field.
- B. To start a game, a team must have a minimum of 7 players (at least 2 must be female.) 8 players (minimum 3 females), 9 players (minimum 3 females), 10 players (minimum 4 females)
- C. Batting Order: No more than 2 men may bat in a row in the batting order (i.e. 2 males, 1 female, 2 males, 1 female, etc. or vice versa). Teams may bat as many players as they want, but must keep the 2:1 lineup rotation.
- D. If a team's line-up is reduced due to injury, there is no penalty as long as the batting order rule is still followed. However, if the injury breaks the 2 in a row rule, the team must take an

out for the missing player each time that position comes up in the batting order. If a team's line-up is reduced for any reason other than injury, the team must take an out each time that position comes up in the batting order (if no legal subs are available).

- E. Defensive Positions: Males and females do not have to alternate defensively in the infield, outfield, or at pitcher/catcher. However, there must be at least one (1) female in the outfield and at least one (1) female in the infield (pitcher and catcher count as infield in regard to this rule). Maximum number of players in the field is 10, including at least 4 women. Minimum number of players in the field/your starting line-up is 7 (at least 2 of whom must be women), or if a team has 8-9 players (3 must be women). There is no maximum number of women allowed on the field/in your line-up. No more than 6 men are allowed on the field at one time.
- F. If a male batter is walked, he is automatically awarded second base. The next female batter will bat. Exception: with 2 outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat. In extra innings, all batters must bat.
- G. Before the game begins either or both teams may elect not to hit the 11" ball. If neither team hits the 11" ball, the 12" ball will be used the entire game.
- H. When a woman is at bat the outfielders must play at normal depth. In most parks a 200' line is established and all outfielders must remain behind that line until the batter swings at the ball. If an outfielder is caught in front of the line prior to the swing, the umpire will call a "delayed dead ball" and the batter will have the choice of accepting the results of the at bat or batting again.

## VI. ELIGIBILITY

A. Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- 1. **MEN'S OPEN AND COED:** A player must be **16 years old** to be eligible.

B. When eligibility is in doubt, the burden of proof rests with the team whose player is in question.

- 1. A case of a player participating under an assumed name **MUST** be handled on the spot. The opposing manager must bring this to the attention of the supervisor on duty before the last out of the game. The player under question must produce a picture I.D. or his/her team will forfeit the game, and the player could be suspended for the remainder of the season.

EXCEPTION: The supervisor on duty may accept a non-photo I.D. if, in his/her judgment, extenuating circumstances exist.

- 2. In other cases where eligibility is in doubt (EXAMPLE: A player not on a team's roster or on two teams in the same league), the protest must be submitted in writing to the league coordinator by 5 p.m. the next working day. A \$50 protest fee (CHECK OR MONEY ORDER ONLY) must accompany the report. If not reported by the deadline, the game will be considered official and cannot be contested.

Recreation department staff will decide all cases of player eligibility. Teams found to have played an ineligible player(s) will forfeit the game, and the ineligible player can be suspended for the remainder of the season (from ALL Cobb PARKS leagues).

- C. Players may participate on **1 team per league**. If a player's eligibility is protested and he is found to be on more than one roster in the same league, the protested game will be forfeited. The player in question must then declare which roster he/she will officially remain on for the remainder of the season.
- D. The field scorekeeper/supervisor has the authority to stop an ineligible player from participating.
- E. **Post Season Eligibility: To be eligible for the post season, players must have played in a minimum of two (2) regular season games. Each player must check in twice and show a photo id to the PARKS Supervisor. The PARKS Supervisor will date the occurrence on the roster.**

## VII. PLAYING ROSTER

- A. **Team rosters must be submitted to the league coordinator or the field supervisor before the first game of the season.** A team that fails to submit a roster automatically will have its games forfeited if an opponent protests the eligibility of its players.
- B. Additions to rosters must be done prior to the new player participating
- C. **The final addition(s) to rosters must be made prior to game time of each team's *second to last regular season game*. After the second to last game deadline, no additions will be allowed to rosters. At no time will players be added after a game begins.**
- D. For a player to change teams either (1) the manager of the player's original team must report to the league coordinator and verbally release the player or (2) the player may report to the league coordinator and request his/her release. If a player requests a release to play for another team, he/she must be added to the roster of his/her new team. Teams will not be allowed to add an illegal/ineligible player to their rosters.
- E. A team can carry up to 25 players on its roster at one time.
- F. A men's team is allowed to play only ONE (1) female player at any time. When at bat, the female must hit the 12-inch ball.
- G. The PARKS Department reserves the right to forfeit games when it discovers the use of ineligible players. This may be done with or without the benefit of a protest.

## VIII. PROTESTS

- A. A manager can protest an umpire's interpretation of the rules, provided the protest is made



prior to the next official pitch. The manager must call time-out and notify the umpire and scorekeeper. The protesting manager must file a written report with the league coordinator by 5 p.m. the next working day, along with the \$50 protest fee. (Check or money order only) The report must outline the events as they transpired and must cite specific rules, sections and sub-sections to bear out protest.

- B. Upon receiving the written protest and protest fee, the league coordinator will determine the validity of the protest. If, in his/her judgment, the protest is valid due to a misinterpretation of the rules, he/she will call a meeting of the staff protest committee and address the protest. If the protest is upheld, the protest fee will be refunded.

