

# Highlands County 2021 Softball League Rules

## General Complex Rules

1. Alcohol is strictly prohibited in the park.
2. All animals are prohibited in the park.
3. Bicycles, skateboards, and vehicles of any kind are prohibited from the park.
4. Glass bottles are prohibited from the park.
5. Lights: A 10:00 p.m. curfew is in effect at the complex. Lights on all 5 fields will be turned off no later than 10:00 p.m. Please plan to leave the complex no later than 10:00.

## League Registration

Recreation League must have a minimum of 6 teams.

All fees, (\$385.00 per team), include 10 games, sanctioning fees and a final tournament. Fees must be prepaid and if unpaid, teams will not be allowed on fields for play. The fee includes one umpire, the field and light use as needed. The sanctioning fee is an annual fee. If the team name or player roster changes, an additional sanctioning fee will be required at registration. All subsequent registration fees for 2019 are \$360.00.

The first game will begin at 6:45 p.m. NO GRACE PERIOD!

The Sports Complex management will post an announcement by 6:00 pm on league nights with pertinent information (i.e. rainouts, complex closures, etc.) when necessary. All rainouts will be made up the Monday of the week following the scheduled game that was rained out. The telephone number to the complex is 402-6755. Coaches only, please call this number after 5:30 if you are unsure if games will be played on designated evenings. It is the coach's responsibility to contact team players. After 6:30 p.m., it will be the umpire's decision to call a game once players are on site.

## League Rules

For all league play, U.S.S.S.A. slow pitch softball rules will apply unless otherwise specified.

1. Scorekeepers are considered as officials and should be treated as such before, during and after any played game. Any abusive or insulting comments will not be tolerated and will result in team penalties.
2. Be prepared to start games 15 minutes earlier than scheduled start time if you are playing the 8:00 p.m. game. No grace period for any team.
3. Once play has started, County staff/umpires will be responsible for determining whether any game will be suspended and/or postponed due to inclement weather or other circumstances.
4. Pitching screens must be used in all leagues. Pitching screen base must be in line with middle of pitcher's mound to one side or the other approximately 7 ft. in front of mound. Pitching screen may only be moved when changing the position to fit either left handed to right handed pitcher. It may not be used as a shield or repositioned to create an advantage. If a throw ball hits the pitching screen, the defensive team is charged with a one base error and all runners are rewarded one additional base. The pitcher is allowed to lay down the pitching screen after the ball has been hit to help avoid his team hitting the screen with a throw.
5. All games shall have a sixty-five (65) minute time limit. Actual playing time will be modified for official timeouts such as injuries, field repair, or emergencies ONLY. No new inning will start

after 65 minutes regardless of which inning is being played unless the game is a tie. In case of a tie, the game will be played until one team wins.

6. The following run rules shall be in effect. 15 runs after FOUR innings; 10 runs after FIVE innings.
7. 5 or 1 up – Last ten minutes will be announce by umpire; last inning is open.
8. During Tournament play, there will be no time limit, but the run rule will still be in affect.
9. A team may bat up to 12 players. If using EH, team must end the game with the same number of player's game it began with, except when an injury occurs. Only one courtesy runner per inning permitted. If at any time there are fewer that 9 eligible players from the roster, the game is forfeited.
10. No Pump Faking permitted during Recreation League games.
11. Metal spikes are prohibited.
12. Home Run limits will be 5 Home Runs, then Out.
13. NO STEALING OF BASES
14. Age Requirements: Minimum age to play on adult leagues is 18. Player must provide a written parent/guardian authorization which allows the minor's name to be posted on official roster.
15. Batter's Count: All leagues will go to 1-1 count on all batters. Batters will not receive a free foul ball. In addition, there will be NO mat for the strike zone.
16. The plate is not a strike. Arch must be 3ft from point of release to 10 ft. max height.
17. A team must be made up of a minimum of 9 players, all who must be registered on the team roster. A team that starts with 9 will not have to take an out. If a 10<sup>th</sup> player arrives, he must be added to the end of the line up. He must also be listed on the line up card as a substitute.
18. "Anonymous" complaints initiated by players, coaches or spectators WILL NOT be investigated.
19. There may be more women than men in co-ed play. No "out" will be assessed for back-to-back women hitting in the line-up.
20. If County staff finds it necessary to cancel a regular league game, a make-up day may be offered. Make-up date and time will be determined by the parks staff only with at least one week's notice.
21. Teams will have one week from the date the parks staff post the standings to report any discrepancies with the standings. After the week is up, the parks staff will not change the standings even if a team can prove that there was an error with the umpire sheet information and/or with the parks staff inputting the scores.
22. Parks staff will mark the field with a hyphenated white line across the outfield. When a woman is at-bat, all outfielders must stay behind the hyphenated white line until the ball has been batted by the hitter. If it is determined that any outfielder is in violation of this rule per the umpire's discretion, all runners including the batter will be rewarded two bases.

## General Articles

1. Experience has proven that it is impossible to anticipate all situations which may arise when rules are formulated. Therefore, the Highlands County Parks and Facilities Dept. reserves the right to waive a rule when its application will result in gross unfairness or unreasonable hardship.
2. It is recommended that teams/players familiarize themselves with U.S.S.S.A. rules.

