

FREDERICK COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Co-Rec. Softball

LEAGUE RULES

(All rules not outlined below will reference the USSSA rulebook)

(Revised 4/5/23)

A. PLAYERS/TEAMS/ROSTERS

1. **All Participants must be at least 18 years old to play in the league.**
2. Players must have photo identification with them during all FCPRD games.
3. Only managers, coaches and sponsors are allowed in the dug-outs.
4. It is the responsibility of the team's representative to manage their team's roster.
5. Each team must complete a roster with each player's full legal name, address, and phone number. Coaches/Managers must be included on the team's roster. **Failure to turn in your team's roster before your third game will result in a forfeit!**
6. Maximum of 25 players per team.
7. Players may be added to the roster until **1 week prior to the start of the tournament.** Updated rosters will be emailed to team coaches immediately following this deadline.
8. A player may be added to the roster **prior** to any game in one of the following ways:
Phone 540-665-5678, or email (rrigglem@fcva.us) by 2:30 p.m. daily.
9. A player can play for only **1-** county co-rec softball team.
10. Any player that is not on the roster is ineligible to participate in any contest. If such players are discovered that player will be ejected from the game.
11. The manager, acting manager or captain of the protesting team shall immediately notify the home plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The umpire shall then notify the opposing manager and scorekeeper. The protest must be noted in both scorebooks and on the scorecard prior to the next pitch of the game.
12. A protest regarding player eligibility must be done before the completion of the **third inning** for starting players or before the **completion of the inning in which an ineligible substitute entered the game.** The umpire will have the protested player(s) produce a legal photo ID. **(Exaple- Driver's License, Work ID, School ID).** If the protested player(s) are found to be illegal the team that protested will win the game.
13. In the event that a team withdraws from competition or is dropped from the league, all contests will stand as scheduled. There are no refunds.

B. SCHEDULES

1. League schedules will be produced by FCPRD.
2. All contests must be played according to the schedule. **No games will be rescheduled due to vacations, other league conflicts, etc.**
3. The home team will be the second team listed on schedule.
4. FCPRD will attempt to re-schedule any missed games. All rescheduled games are subject to be played outside of the normal playing nights. Games that have not been completed due to weather related issues **(Example- canceled game in the bottom of the 2nd inning)** will be rescheduled as a new game. In cases of weather related issues a game will be considered complete after 5 innings of play, or 4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
5. FCPRD reserves the right to reassign any team based upon past record and other considerations for the **Cancellation Line – 540-665-5678 after 3:30 p.m. M-F.** Field conditions after 5 p.m. are left to the decision of the park ranger and the cancellation line will be updated once they make a decision.

6. **The first scheduled game will begin on time. All other games will begin 5 minutes after the conclusion of the previous game.**

C. GENERAL RULES

1. Softballs must be optic yellow and clearly marked **12 inch, USSSA Classic M**. Teams will hit their own ball. All balls entering the field of play must be inspected by the umpire before they can be used in the game. If the umpire cannot determine if the ball is clearly marked and optic yellow (example: Classic M), it will not be allowed. Both teams should have extra playable balls on hand in case replacements are needed for balls that are lost or damaged during game play.
2. Bats must meet the new or old USSSA bat stamped standards. A list of approved bats can be found at <http://www.ussa.com/slowpitch/>, and then click on the “Rules/Legal Info” tab found midway on the top part of the page. Bats that are considered to be “Senior Bats” or wood bats are not allowed to be used in this league. If you are found using a bat that is altered or not on the approved bat list, you will be removed from the league and subject to stiffer punishments by FCPRD.
3. Please review the new list of bat bans for the 2023 season. The following bat models listed below that have **UTH-43** markings on handle will signify temporarily suspended models:
<https://www.ussa.com/gslslowpitch/newsRead?id=21618>
4. **Time Limit: When 55 minutes has been reached during the game, the next full inning will be the last inning of the game. No matter what part of the inning the game is in (top, middle, end) the umpire will make this announcement.** Please note game starting time in your respective scorebook. All players should be encouraged to hustle between innings. The game will not conclude until each team has batted in their half of the inning. **In the case of a mercy rule, when 55 minutes has been reached during the game, the next full inning will be the last inning of the game no matter what inning the game is in (Example- bottom of 3rd).** However, in cases of weather related issues a game will be considered complete after 4 ½ innings have been played.
5. In the event a game is tied and the full inning after the 55 minute mark has been played **or** 7 innings have been played, teams will receive 1 inning to break the tie using the International Tiebreaker Rule. Teams will start the next inning with the **player of their choice** on 2nd base. There will be zero outs and each team will get a chance to score. If the game is still tied after the extra inning, the game will end as a tie.
6. **Mercy Rule – 10 runs after 5 innings of play.** The Run Rule will be used in all season ending tournament games including the Championship Game(s).
7. **Flip/Flop Rule**
8. ****FCPRD League Flip/Flop Rule EXCEPTION to the USSSA rule below- the winning visiting team must be winning by 15 or more runs in or after the 4th inning. ****

From the USSSA Rule Book: (rule book- https://ussa.com/docs/2018/2018_SP_RuleBook.pdf page 24- mid-page)

F. Flip/Flop Rule—All Programs: In the inning when the run rule for that particular program is exceeded and the home team is losing, the home team will remain at bat and become the visiting team. If the team (new visiting team) does not score enough runs to reduce the run difference below the run rule, the game is over. If they reduce the run difference to below the run rule then the new home team will bat. If they subsequently score enough runs to exceed the run rule, the game will be over; if they do not, the game will continue under that format. If the situation reverses, the teams would flip/flop again.

9. A pitcher may have a total of three warm up pitches prior to the start of all innings.

10. The league will use a 3 ball, 2 strike count (3-2), **No Courtesy Foul**.
Three balls = walk, two strikes = Out
- If first pitch is called strike, next foul is an out- NO COURTESY FOUL BALL
11. The pitch must be underhanded at slow speed and with an arc that must have a minimum height of **3 feet from the pitcher release and a maximum of 10 feet** from the ground, in the umpire's judgment. Pitchers can pump fake in ALL DIVISIONS. Pitchers must **release the ball within 5 seconds** of the start of their wind-up. Any time after 5 seconds, a "ball" will be called by the umpire.
12. Teams must furnish scorebooks for their team. Team representatives must sign a scorecard after each game to verify the correct final game score with the umpire. Once a scorecard is signed by a team representative the game is considered final.
13. Teams must have a minimum of 9 players to start a game. Teams unable to field nine eligible players at the scheduled starting time will have to forfeit that game. If at any point your teams falls below 9 players the game will be considered a forfeit.
14. If a team falls below the total number of players that started the game (player leaves the game, injured player, quits, etc.), and no legal substitute players are available, that players position in the line-up will continually receive an out every time throughout the remainder of the game. The opposing pitcher may walk batter(s) to get to the free out.
15. Any team that forfeits 5 games during the regular season will receive a warning from FCPRD; a team forfeiting 6 games will not be eligible for tournament play.
16. The bases will be positioned at 70 feet.

D. DETAILED CO-REC. RULES

1. Your team must have at least 4 males and 4 females playing at all times, but have an additional male or female to have a playable game.
2. Coed Batting Order Options: Equal number of males and females in the line-up- the batting order MUST alternate male-female. Games must have a minimum of 9 players for each team- teams will take an out when the line-up consists of male following male. The opposing pitcher may walk batter(s) to get to the free out. **It will be permissible to have 1 or more female players in the line-up than male players.**
3. When adding the 10th player to the line-up, the ratio must be 5 males to 5 females or more females than males.
4. Teams with 10 players on the field have the option of batting up to 12 players or using 2 Designated Hitters (DH). The DH(s) must be declared prior to the start of the game, they must remain in the same batting position the entire game, and may enter on defense. The substitute must be a player who has not yet been in the game. The starting DH can re-enter. Co-ed teams that choose to use the DH option must have **6 males and 6 females or more females than males**.
5. Any male batter that receives a base on balls, whether intentional or unintentional, will be awarded second base only if the female batter after him does not elect to hit. Runners will advance only if forced. The female batter following the walked male batter has the option of taking her normal at bat, or accepting a walk. If she elects to hit, the male batter in front of her must stop at first base. Male runners **must touch first base** before running to second base.
6. **A. Co-Rec defensive positioning shall include two males and two females in the outfield (on the grass), two males and two females in the infield (on the dirt), and one male and one female in the pitcher/catcher positions. No alternation required as long as the required number of males/females is met. If a team plays shorthanded with either three players in the infield or outfield, at least one must be male and one must be female.**

B. If a Co-Rec 3 player outfield (a.k.a. 5 player infield) is being played, one of the 3 outfielders must be of the opposite sex.

7. Outfielders must remain in the grass area prior to the batter making contact.

E. COURTESY RUNNER

One courtesy runner per inning (one time) may be used. The courtesy runner must be any player in the lineup. A male must run for a male, a female can run for a male or a female. Your team will not be allowed to use two opposite sex runners in the same inning. If the courtesy runner is stranded on any base and it is their turn to bat, they will remain on the base and will be considered out at the plate. The next batter in the line-up will then go up to bat. Note: **if a team only has 9 players and there is one out**, and the 9th player in the line-up is stranded on the base the inning will end with the 9th and the 10th players receiving outs at the plate (this will end the inning).

F. HOME RUN RULE

1. Home run rule: each team is allowed 3 homeruns during a game. Any home run that exceeds the league max will be ruled an out. **(ALL CO-REC DIVISIONS- 3 HOMERUNS THEN OUTS)**
2. The team that hits an over the fence home run is responsible for retrieving the ball or supplying a clearly marked replacement ball.
3. After a player hits a homerun over the fence, they **Do Not** need to touch 1st base or any other base.

G. EQUIPMENT

1. Cast, splints and braces must be padded. Any of this equipment judged by the umpire to be dangerous is illegal and you will not be permitted to play with them.
2. No exposed jewelry will be permitted. If it is unable to be removed, it must be taped to the body before that player is allowed to play. If a player refuses to remove or tape item to his/her body, that player will be removed from the game. **(Note: medical alert bracelets and necklaces are not considered jewelry, but, if worn, must be taped to the body.)**
3. Rubber sole footwear, metal cleats are not allowed.

H. PROTEST

1. Judgment calls by the umpire may not be protested (**ex. balls/strikes, safe calls, etc...**)
2. Protests regarding rule interpretations must be made aware to the umpire and noted in both scorebooks and on the scorecard prior to the next pitch of the game.
3. Notice of the protest must be submitted in writing by the team representative to FCPRD within 24 hours of the incident. No phone calls will be taken regarding a protest.
4. FCPRD will review the protest and notify teams of the decision regarding the protest within 48 hours.

A protest regarding player eligibility must be done before the completion of the **third inning** for starting players or before the **completion of the inning in which an ineligible substitute entered the game.** The umpire will have the protested player(s) produce a legal photo ID. **(Example- Driver's License, Work ID, School ID)**. If the protested player(s) are found to be illegal the team that protested will win the game.

I. EJECTIONS

1. A coach or player who is ejected from a game is automatically suspended for that night plus he/she will be suspended for the next ***game night***, including tournament play.
2. **In addition to the suspension**, the player ejected will also be fined \$40.
3. The fine must be paid to FCPRD before that player can be reinstated. No onsite payments will be received. That player's team will also forfeit all games until the fine is paid. The team may drop the player from their roster to avoid any forfeits. The player is considered ineligible and may not play on any other team(s).
4. However, if a player is ejected twice in a season, they are automatically removed from the league.
5. All ejections must be reported on the scorecard by the umpire and coaches.
7. The following offenses will be considered grounds for ejection:
 - i. Foul language
 - ii. Verbal/Physical abuse of umpire or FCPRD staff member
 - iii. Fighting
 - iv. Unnecessary poor sportsmanship
8. **ALL EJECTIONS ARE SUBJECT UP TO A 2-YEAR BAN FROM ALL FCPRD PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES.**

J. POST SEASON TOURNAMENT

BRACKET PLAY

1. FCPRD staff will determine the tournament format.
2. Awards will be given to the champion and runner up in each division.
3. Regular season ties in the standings will be settled according to head-to-head, then run difference to determine tournament seeding.
4. The higher seed will be the home team.
5. Teams will hit their own ball. All balls entering the field of play must be inspected by the umpire before they can be used in the game.
6. Rapid succession will be enforced for playoff games. Teams must be at the field **ready to play 30 minutes prior to their game time**.
7. All tournament games will use the international tiebreaker rule. Teams will start the next inning with the **player of their choice** on 2nd base. There will be zero outs and each team will get a chance to score. The game will continue until a winner is decided.

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME(S)

1. The championship game(s) will be played without a time limit.
2. The Run Rule will be used in all season ending tournament games including the Championship Game(s). However in cases of weather related issues revert to the FCPRD softball weather policy (in section B).
3. If the game is tied after seven complete innings, the game will continue until a winner is declared.
4. During the first championship game the undefeated team chooses to be the home or away team. If a second game is needed then the previous home & visitor teams will switch.

K. WEATHER

Thunder/Lightning

- Removal of all players from the field (go to your cars) for a duration of 30 minutes each time **lightning is seen or thunder is heard (no exceptions)**
- Games can resume after thunder and or lightning has stopped for 30 minutes not to exceed 30 minutes. If thunder/lightning continues for 10 minutes or more the current game (example 6:30 game) will be canceled. If the storm clears, potentially the 7:30 & 8:30 games can be played (if the fields are deemed playable).

Inclement Weather Check:

- -Cancellation line 540-665-5678 cancellations will be updated after 3:30 p.m. during the week or as needed during games.
- -FCPRD Face Book and twitter
- - www.fcprd.net

NO ALCOHOL is permitted in FCPRD Parks.

NO SMOKING within 50 feet of the softball complex is permitted.

NO DOGS within 50 feet of the softball complex.

Anyone who does not adhere to these rules is subject to being banned from the Parks and ejected from the league for a period of two years.