

**NORTHAMPTON PARKS AND RECREATION
COED SLO-PITCH SOFTBALL LEAGUE
2022 RULES AND REGULATIONS**

1. The league shall be known as the Northampton Coed Softball League.
2. The league shall be under the jurisdiction of the Northampton Parks and Recreation Commission and shall be under the direction of the Director of Parks and Recreation or their designee.
3. Players will compete at their own risk. The Parks and Recreation Commission is not responsible for injuries.
4. Single wall bats only will be allowed. All new bats must have a BPF 1.2 written on it. Please see last page for more information on legality of bats.
5. Games are played at Ray Ellerbrook Field, Northampton High School, JFK Middle School and Maines Field.
6. A player must be at least 16 years old to play.
7. ***Lightning Policy: Adopted May 7, 2012:***
 - a. **Northampton Parks and Recreation Commission Lightning Policy:** Thunder or lightning necessitates that all outdoor practices and competitions be suspended. Before a practice/game begins, take a look around and have a plan for shelter prior to the start of any contest. When thunder is heard or when lightning is seen, the following procedures must be executed:
 - Suspend play and direct participants to the previously identified shelter, such a building normally occupied by the public or a vehicle with a solid metal top (e.g. bus, van, and car).
 - Do not permit people to stand under or near a tree and have all stay away from poles, light towers, antennas, towers and underground watering systems.
 - After thunder and/or lightning have left the area, wait 30 minutes after the last boom is heard or strike is seen before resuming play or competition.
8. ***Player Eligibility: Adopted as of April 1, 1997 (revised August, 2002):***
 - a. **Residents** - Anybody whose primary residence is in or and individual who owns property in Northampton, Florence or Leeds is considered a resident. Players who are trying to meet this requirement **must** have their residence or property listed on the roster so it can be confirmed. Teams that misrepresent addresses to meet the residency requirement may be dropped from the league.
 - b. **Non-Resident** – Anybody who does not live or own property in Northampton, Florence or Leeds. Non-residents must pay and additional \$10.00 each.
 - c. **Proof of residency for all new players must be submitted with your roster.** Copies, with all copied on the least amount of pages possible, are required. All must be submitted together. Proof may consist of a copy of a pay stub, license or a recent bill, for example. Information must be current. Official Personnel Director letters are only accepted as a proof letter from a business. Phone book listings must list the full name. City Census will also be checked to verify addresses.
 - d. **A maximum of \$100.00 per team in non-resident fees.**
 - e. Proof of eligibility must be provided to the Parks and Recreation Department. Use of an ineligible player will result in that team's forfeit of all game played with the player in question. Any further penalties will be at the discretion of Northampton Parks and Recreation and could result in the team's suspension from further play. No money will be refunded.

- f. **Teams must submit requests regarding eligibility, which will be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Department Staff.** The Parks and Recreation Department may decide the player is “too talented” for the level of competition in the division and reserves the right to remove the player from the roster. In this case, any non-resident fees involved will be refunded.
9. Each team must have a coach or manager who may also be listed as a player. This person will be responsible for submitting team rosters and receiving correspondence from the league coordinator.
10. Each team must have at least 12 players listed on the roster.
11. Teams can pick up players not on their roster to avoid a forfeit if the opposing team manager is ok with the change. The umpire must be notified of the agreement between both managers to be an official game prior to the start of the game. Teams are only allowed to pick up players until they have 9 players.
12. Players may not be listed on more than one roster or play in more than one division. Players found listed on more than one roster must play on the team they first played for, and/or signed player conduct form with first. Players who are found playing on more than one team will be ejected from the league and all games played with that player will be forfeited by the team utilizing that player.
 - a. *Copies of official team rosters will be emailed to team managers when games begin and after the completion of the add/drop period.*
13. **Roster Changes:** Roster changes may be made until **Friday, June 3 at 4:00p.m.** After this date, rosters will be frozen for the remainder of the season.
 - a. To add a player to the roster, the manager must present, in writing, the name and address of the new player, as well as proof of residency or a non-resident fee of \$10.00 to the Recreation Department at least 24 hours prior to the team’s next game. Each new player must also sign that they have read and understand the player conduct policy before participating in any game. **Non-residents fees cannot be transferred and are non-refundable after the season starts.**
 - b. All roster changes must be made through the league director at the Parks and Recreation Office. Roster changes will not be accepted at the field.
 - c. If an added player is found to be “too powerful” for the division, the Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to remove him or her.
14. All games shall be played under the rules of the Independent Umpires Association (IUA), with the exceptions as stipulated in these rules and regulations.
 - a. A team must have nine players to start a game. A player who arrives late must enter the game immediately and be placed tenth in the batting order.
 - b. If an injury occurs to a player during the game, the game may continue without players. The lineup will remain unchanged except for the omission of the injured player from the batting order. (If the injured person is a woman the second male batter in succession will be an automatic out.)
 - c. After 4 ½ or 5 innings, a team with a 12 run lead will be declared the winner with no further action to be taken.
 - d. **Metal Spikes are not permitted.** Any player found wearing metal spikes will be immediately ejected from the game.
 - e. Five male and five female players must be in the lineup at all times – up to seven and seven if the AH (additional hitter) is used.
 - f. The AH’s can be used at the discretion of the coach as the 11th and 12th batters placed anywhere in the lineup. The AH’s must be decided before the first pitch. The batting order must remain constant. However, any 10 of the 12 players can take a defensive position throughout the game.

Note: If the AH is used, both a male and a female “AH” must be used. Teams have the option of batting 10 or 12 in the batting order. If you bat 12 you can use a female and male extra hitter, or two female extra hitters, but not two consecutive male batters.

- g. **Courtesy Runner:** The courtesy runner must be the last player of the same gender to make an out (male runs for a male; female runs for a female). If someone gets injured during the game and the team is already using their courtesy runner and there are no substitutes, the team will not be forced to forfeit, but rather put the newly injured person as an extra hitter or the catcher. If a runner gets hurt after the courtesy runner has already been used, another courtesy runner may be used but a ghost out will be imposed (again the runner would be the last out). Teams are always allowed to use a substitute.
 - h. For games played at Maines Field, there is a five (5) home run limit for balls hit over the fence. Any home run hit over the fence after this will result in an out.
 - i. The 12 inch softball, 44 Core will be used for all batters.
 - j. Male and female players must alternate in the batting order.
 - k. When a male batter receives a base on balls or an intentional walk, he will be awarded first and second base, with the next female batter having the option to walk or bat.
 - l. Three strikes constitute an out and four balls a walk. **The count starts at 1-1.**
 - m. There will be a distinct mark at each field approximately 160 feet from home plate. All outfielders must stay behind this imaginary line until the batter (male or female) makes contact with the ball. