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**TALLAHASSEE PARKS, RECREATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD  
AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT SOFTBALL**

**PHILOSOPHY**

The goal of Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs is to provide an enjoyable, exciting and satisfying recreation softball program for children.

In addition to teaching the physical skills and techniques of the game, we ask that you work with the social and emotional development of the children by emphasizing self-discipline.

Our rules are written to encourage participation and enjoyment by all, rather than a strictly competitive, win-at-all-cost-program. We hope that you will measure "success" not simply in terms of team victories, but also, in the real enjoyment of playing an exciting sport, the skills learned and having a great time!

## **SCOPE OF SOFTBALL PROGRAM**

The following is a breakdown of the various leagues and age groups that make up our Youth Softball Program:

### **PARKS**

Buck Lake Elementary School  
Cobb Middle School (Bowl)  
Lee Park  
Levy Park  
Meridian Park  
Jack McLean Park

**ROOKIE:** Girls 6 - 8 years old.

**MINOR:** Girls 9 - 10 years old.

**MAJOR FAST:** Girls 11 - 12 years old.

**MAJOR SLOW:** Girls 11 - 17 years old.

THE AGE DETERMINING DATE IS DECEMBER 31, 2009. THE PLAYER'S AGE ON THIS DAY IS THEIR LEAGUE AGE.

Some parks may be combined resulting in games being played at other locations.

# **Tallahassee Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Affairs Department**

## **Lightning Safety for All Outdoor Activities**

### **Lightning-Safety Policy**

All adults participating in or observing outdoor activities or events are responsible for their own safety and the safety of their children. Adults shall monitor threatening weather conditions at all times.

During supervised activities, before each practice, warm-up time or game, the umpire, home team coach, recreation supervision personnel or other official shall appoint an adult as a designated “weather watcher.” The “weather watcher” will make the call to stop play, remove individuals from the field, and announce a warning to the spectators should weather conditions be determined to be potentially dangerous due to the approach of a lightning storm.

Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds and thunder or lightning. Even storms that are many miles away can pose a lightning danger to your area. This may mean the appropriate decision is to suspend activities even before the first sight of lightning or sound of thunder.

All participants shall have the right to leave an athletic site or recreational activity, without fear of repercussion or penalty, in order to seek a safer structure or location if they feel they are in danger from impending lighting activity. Safety is the number one consideration. The activity can be made up later.

#### **LIGHTNING SAFETY STRATEGIES**

Lightning safety strategies include avoiding shelter under trees, avoiding open fields and spaces.

Individuals who feel their hair stand on end or skin tingle or hear crackling noises should assume the lightning-safe position (i.e., crouched on the ground, weight on the balls of the feet, feet together, head lowered, and ears covered). Do not lie flat on the ground.

#### **SAFE LOCATIONS**

The following areas are not appropriate shelter and should be avoided: Any area of higher elevation; wide-open areas such as sports fields, tall isolated objects such as flag poles, light poles, or trees; metal fences and metal bleachers, unprotected open buildings like dugouts, picnic pavilions, and rain shelters.

The primary choice for a safe structure is any fully enclosed, substantial building. If a substantial building is not available, a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows completely closed is a reasonable alternative. Convertible vehicles and golf carts do not provide a high level of protection and cannot be considered safe from lightning.

A swimming pool can be a dangerous location during thunderstorms. The current can be propagated through plumbing and electric connections via the underwater lights and drains of most swimming pools.

Lightning current can also enter the building, either into the electric wiring inside the building or through underground plumbing pipelines that enter the building. If lightning strikes the building or ground nearby, the current will most likely follow these pathways to the swimmers through the water.

Small structures, such as rain or picnic shelters or athletic storage sheds, are generally not properly protected and should be avoided during thunderstorms as well. These locations may actually increase the risk of lightning strike via a side flash and cause injury to the occupants.

## CRITERIA FOR POSTPONEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

**When determining whether or not to suspend play, the designated “weather watcher” should use his/her common sense, good judgment and the “30-30 Rule.” If a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during an activity or contest (regardless of whether or not lightning is seen or thunder heard), postpone or suspend the activity until the hazard has passed for at least 30 minutes.**

### **THE 30-30 RULE**

**Criteria for suspension of activities:**

**By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 30 seconds, all individuals should already be inside a safe shelter.**

If activity has been suspended due to lightning, the designated weather watcher should wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder prior to resuming activity. Each time additional lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the minimum 30-minute waiting period should be reset.

**Criteria for resumption of activities:**

Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound (thunder) or observation of lighting before leaving the ‘safe shelter’ to resume activities.