## IX. PLAYER CONDUCT

- A. **Abusive language, behavior, or, profanity will not be tolerated by players or spectators who are on the bench, on the field or in the park. Offenders may be ejected before or after a game has been concluded and are subject to removal from the park, playing area and league.**
- B. Smoking is not allowed by anyone on the field or in the dugout.
- C. If a player or coach touches an umpire or county representative in anger or threatens to do bodily harm before, during or after a game, he will be barred from the league indefinitely. Cobb Recreation Department staff will determine the length of the suspension. (MINIMUM SUSPENSION IS FOR 1 CALENDAR YEAR IN ALL COBB PARKS ADULT ATHLETIC PROGRAMS.)
- D. Any player or coach ejected from a game will serve a two (2) game suspension (minimum) in **all leagues he/she participates in.** A player ejected for the second time from any game during a season will be suspended for the remainder of that season. If a player or coach participates in a game while ineligible due to suspension, the game shall be declared a forfeit and the player or coach will be suspended for the remainder of the season. **NOTE: Scorekeepers are not required to notify said player prior to the start of the game concerning ejections. Failure to do so shall not affect a player's ejection for the season**
- E. Fighting among players, coaches and spectators, or any other conduct judged inappropriate by recreation department staff may result in ejection of the individuals or teams involved. If suspension is warranted, recreation department staff will determine the length of the suspension. **(MINIMUM SUSPENSION IS 2 ADDITIONAL GAMES)**

## X. THE SEASON

- A. The season will feature a 10-game schedule. (Partially filled leagues will play schedules to be determined by the league coordinator.) The winning team will receive the championship trophy and t-shirts, and the second place team will receive the runner-up trophy.
- B. If a team forfeits two or more games during the season, Cobb PARKS reserves the right to drop that team from the league with no entry fee refund.
- C. At the completion of each season, the league coordinator reserves the right to place the

league winners into the next-higher division for the following season. The last-place team in a division may be dropped to the next-lower division.

- D. After the schedule is complete, there will be no changes or refunds. Schedules will be emailed to the team managers.
- E. Rainout games and playoff games may be scheduled based on available days, not according to the specific days of the week on which participating teams may have played.
- F. **Championship Tournament Games:** In leagues where a tournament decides the winners, the higher seeded team will be the home team. If an "IF" game is played to determine a champion, a coin toss prior to that game shall determine HOME/VISITOR assignments. The time limit shall remain in all games until the championship game when the time limit will be waived. All other league rules apply. In tournament games, player eligibility protests must be made prior to the last out of each game. All players may be required to show a picture I.D. to the scorekeeper/supervisor prior to championship games. All bats are subject to compression testing prior and during the game.
- G. **COBB TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS** – The champion and runner up teams from each men's & coed competitive leagues at Al Bishop, Kennworth, and Terrell Mill may participate in a single elimination county wide championship tournament. The county wide tournament will begin immediately following the last completed men's & coed park tournament. This tournament will be played at Al Bishop and will be completed in one week. Games may be played Monday-Thursday. The number of teams will determine the length of the tournament. If a player plays in multiple leagues and both teams make the Tournament of Champions, the player will have to declare which team he or she will play on for the tournament.
- H. Cobb PARKS Department reserve the right to place any team in a higher or lower division. Any team that comes in First place in its division during the regular season and/or playoffs will be moved up to the next highest division the following season. *Example - a team wins the Rookie division on Tuesday night, they will have to move up to the Tuesday night Competitive division the following season. Also, if this same team wishes to change the night it plays on, they must also move up to the next division despite changing its normal game night.*

## PARK RULES

- A. Drinking of alcoholic beverages will not be tolerated. A player determined to be under the influence of intoxicants will be immediately removed from the playing area and suspended from the Cobb Recreation Department softball program for 1 year. Cobb County law prohibits possession of alcohol in the county parks system, including parking lots.
- B. Unattended or unleashed dogs are not allowed in the parks. Dogs are not allowed on athletic fields. Dogs cannot be tied to the fence.
- C. "Pepper drills" (hitting balls against the fence) are strictly prohibited on all playing fields.

## XI. RAIN-OUT PROCEDURE

**Notifications of game cancellations will not be made before 4pm.**

**RAINOUTLINE.COM**

### **WE ENCOURAGE ALL PLAYERS TO REGISTER FOR FIELD CLOSURE ALERTS.**

To receive an automated text about field closures, please visit

<https://rainoutline.com/search/dnis/7622028142> and click the email or text alerts link. You would then click the email or text heading and check which locations you would like to subscribe to for rainout alerts. You can also download the mobile app to receive notifications. No cancellations will be made before 4pm.

## XII. TIE-BREAKER

The following procedures will be used to determine the first-place finisher or to break ties for other places.

### **A) TWO-WAY TIE:**

- 1) **Head-to-Head** - If two teams are tied with identical records, the winner is the team that won the game when the two teams played.
- 2) **Fewest Runs Allowed** - If the teams split their games, the team that allowed the fewest runs during the entire season will be declared the winner.
- 3) **Most Runs Scored** - If the teams still remain tied, the team scoring the most runs during the season will be declared the winner.
- 4) If a tie still remains, the team that allowed the fewest runs when they played each other will be declared the winner.

### **B) THREE-WAY OR MORE TIE:**

- 1) **Head-to-Head** - If one of the three or more teams defeated each of the other teams during the season
- 2) **Fewest Runs Allowed** - If three teams or more are tied, the winner will be determined by the team that allowed the fewest runs.
- 3) If two of the teams still have the same total of runs allowed, the winner will be the team that won the game played between the two teams during the season. If the teams split their games, the team that scored the most runs during the season will win.

**NOTE\*** Forfeit games will be recorded as a 7-0 score. This score can be used except when a disadvantage would occur to a winning team or an advantage would occur to a losing team.