



Cobb County PARKS Department Senior 45+ Softball League Rules and Regulations

*****UPDATED March 19th 2024*****



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- B. USA slow-pitch rules shall be strictly adhered to unless superseded by the following rules and regulations.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. League information can be found and at www.quickscores.com/cobbcounty.
- F. Ages 45+. All players will register individually. Registration is \$50.00. Players will answer questions regarding skill and experience. Players will also be asked if they would like to manage a team. Once registration closes managers will be chosen and a draft will be held where managers will draft teams from the registration pool.
- G. If there are enough players to split the league it will be divided into 2 divisions. A 45-59 division and a 60+ division. Registering as an individual for this league does not guarantee you a place on a team. If there are not enough registrants to create a team, your registration fee will be refunded.

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 **4th 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) Teams will play with 11 players in the field.
 - 4) A team that falls below 8 players, after the grace period, will forfeit the game.
 - 5) If a team starts with less than 11 players, late-arriving players must be added at the end of

the lineup.

- 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 (7th) player arrives. Grace period time counts as game time.
- 2) **TIME LIMIT** – Each game will consist of 55 minutes of play plus 1 open inning. The open inning will be played once time runs out or during the 7th inning. The fifty-five (55) 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:**
- 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.
 - a) If no scorekeepers are available, umpires will keep score on the field. In this case, teams must exchange line-ups with the other captain prior to the start of the game. Each team will monitor that the line-up order is correct. If a team bats out of order the opposing team must notify the umpire no later than the first pitch to the subsequent batter. If the referee confirms the player batted out of order, that player will be counted as an out.
 - b) Staff will provide umpires with a score card for each game. The umpire will keep score and home runs limits on the card. Following the game, the home and away managers will confirm that the score is correct.
- 4) No altered lineup cards are allowed once games have started.
- 5) **RUN RULE** - There will be a 20-run rule after 5 innings and 15-run rule after 6 innings.
- 6) **FLIP FLOP RULE** – If the home team is losing by 8 runs after the 6th inning or when time runs out, the bases will be cleared and the home team will remain at bat to start the open inning.
- 7) **Innings** – An inning will consist of a team making 3 outs or scoring 5 runs before the 3rd out is made. The open inning will allow the team to score as many runs as they can prior to making the 3rd out.
- 8) **Competitive Balance Rule** – This rule may be implemented if there is a difference in division or skill level. If implemented the lower team will be spotted 5 runs to start the game.
- 9) 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. The 11th fielder must also be behind the coed line.

B. **PITCHING** – A strike shall be called by the umpire for any pitch that has achieved a minimum arch of flight of 6 feet and a maximum arch of 12 feet and hits the pitching mat with the pitcher starting from the designated pitcher's zone. An illegal pitch shall be declared verbally by the umpire.

- 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.

C. **BATTING**

- 1) **3 balls** will result in a walk and **2 strikes** will result in a strikeout. One foul on the 2nd strike is allowed.
- 2) Teams can bat as many players as are in attendance at game time, with any 11 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 and a player is injured or has to leave the game, an out will be awarded at their first at bat. If the player isn't able to bat again the rest of the game, no out will be awarded after the first at bat. If a player leaves the game for another reason an out will be awarded the rest of the game.**

D. **COURTESY RUNNER** – Players may run once for themselves when they bat and once for another player during that same inning. A substitute runner may not be run for by another substituted runner unless an injury has occurred which prevents the original substitute runner from continue running. If a substitute runner is on base and his turn to bat comes up, an out is recorded at the base the runner is occupying and he is then allowed to take his turn at bat, unless that recorded out is the 3rd out of the inning. The substitute runner would then lead off the following inning. In a case where a team bats through its

