



## CHARLES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS, AND TOURISM ADULT SOFTBALL LEAGUE GUIDELINES

### I. THE LEAGUE:

- A. **Mission:** To enhance the quality of life for our residents and visitors by providing well rounded recreational and competitive sports programs focusing on building a sense of community and improving the overall
- B. **Philosophy:** The Charles County Softball Leagues are first and foremost recreational sports leagues. The purpose of these leagues is to provide an opportunity for Charles County residents to participate in an organized sanctioned League.
- C. **Administration:** The leagues will operate under the jurisdiction of Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Office. Guidelines are subject to review and changes may be made at the discretion of the League Director. Any questions or discrepancies should be brought to the League Director's attention.
- D. **League Format:** Regular season play will be a round robin format, whenever possible, teams will play double-headers. A sponsor trophy will be awarded to the first and second place finishers of the respective division/league. Individual awards will be given to the first-place team only.
- E. **Division Breakdown: Team Classification: Teams may be placed in leagues at the discretion of the League Director**
  1. **Pacific Division:** Intended for teams and players to participate in a competitive atmosphere, who possess intermediate or novice softball skills. This division will consist of an East, North, West, and South league; with East being the highest level of play
  2. **Co-Rec Division:** A competitive recreational atmosphere for both males and females simultaneously. This division may consist of a North, West, and South league; with the North being the highest level of play. Weekday leagues will also be offered with the North being the highest level.
  3. All teams are registered in the USA program; therefore, teams are sanctioned and are eligible for tournament play with USA Softball.

**II. COACHES/MANAGERS:**

- A. The coach or manager shall be the team representative and shall be responsible for the following:
1. Be the liaison between League Director and team
  2. Attend all coaches/managers meetings
  3. Inform team members about all information pertaining to the league (rules, regulations, schedule, etc.)
  4. The conduct of players and team spectators. It is the responsibility of the coach/manager to keep all children out of the dugout areas.
  5. Obtaining and submitting all league information required such as franchise fees, registration, completed rosters with all team members signatures, etc.
  6. Responsible for keeping team bench and surrounding area free of trash resulting from team members and team spectators (see Park Rules).
  7. Coaches are responsible for turning in scores to by calling sports office or emailing the league director @ robertmt@charlescountymd.gov no later than 12 noon. the next business day.

**III. TEAM MEMBERSHIP:**

- A. A 20% administration fee is deducted for all refund requests 4 weeks prior to the league starting; a 50% refund if withdrawal requested 2 weeks prior to the league starting; no refund will be given inside of two weeks.
- B. Each team shall be limited to a minimum of 15 players and a maximum of 20 players (no exceptions).
- C. Additions and/or deletions to the roster must be in writing and submitted to the League Director before player(s) are eligible to play in any game.
1. Adding or dropping players must be done by using the current add/drop form. Phone-in additions will not be accepted. This information will not be accepted at the game site.
  2. Teams needing to add players (after last day to add/drop) may do so with the permission of the League Director but such teams will not be eligible for regular season awards, and all games will go down as forfeits in the standings
  3. Team members on a particular team may not be held on a roster past the add/drop date to purposely eliminate their participation in the program. NOTE: Player may switch teams in the same division, only if they have not played in any games and it is before the add/drop deadline;

players that have played in games before the add/drop deadline can only switch teams if the new team is in a different division

4. A team that previously wins a particular league may not use the add/drop system to remain in the same league. **Example:** Submitting a roster of non-existent (etc.) players then changing the roster to add and drop players, forming the original team.
- D. Completed team rosters must be submitted with the franchise fee. Franchise fees will not be accepted with a roster
- E. The first-place finisher of the regular season will be moved to the next higher level of competition during the next sport season in which the team participates. If 5 or more players of the first-place team return to that team or any team, then that team will be moved up as stated above. Teams will be reclassified during the next sports season, if necessary. We reserve the right to move down the bottom finisher, if necessary, to balance out the league.
- F. Out of County Players: Non-residents are welcome to participate, however, in the circumstance where a division has reached a full capacity of teams, rosters with Charles County citizens will be given priority.

