

FREDERICK COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Men's Softball

SUMMER/FALL LEAGUE RULES

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

Revised 3/22/16

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 prior to the team's first contest. 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, fax 540-665-9687 or email (rigglem@co.frederick.va.us) by 2:30p.m. daily.
9. A player can play for only 1- county men's 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. (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.
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 schedule 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. Home team will be the second team listed on the 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 best interest of the league.
6. **Cancellation Line – 540-665-5678 after 3:30 p.m. daily.** Field conditions after 3:30 p.m. are left to the decision of the park ranger and the cancellation line will be updated once they make a decision.
7. **The first scheduled game will begin at 6:30p.m. 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, .44 core, 375 compression or 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: 12", .44 cor, 375 compression or 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" 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. **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.
4. 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.
5. I. SUMMER & FALL RECREATIONAL: Mercy Rule – 10 runs after 5 innings of play.
II. SUMMER & FALL COMPETITIVE: Mercy Rule – 20 runs after 3 innings, 15 runs after 4 innings and 10 runs after 5 innings of play. The mercy Rule will not be used in the tournament championship game(s).
6. The league will use a 3 ball, 2 strike count (3-2). three balls = walk, two strikes = out.
 - a. Maximum of three fouls.
 - b. If first pitch is called strike, allowed one foul, next foul is an out
7. 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 ONLY in MEN'S SUMMER/FALL COMPETITIVE. 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.
8. Team 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.
9. 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.
10. Teams that start with 9 players may ONLY add a 10th player to their line-up (scorebook) at any time after the game has started without penalty. Any player added will be placed at the bottom of the line-up.
11. Teams with more than 10 players present 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. These players

- may enter the game on defense but must remain in the same batting position the entire game. The DH can be substituted by a player not yet in the game. The starting DH is eligible to re-enter.
12. If a team falls below the total number of players that started the game 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.
 13. Any team that forfeits 4 games during the regular season will receive a warning from FCPRD; a team forfeiting 5 games will not be eligible for tournament play.

D. COURTESY RUNNER

Any player can run for another player once per inning (one runner per inning). If the courtesy runner is stranded on any base and it is their turn to bat, they will remain on the base and be considered out at the plate. The next batter in the line-up will then go to bat.

E. HOME RUN RULE

1. I. SUMMER/FALL RECREATIONAL: Home run rule- 3 home runs per game.
II. SUMMER/FALL COMPETITIVE: Home run rule- 5 home runs per game. Any home run that exceeds the league max will be ruled an out.
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.

F. 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.

G. PROTEST

1. Judgment calls by the umpire may not be protested (**Example- 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.

H. EJECTIONS

1. A coach or player who is ejected from a game is automatically suspended for that night, plus he or 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 \$30.
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.
6. 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
7. **ALL EJECTIONS ARE SUBJECT UP TO A 2-YEAR BAN FROM ALL FCPRD PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES.**

**I. POST SEASON PLAY
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. FCPRD will provide 2 new tournament game balls per 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. Championship games will play the full seven innings; however in cases of weather related issues revert to the FCPRD softball weather policy (in section B). The slaughter rule will not be in effect. If the game is tied after seven complete innings, the game will continue until a winner is declared.
3. 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.

J. WEATHER

Thunder/Lighting

- Removal of all players from the field area (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 40 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 fields are deemed playable).

NO ALCOHOL is permitted in FCPRD Parks.

NO SMOKING within 50 feet of the softball complex.

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.