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. Teams will be allowed to hit 6 homeruns and 1 Up. Additional home runs will be treated as an 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 the open inning; extra innings will be played using the international rule.
- 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. When batting, if a batter hits the net, it is a dead ball foul. If the batter hits the net again during the at bat, they are out. If they have no more fouls to give, and they hit the net, they are out. In each at bat, **3 balls** result in a walk and **2 strikes** result in a strikeout. One foul on the 2nd strike is allowed.
- 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 official game ball of the league will be the Trump X-Rock 44/375 (12" Composite). The Baden or Tattoo 44/375 may also be used. **Each team will be given 12 new game balls.** If teams need more balls they can notify the league coordinator. It is **BOTH** teams' responsibility to retrieve homerun and foul balls.
- B. **Each team will provide their own balls. Teams must use the Trump X-Rock, Baden, or Tattoo ball.**
- C. **BATS** – Any bat with a rating of 1.21 or less is acceptable for use with the only exception being the original Grey Miken Ultra I. Any bat that has been damaged or deemed altered in the umpire's opinion will be banned and considered illegal.
- D. **Strike Mat** – Mat specs are 35" long by 21" wide
- E. **Home Plate & Commitment Line** – A minimum six-foot commitment line shall be marked across and perpendicular to the foul line and placed thirty feet from home plate. Once a runner has crossed the commitment line: they cannot return to third base; must continue home; can no longer be tagged out by the defensive player; the defensive player must touch the white part of the strike zone mat. The ball remains live.
- F. Cobb County PARKS Department reserves the right to check and test a bat at any time.
- 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.
- F. All players 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 the opening day of the season. After that time, if a team has a player without a number they will be penalized and will start the game down 3-0. Before the start of the game, teams must notify the staff and umpire of any player without a number. If it is confirmed that a team has a player out of uniform, that team will be notified and will start the game down 3-0. If the opposing team does not want the runs, they can let staff know and the game will begin 0-0. Once the game starts, no runs will be awarded to players without a number unless that player or players show up late. No runs will be awarded to any team after the 3rd inning. This rule may not be used to protest the outcome of a game.
- G. Safety bases will be used at all parks. See ASA/USA 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.

VI. PLAYING ROSTER

- A. Rosters will be managed and updated online at www.quickscores.com/cobbcounty.

- B. Teams may pick up players on another team, **ONLY** if they are short their full starting lineup. Teams may not pick up extra players past 11. If a team's player shows up they will take the place of the pickup player and the pickup player must leave the game. For each player that is picked up, a team will lose one homerun. (If a team picks up 2 players they will start the game with 2 home runs to their total). Teams must notify staff and the umpire of any players that are picked up. Only players that have registered and payed the \$50.00 fee may play. Pick up players must be added to the bottom of the lineup. **For the playoffs, each player that is picked up, a team will lose two homeruns.**
- C. Once teams are drafted no new players may be added to the team's roster. If a player reaches out about playing in the league after the draft the league coordinator will place that player on a team. If a team needs to add additional players they must reach out to the league manager and league coordinator about adding a player. To officially add a player to the team, the player/team must reach out to the league coordinator to make payment. Once payment is made they will be added to the team roster.
- D. A team can carry up to 16 players on its roster at one time.
- E. 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.

VII. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Eligibility requirements are as follows:
 - 1. A player must be **45 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.

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).

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 Cobb County PARKS leagues he/she participates in**. If a player plays in multiple leagues, the suspension covers all games he/she participates in until the suspension league night has been served. (E.G. Player A is ejected from the Monday night Men's Competitive league. Player A also plays in the Tuesday night Men's Competitive league. The suspension for Monday night would result in Player A missing the next two games on Monday and Tuesday night.) 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 an 8, 9, or 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 and t-shirts.
- 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.
- D. After the schedule is complete, there will be no changes or refunds. Schedules will be emailed to the team managers. You may submit a scheduling request before the season and the

League Coordinator will accommodate if possible.

- 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.
- A. **Championship Tournament Games:** In leagues where a single elimination tournament decides the winners, the higher seeded team will be the home team. In double elimination tournaments the higher seeded team will be the home team unless the higher seeded team is coming out of the loser's bracket. In this case the team in the winner's bracket 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 tournament games. All bats are subject to compression testing prior and during the game.

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](https://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.