#### IV. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY:

- A. Players must be 18 years of age and not eligible to participate at the high school level. **EXCEPTION:** a player who is 17 years old graduates during the current season can be listed on the team roster; however, that player is not eligible to play for his/her team until after graduation date.
- B. At the game site, players are responsible for providing identification to determine eligibility as requested by a league official. (If not, he/she will immediately be declared ineligible).
- C. Player participation in multiple leagues
  1. Women can participate on one Co-Rec Sunday league team and one Co-Rec Friday League Team
  2. Men can participate on two Men's League teams (they must be on different nights), one Co-Rec Sunday League team and one Co-Rec Friday league team
- D. Technical Out
  1. As a sanction against those teams or individuals whose behavior is unacceptable, but the umpire judges that ejection is too severe a penalty, the umpire may invoke a technical out against the offending team

- i. **Offense:** If the team at bat is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct, the umpire may enforce an out against them. If this is the first or second out of the inning, the game continues with the batter and base runners being unaffected; an additional out is simply added to the team's total. If the technical out is the third out of the inning, the next inning will resume with the batter who would have batted had the out not been called. In this case, the batter will begin with a fresh one-and-one count.
- ii. **Defense:** If the team in the field is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct, the umpire may invoke the technical out rule by giving them an out when they come to bat
- iii. Two consecutive technical outs may not be assessed against the same team. At least one pitch (legal or illegal) must intervene. An ejection for any unsportsmanlike behavior must be accompanied by the charging of an out against the offending team

## V. EJECTIONS/SUSPENSIONS

- A. Consequences for suspensions/ejections will be decided by the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism office based upon a 3 Tier system. Anyone suspended may not attend any game or practice sites until their suspension has been fulfilled.
  1. Tier One: 2 Game Suspension
    - a) A Tier One offense may be issued to any player, parent, coach, or spectator who:
      1. Is ejected from a game or asked to leave a game or practice site by an official or Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism staff member for harassment, obscene gestures or language, or any other unsportsmanlike behavior. The result of these actions may result in a 2-game suspension, effective immediately, starting with your teams next scheduled game.
      2. Any further ejections may result in suspension from the league.
  2. Tier Two: Suspension for Remainder of the Season
    - a) Players may be suspended from the league and all Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism programs for the remainder of the season.
    - b) A Tier Two offense may be issued at the discretion of the League Director to any player, coach, or spectator who:
      1. Committed multiple Tier One offenses within the same season.

2. Strike, shove, bump, trip, or threaten an official, player, coach, spectator, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff member or league official during or after a game on Charles County Community Center, Public School, or Park property.
3. Tier Three: 2 Year Suspension
  - a) Anyone involved in a Tier Three offense may be suspended from the league and all Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism programs for a minimum of two years.
  - b) A Tier Three offense may be issued, with discretion from the League Director to any player, parent, coach, spectator who:
    1. Commits multiple Tier One or Tier Two offenses within one year of previous offenses.
    2. Is involved in a severe incident that displays excessive or relentless disobedience of our mission, including but not limited to; harassment, fighting, or conduct with intent to harm an official, player, coach, spectator, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff member or league official during or after a game, on Charles County Community Center, Public School, or Park property.

## VI. GAME RULES:

- A. Unless modified by these guidelines, all games of the league shall be played in accordance with current USA Softball Rules.
  1. Legal Delivery: The ball must be delivered with perceptible arc and reach a height of at least six feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum of **12 feet** from the ground. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left entirely up to the judgment of the umpire.
  2. Legal Position of the Pitcher's Feet – The pitcher may take a position from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to six feet behind the pitcher's plate within the 24-inch width of the pitcher's plate with both feet on the ground. No part of the foot shall be outside imaginary lines extended from the two edges of the pitcher's plate to six feet behind it
  3. All games will be played using a 1-and-1 count (One ball and One strike) for each player with an additional foul. (If foul fly ball is caught, runners may tag and advance at their own risk).
  4. All Co-Rec league and tournament games will be played using 12" softball for males and 11" softball for females. The first base coach for the team at bat will be responsible for the rotating of softballs during games.