The 30-minute rule can also be explained in another way. A typical thunderstorm moves at a rate of approximately 25 miles per hour. Experts believe that 30 minutes allow the thunderstorm to be about 10 to 12 miles from the area, minimizing the probability of a nearby, and therefore dangerous lightning strike.

A clear sky or lack of rainfall are not adequate indicators for resuming play. The minimum 30-minute return-to-play waiting period should not be shortened. Play should not be resumed even after the 30-minute waiting period if any signs of thunderstorm activity remains in the area or if the weather forecast indicates the threat is not over.

### **THE FLASH-TO-BANG METHOD**

The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient means for determining the distance to a lightning flash and can also be used to determine when to suspend or postpone activities. The flash-to-bang method is based on the fact that light travels faster than sound, which travels at a speed of approximately 1 mile every 5 seconds.

To use the flash-to-bang method, begin counting on the lightning flash, and stop counting when the associated clap of thunder is heard. When storms have a high flash rate, it is important to correlate a specific flash with the thunder it produced. Divide the time to thunder (in seconds or count one thousand one, one thousand 2, and so on) by 5 to determine the distance, in miles, to the lightning flash. As the flash – to - bang count approaches 30 seconds, all persons should be seeking, or already inside, a safe structure or location. This is the minimal guideline when using the flash-to-bang method to halt activities.

**A significant principle to remember is, “if you see it (lightning) flee it, if you hear it (thunder), clear it.”**

**NO LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES CAN GUARANTEE ABSOLUTE SAFETY. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY PERSON TO BE AWARE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO BE SAFE. USE COMMON SENSE AND GOOD JUDGMENT. PLAN AHEAD AND MAKE SAFETY YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.**

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES (ACCIDENTS)**

Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs wants to emphasize the importance of conducting yourselves properly in dealing with medical emergencies at your facilities. Realizing we are not empowered or trained to "treat" victims, we still have the responsibility to render front line aid and supervise the situation. This may be in the way of discussing the situation with the victim, coach, or parent, or to call in the Ambulance Service. Listed below are some guidelines to follow, which should always be coupled with good common sense.

In the event of an accident or emergency:

1. Try to determine the extent of the injury. If in doubt as to the seriousness of the accident, do not move the patient. Keep him comfortable, reassured, then call an ambulance (911 or 681-5400). If the victim's parent is present, get permission before phoning an ambulance. If the situation calls for it, apply ice or keep the patient warm and comfortable.
2. Front line care of an accident would include use of ice, stoppage of bleeding, restoring breathing, treatment for shock, heat exhaustion, or stroke.
3. Be sure the victim remains calm. If it's cold, cover them. If it's hot, loosen equipment, etc. USE GOOD COMMON SENSE.
4. Call for additional support. Use other adults to secure necessary materials. Never leave the patient alone with other players.
5. If an ambulance is called, be sure you have someone to direct it to the site. Assist Paramedics in any way you can.
6. Always prepare an accident report which will be turned into the supervisor who will then get the information to Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs. The supervisor needs to know immediately.
7. Be sure that you know the nearest location of a phone that can be reached within a short period of time.
8. Submit a follow-up report of the injured person. Call to find out the extent of the injury and how she is doing.

Above all, Supervisors and Coaches are to take charge during these incidents and must coordinate aid rendered. Please advise all your staff of the importance of being sure all aspects of an accident are handled properly and expeditiously. If you have any questions regarding these procedures, please contact our office for clarification at 891-3866.

## **HEAT RELATED EMERGENCIES**

Heat related emergencies usually result from loss of fluids and electrolytes (salts) from heavy sweating. As a person continues to lose fluids through sweat, the blood volume is decreased. Blood flow to the skin increases, reducing blood flow to the vital organs. The circulatory system is affected; therefore the person goes into mild shock. If treated immediately, heat cramps and heat exhaustion can usually be reversed with prompt care.

**HEAT CRAMPS** – Loss of fluids and electrolytes can begin to produce painful spasms of skeletal muscles, generally in the legs and abdomen. Skin is moist. Body temperature is usually normal. **TREATMENT:** Have person drink cool water and rest in a cool place.

**HEAT EXHAUSTION** - Cool, moist, pale, clammy or ashen, headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, exhaustion. **TREATMENT:** Have person drink cool water and rest in a cool place.

**HEAT STROKE** – Red, hot, dry. Body temperature continues to climb. Person may vomit and begin to show changes in level of consciousness. Sweating may stop because body fluid levels are low. When sweating stops, the body cannot cool itself effectively and body temperature rapidly rises. Soon the brain and other vital organs, such as the heart and kidneys begin to fail. Convulsions, coma and death will result.

**TREATMENT:**

- ❖ Check ABC's
- ❖ Call 911
- ❖ Remove person from the hot environment
- ❖ Have the person lie down in a cool or shady area. Elevate the legs slightly
- ❖ Loosen or remove clothing
- ❖ Apply cool, wet towels or sheets or cold packs to the body
- ❖ Fan the person to help increase evaporation
- ❖ If you only have ice or cold packs, place them on the person's wrists and ankles, in each armpit and in the groin to cool the large blood vessels.
- ❖ Give small amounts of water to a fully conscious person.
- ❖ DO NOT apply rubbing (Isopropyl) alcohol. The alcohol may cause poisoning through the skin or through inhalation.
- ❖ Monitor vital signs.

**MAJOR LEAGUE FAST PITCH GIRLS SOFTBALL**  
**RULES AND REGULATIONS**

1. LEAGUE AND FEES

The league shall consist of at least four (4) teams. The Major League fast pitch registration fee is \$36.25 (a \$10 late fee will be charged after February 6<sup>th</sup>). NOTE: Some Parks may be combined to form a full league. Practices and games may be played at a park/field other than your home park.

2. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Major league teams will consist of 13 players and a new team will be formed if 11 players are available.

3. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

- A. The Major League fast pitch program is for 11 and 12 year old girls with December 31, 2009 as the age determining date. The player may not turn 13 prior to January 1, 2010. NOTE: Rules and regulations for the major league slow pitch program are in a separate manual.
- B. Proof of Age - All players must show proof of age by birth certificates, baptismal or school record.

4. LEAGUE BOUNDARIES

Girls will be permitted to go to the park or field nearest or most convenient to their home.

5. EQUIPMENT

- A. Sneakers or one-piece sole composition soccer style shoes. No screw-on or metal cleats allowed!
- B. Uniform shirts will be supplied by Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs and must be visibly worn during the game. Visors will also be provided and may be worn at the player's discretion. Other uniform and equipment is optional but coaches should not ask players or parents to purchase additional uniforms or equipment.

All equipment provided by Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs including bats, balls, catchers' gloves, helmets, masks, and batting helmets must be turned in to the Umpire/Park Supervisor at the completion of the last scheduled game.

Pitching machines will be used in this league. The machines and appropriate balls will be provided for practices and games.

6. COACHES

- A. Each team shall have a coach and an assistant coach if possible, to operate the pitching machine and coach the team from the coaching boxes only.
- B. No coach may unduly delay a game. Keep in mind the impression you are making on the youth at all times. Accept the judgment of the umpire and play ball.
- C. Please stay with participants until a parent/guardian arrives to pick them up. Notify your supervisor if you have a parent who is habitually late picking up their child.

- D. WE ARE REQUIRED TO PERFORM A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK ON ALL VOLUNTEER COACHES DUE TO THE "JESSICA LUNSFORD ACT". Please make sure that all of your assistant coaches complete the Volunteer Coaches form before providing any assistance; return these forms to your Supervisor immediately.

Thanks again for coaching in the Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs youth Major Fast Pitch program. Please continue to communicate with your park supervisor on matters of importance and to help promote the game of softball for the youth of Tallahassee.

## 7. UMPIRES

- A. It is our intent to provide 2 umpires for each Fastpitch game who will be paid by Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs. However, if the department is unable to secure an umpire, it will be the responsibility of each team to supply an individual to serve as an umpire. Preferably a parent, not a coach.
- B. Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs will furnish each paid umpire with a Official's T-shirt, a ball and strike indicator, and other necessary protective equipment.
- C. The umpire's decision on matters not covered by league or softball rules shall be final, providing the league supervisor is not on hand to make a decision.

## 8. INTER-LEAGUE PLAY

There shall be no games played among teams of different parks unless parks need to be combined.

## 9. STANDINGS AND AVERAGES

There will be NO official standings or averages kept.

## 10. INSURANCE

Recreation Accident Insurance will be offered to those desiring to purchase it at a cost of \$6.30.

## 11. OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs cannot endorse or take responsibility for team activities beyond what is established as standard procedures in conducting this activity. Activities such as photography sessions, team picnics, etc. are activities that parents must understand are their personal choice and ultimate responsibility if they choose to participate in them. Coaches are advised to refrain from actually organizing "outside" activities. If parents wish to undertake these activities, it must be understood that mandatory donations for these events from team members are prohibited. All donations are "optional" and cannot affect a participant's right to any benefits afforded any other player.

NOTE: Any activities or functions taking place on sites other than those sites supervised by the City of Tallahassee will be the responsibility of the individual conducting those activities.