3. League teams with equal win/loss records will have ties broken by results of head-to-head competition and/or run differential.
4. Once game schedules are distributed, no changes will be made unless approved by the Highlands County Parks and Recreation Department.
5. Blood Rule: Any player with an open wound or bleeding will be prohibited from playing until wound is cleaned and covered.
6. During end-of-season tournament play, if County staff/umpire cancels a game of less than five full innings played, a makeup date and time may be offered. If a second cancellation occurs during the season's tournament, the tournament championship will be awarded to the remaining highest seeded team of the tournament and the season will end.

## Equipment

1. Women can use an 11 or 12-inch ball in all Leagues. Men must use a 12-inch ball in all leagues.
2. All softballs must be stamped U.S.S.S.A. Men's league softballs approved for use are CLASSIC M, and CLASSIC PLUS FOR MEN'S only. Women's softball approved is the Classic W only. If a non-USSSA ball is used during play, the inning being played will be over and the faulted team will begin the next inning with an automatic out.
3. Players that are 50 years and older may use a senior bat that is marked with red tape at the end of the barrel that says "Senior" for easy identification. Players are responsible for marking the bats. If the bat is not marked, it cannot be used. If someone is caught using a senior bat that is not a senior is considered a dead ball foul and is an automatic ejection. Second offense in same game, player and manager is ejected.
4. All bats must be U.S.S.S.A 1.20 thumbprint and approved for **slow pitch** only.

## Rosters

A player may play on only one Recreation team; meaning he or she may not be on more than one Recreation team roster (players in question must show ID). It is the coach's responsibility to monitor the league roster rules. If the coach believes the league roster rules have been violated, then he or she may file a protest against the accused team. (*See Protests*) If it is determined that there is an illegal player in violation of this rule, the penalty is forfeit of game due to non-compliance. If a coach/team is found to be in violation of this rule for a second offense, the penalty is suspension of coach for the remainder of the season. If a coach/team is found to be in violation of this rule for a third offense, the penalty is suspension of coach for one calendar year. If a coach receives the penalty of suspension for violation of the league roster rules, it is his team's responsibility to provide parks staff with contact information of the interim coach before their next scheduled game.

The official U.S.S.S.A. sanctioned roster shall also be constituted as the official Highlands County League Roster. Rosters shall be turned into the Highlands County Parks and Recreation Dept. by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> game. Coaches have until the 3<sup>rd</sup> official game to add any players to the roster. Failure to turn in roster by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> game results in the team forfeiting the next game or games until it is properly filled out and turned in. Roster needs to be completely filled out and each individual player must sign the roster. Limit of 22 players on roster.

Teams are allowed to add an emergency player(s) in between weeks 8-10 of the regular season to ensure they will have enough players for the tournament. They can only add a player(s) if they remove a player(s) from their roster (1 for 1) and the parks staff rule the situation as an emergency.

## Team Conduct

1. Team managers are responsible for the conduct of their team members while inside the confines of the park. Any unacceptable behavior by a team member will be reported to the

coach by umpire or Parks and Recreation management. The coach will be responsible for enforcing the complex rules. If coach/manager refuses to enforce complex rules, both coach and player may be ejected from the complex which will result in forfeiture. **In addition, verbal abuse of county staff and league officials will not be tolerated. First offense will result in automatic ejection from the complex. Any further offenses will result suspension from play for the remainder of the season. In addition, the player will be prohibited entrance to this facility during the term of the suspension.**

2. Umpires also have the authority to eject or suspend any team member(s) for unsportsmanlike conduct prior to, during or following a game. A "TEAM OUT" will be assessed for any unsportsmanlike behavior. In addition, a player may be ejected from the complex by the officiating staff.
3. The use of the "F" word is strictly prohibited (players and spectators). This word used in any capacity on or off the fields will result in immediate ejection from the game and/or sports complex. Any players who use the "F" word may also be penalized a \$25 fee and may not return until fee is paid, in addition to ejection from the park on the night of offense.

## Protests

All protests are to be made directly to the field umpire. No protests will be handled after the game is complete. A filing fee of \$25.00 must accompany the protest. If the umpire has determined that the protest is valid, the \$25.00 protest fee will be returned.

## Tournament Play

Recreation A League with eight or more teams is eligible to participate in tournament play. Recreation B League with six or more teams is eligible to participate in tournament play. The dates and times of the tournaments will be determined by Parks staff.

## Awards

The league champion shall receive a 50% off registration voucher for next season only. The voucher can be used by the league champion team only.

End-of-season tournament champions in the league will receive a 25% discount on the registration fee for the upcoming season only. The voucher can be used by the tournament champion team only, with no changes in team name for the next season.

If the league champion and the tournament champion is the same team, the total discount for registration into the upcoming season will be 75%, or \$270.

*The Highlands County Parks and Facilities Department continues to strive to make the sports complex a safe and enjoyable recreational experience for the players and spectators. Please help us to maintain the quality of services that the facility provides by respecting people and property.*

*Thank you.*