5. **Courtesy Runner – Any eligible player on official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning. One per gender. NOTE: Any courtesy runner used in Co-Rec must be gender specific.**
6. Grace period - 15-minute grace period will be used for the first weeknight games only (6:30 p.m. start) Monday-Friday. The time used during the grace period will be deducted from your 60-minute time limit. NO grace period for weekend games or later weeknight games.
7. Base stealing will not be allowed in league or tournament games
8. Second team listed on the schedule is home team and shall have the official scorebook. The scorebook should list each player's complete name.
9. Any team ahead by twenty (20) or more runs after four (4) innings (3½ if the home team is ahead) and ten (10) or more runs after the fifth inning (4½ if the home team is ahead) or any complete inning thereafter, shall be declared the winner.
10. If no official umpire arrives for a game, the game may be played if both coaches agree and there is a volunteer umpire to umpire the game. If a game is started with a volunteer umpire, it must be completed. Both coaches are required to sign the scorebook as proof of agreement. Payment to volunteer umpires is at the risk of the teams and Public Works will not reimburse such payment
11. **Home Runs and Running Bases:** When a home run is hit out of the ballpark, the batter and all runners can go directly to the dugout. No appeals can be made for runners missing a base.
  - i. Home Run Restrictions: A limit of over-the-fence home runs/per game will be used in all men's and co-ed slow pitch divisions. (there will be no limit to the number of in the park home runs):
1. **Top Men's League (Wed. & Thurs. Night): Five.** All homeruns from this point will be ruled as an out
  2. **All Other Leagues: Two.** All homeruns from this point will be ruled as an out
12. A game may start and/or be played with a minimum of nine (9) players. There will be an out taken in the missing player position. If a tenth player arrives after the start of a game, he/she shall bat in the tenth batting position and may enter anytime providing it doesn't delay the game.
13. If a team chooses to use an extra player(s), **Men's and Co-Rec can bat up to 14 players.** The extra players used in Co-Rec will consist of 1 male and 1 female **by 2's (12, 14).** If substitutes are available, with the following exceptions:
  - i. In case of any ejection or injury, a team may finish with one less than they started with. If a substitute is not available, there will be an out taken in the batting order spot of the missing player(s).

- ii. The extra player may substitute in the field for any player at any time during the game (players must bat in their original order during the entire game).
14. Co-Rec Play: A team shall consist of five men and five women to start the game. If only nine (9) players are used, the team may consist of - 5 men & 4 women or 5 women & 4 men.
  - i. In CO-REC PLAY, THE PITCHER AND CATCHER MUST BE OF OPPOSITE SEX AT ALL TIMES. Two males and two females - in both the infield and outfield - and in position, defined by the infield dirt for infielders and the grass for outfielders.
  - ii. **Co-Rec Outfield Throws**: No outfielder will be allowed to throw directly to first base for a force out. All throws from the outfield grass must be relayed by an infielder to force the hitter at first base.
    - iii. **Co-Rec Batting Order**: The batting order shall alternate the sexes, with either a male or female player batting first. When a male batter is walked, be it intentionally or unintentionally, the male batter is awarded first and second base, and the following female batter will bat. EXCEPTION: With two outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat.
    - iv. **Co-Rec Base Running**: Any runner who remains on his/her feet and crashes into a defensive player who has the ball or is about to catch a thrown ball will be ruled out. Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected. An errant throw drawing the defense into the path of the runner is not interference.
15. On Field Warm-up: Thirty (30) minutes prior to the first scheduled game of the day, the visiting team has the field first for fifteen (15) minutes, for warm-up, while the home team has the field for the remaining fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of the game. Second game and all subsequent games shall have no warm-up time on the field.
16. Time Limit: For scheduling purposes, all games will be one hour apart, however the length of each game will be seven innings (unless darkness, rain, time limit or run rule prevails), and then five innings constitute a completed game. **NOTE: Softball game shall have no new inning start after sixty (60) minutes of play, unless tied or that 5 innings have not been completed, then 1 pitch softball rules will be in effect to determine a winner (strike/foul = out: ball = walk).** Any game which reaches 60 minutes during the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning with the home team ahead shall be considered over at that point. The inning does not have to be completed. IN THE EVENT THE GAME IS TIED AFTER SEVEN COMPLETED INNINGS; ONE PITCH SOFTBALL RULES (Strike/foul = out: Ball = walk) WILL BE IN EFFECT TO DETERMINE A WINNER. Tournaments sponsored by CCDPW will use one pitch rules for all extra-inning games until the championship game, which will revert back to a 1-1 count.