## 12. GENERAL PLAYING RULES

- A. No new inning shall start after 1 hour and 20 minutes. In the event a game is called, either 2 innings or the regulation playing time of 1 hour and 20 minutes shall constitute a game.

- B. In case of rained out games, coaches of both teams, along with the supervisor will reschedule games as soon as possible. Games must be played before the season ends.
- C. However, if arrangements cannot be made, a forfeit shall not be declared for either team.
- D. If a team does not have at least 8 players at game time, they may ONLY borrow a player or players from the opposing team. No one else may be used to fill in.
- E. A pitching machine will be used for the first 3 innings of each game. Each batter will be given 6 pitches with unlimited fouls on the 6<sup>th</sup> pitch. There will be no walks while using the pitching machine.
- F. The pitching machine will be set at a speed of 35 mph and will be run by the offensive team's coach. The speed will not change unless it is determined by Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs staff that the speed needs to be adjusted. If a pitch is determined by the umpire to be outside the strike zone, it will be called "no-pitch" and the umpire will re-adjust the pitching machine. If a coach feels the pitching machine needs adjusting, the coach can request an adjustment from the umpire. The umpire must approve all adjustments.
- G. The player in the "pitching position" will stand on either side of the machine and coach. The player in this position can not leave the circle until the ball is hit. If the machine or coach is hit by a batted ball, the ball will be ruled dead, the batter will advance to first base and all other players will advance one base.
- H. Batters may not run on a dropped third strike by the catcher.
- I. There will be a 10-batter rule in each half inning on offense regardless of the number of outs. When the 10th player comes to the plate, the offensive coach must declare "10th batter". While using the pitching machine, the 10<sup>th</sup> batter will be given 6 pitches. With a "player pitcher", the 10th batter must hit the ball or strike out. She cannot walk. In the event a pitcher hits the 10th batter, the next batter in the order will bat.
- J. All players present must be listed in the batting lineup. No player can sit out 2 consecutive innings on defense. The batting order cannot change during the game. The coach may use his/her own judgment if a girl is late without good reason or has exhibited bad sportsmanship.
- K. The runner may advance at her own risk on an overthrow. Fences will enclose all fields.
- L. Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs will not cancel games. The umpire/park supervisor will do this at the field.
- M. There will be no warm up (batting or throwing) against the fences. Coaches should strictly enforce this rule due to the damage it causes to our fences.
- N. The on-deck batter will stand in the on-deck circle to the batter's back. For example, the on deck batter will stand in the 3<sup>rd</sup> base on deck circle when a right-handed batter is up.
- O. Base runners do not have to slide into home. However, the runner may not initiate a collision with the catcher with the intent of dislodging the ball.

ASA Jr. Olympic Softball Rules will govern all play with the following exceptions:

## EXCEPTIONS

Rule 8, Section 10 (page 120): Rule for courtesy runners for pitchers/catchers is not in effect except for the catcher speed up rule. Any catcher who is on base with 2 outs will be replaced by the last out in order to allow the catcher to return to the dugout and get her equipment on so play will continue in a timely fashion the next half inning.

Rule 8, Section 1 - B: The batter may not run if the catcher drops the third strike. It will be an automatic out. However, base runners may advance at their own risk.

Rule 5, Section 3 – A: 6 innings (not 7 innings) is a regulation game; the home team will keep the official score.

Rule 8, Section 4 - A: The runner may steal when the ball reaches home plate (not when it leaves the pitcher's hand). A runner leaving the base too soon must go back. If the runner is off the base and the batter gets a hit, the runner cannot advance more than one base in front of the batter.

Rule 4, Section 1 – C: The defense will consist of 10 players (not 9) in the major fast pitch league. The 10<sup>th</sup> player will be an outfielder.

## IMPORTANT ASA RULES TO NOTE:

Rule 6, Section 1-11: PITCHING REGULATIONS (Fast Pitch). Also see Points of Emphasis 39. Read and understand this rule completely. If you have any questions, call your league supervisor or TPRD.

- Coaches are to use good judgment as to the selection of pitchers. Be sure pitchers have the ability to pitch.

- No balks shall be called.

Rule 8, Section 7 – T: LOOK BACK RULE. Also see Points of Emphasis 33.

Rule 1: INFIELD FLY RULE.

Rule 7, Section 6 – G: Bunted foul ball on 3<sup>rd</sup> strike is an out

Rule 2, Section 1: The pitching rubber shall be 40 feet from home plate.

Rule 8, Section 1 – F: A batter is awarded first base when hit by a pitched ball even if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. If a pitch hits a batter, a dead ball situation occurs prohibiting runners from advancing.