- i. **Flip/Flop rule will be used for all leagues** - In the inning when the Run Rule for that particular program is exceeded (after the second inning) and the home team is losing, the home team will remain at bat and become the visiting team. If the 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.

17. Field Curfew: No inning or overtime period may start after 11:15 p.m., in which case the ASA rule (rule 5, section 4-a) concerning a "Regulation game," will apply which states; The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the team second at bat has scored an equal number of or more runs than the first team at bat in the incomplete inning. In this case the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.

## **VII. EQUIPMENT:**

- A. All softball bats must be certified by USA Softball. For a complete listing of approved bats, go to [www.teamusa.org](http://www.teamusa.org). For the complete list of banned bats for the Charles County Adult Softball season, please go to [www.charlescountyparks.com](http://www.charlescountyparks.com)
- B. Game balls (12" Trump Optic Yellow, .52 cor, 275 compression - 11" Trump Optic Yellow, .44 cor, 375 compression) will be supplied by the League Director prior to the start of the season. Other equipment (face mask, chest protector, etc.) is optional and must be provided by teams.
- C. Team Uniform Policy – All teams are strongly urged to have all players wear same colored shirts with at least a six (6) inch number on the front or back. No duplication of numbers will be accepted.
  1. If a player's eligibility to participate is challenged because of no team shirt or number, that player must present a picture ID to the umpire to confirm the player's true name. If a picture ID is produced, the player may remain in the game. The umpire will report the player's name to the League Office the next day for final determination as to the player's eligibility to play on that team.
- D. Appropriate softball shoes must be worn. NO metal spikes. Rubber cleats are permissible.
- E. Jewelry - Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous, must be removed and may not be worn during the game



## **VIII. LEAGUE REGULATIONS:**

### A. Refund

1. Teams that pay their franchise fee and drop prior to the league starting date will be assessed a \$100.00 fee. Teams that drop after the league starting date are not eligible for a refund.

### B. Forfeiture

1. Teams that forfeit three consecutive or a total of four games will be dropped from the league.
2. Any team using an ineligible player or using a player under any assumed name shall automatically forfeit all games in which the illegal player participated. Any player guilty of this infraction will be suspended for the remainder of the season
3. Any coach using an ineligible player will also be suspended for the remainder of the season.
4. Tournament Play: Any team using an ineligible player will be disqualified immediately.
5. Any repeat infraction of the above rule will result in that team being dropped from the league and all scheduled games not played shall be forfeited to the opponents.
6. When a team forfeits a game, the opposing team may use the field for practice or scrimmage (except the last scheduled game, the field will be closed upon forfeit). Teams must vacate the field five minutes prior to the scheduled start of the next game.
7. Teams that forfeit games before game day will not be allowed to make up games if regularly scheduled date is rained out

### C. Protests

1. Rule interpretations must be protested at the time of the incident, and before play resumes (next pitch). If the umpire's decision is not accepted, the coach must immediately notify the opposing coach and umpire of their intention to protest. The protest will immediately be logged in the official scorebook including reason, inning, and score.
2. If by chance a situation cannot be resolved with the umpire, a written protest may be made. **IF THE COACH HAS NOT NOTED THE PROTEST IN THE OFFICIAL SCOREBOOK, THE LEAGUE DIRECTOR WILL NOT ACCEPT A PROTEST ON THE MATTER.**
3. Formal protests (including player eligibility) must be submitted in writing to the League Director within two working days of the incident

4. All protest must be accompanied by a \$100.00 certified check or money order, made payable to Charles County Commissioners (no fee required for player eligibility protest). If the protest is upheld, the fee will then be refunded. The coach or assistant coach shall be the only people permitted to protest
5. No verbal complaints concerning umpires, other teams, etc., will be addressed---all complaints must be made in writing and there is no fee requirement.

#### D. Tie Break Procedures

1. The tie break procedures will only be used if teams are tied in regular season standings:
  - i. Won/Loss record in head to head competition.
  - ii. Run differential in head to head
    1. If more than two teams are tied, head to head amongst all teams tied would be the first tiebreaker and then run differential in just the games amongst those teams would be used.
  - iii. If possible and necessary, a playoff will be held for determining standings when league awards are involved. Otherwise, if all above tiebreakers have been exhausted, a coin flip will determine positioning for league playoffs.

**E. Awards:** The regular season champion will receive a sponsor trophy. The tournament runner up will receive a sponsor trophy. The winning head coach of the tournament may pick one of three awards options:

The Tournament Champion will have the option of choosing one of the following:

1. Sponsor trophy or medals for players.
2. Championship shirts w/numbers and names on the back.
3. \$150 discount off the next league the team registers for.

**F.** Choice of awards must be made immediately following the championship game. Player name verification is required immediately following the game for all awards. Shirt sizes and numbers are required if the shirt option is selected.

#### **IX. BLOOD RULE**

- A. A player, coach or umpire who is bleeding or who has transferrable blood on his uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. If medical care or treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time, the individual will not have to leave the game. The length of time considered reasonable is left to the umpire's judgment. Uniform rule violations will not be enforced if a uniform change is required. The umpire shall:

1. Stop the game and allow treatment if the injured person would affect the continuation of the game.
2. Immediately call a coach, trainer or other authorized person to the injured player
3. Apply the rules of the game regarding substitutions, re-entry and shorthanded player if necessary.
4. Coaches should have first aid supplies and extra uniforms available for every game

## **X. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

- A. In the case of inclement weather, each park field will be evaluated individually as to playing conditions. Please remember that out parks are located in different areas of the County and that cancellation at one park does not necessarily mean that we are cancelling elsewhere.
- B. Charles County Recreation utilizes the Charles County Citizen Notification System (CNS) to provide updates on program or facility cancellations and closures due to inclement weather. Sign up to receive free text messages or emails at [www.charlescountymd.gov/switching-alert-systems](http://www.charlescountymd.gov/switching-alert-systems). Notifications will also be uploaded onto the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Facebook feed.
- C. For information after 4:00 p.m, we will be using the same notification system listed above, but you can also call the park where your game is scheduled directly. A recording will announce which fields are canceled. White Plains Park office number is 301-645-2617 and Laurel Falls Park office number is 301-934-2541
- D. Cancellations at the last minute or game time will be handled by park staff at the field
- E. All games to be rescheduled will be done by League Director and may be scheduled on various nights. Schedule will remain the same, only rainouts will be rescheduled. Coaches are responsible for checking the website at [www.charlescountyparks.com](http://www.charlescountyparks.com) (Outdoor Sports/Men's or Co – Rec Softball/Make-up games) for all rescheduled game dates
- F. Lightning: Criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
  1. A 30 second or less flash to bang count calls for removal of all players from playing area
  2. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 15 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard prior to resuming play.

## **CONCUSSION FACT SHEET**

### **WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?**

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding”, “getting your bell rung”, or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost, even if they do not directly hit their head.

The potential for concussions is the greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common. Concussions can occur, however, in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity. As many as 3.8 million sports and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year.

### **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?**

If your player has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

Signs Observed by a Coach or Teammates:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Cannot recall events prior to hit or fall
- Cannot recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

### **HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR PLAYER PREVENT A CONCUSSION?**

Every sport is different, but there are steps your players can take to protect themselves from concussion

- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly
- Learn the signs and symptoms of concussion.

### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR PLAYER HAS A CONCUSSION?**

- **Seek medical attention right away** ○ A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your player to return to sports
- **Keep your player out of play**
  - Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your player return to play until a health care professional says it's ok. Players who return to play too soon – while the brain is still healing – risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your players for a lifetime.
- **Tell your coach about any recent concussion** ○ Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your coach may not know about a concussion a player received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

**Remember, you can't always see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. It's better to miss one game than the whole season.**

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury>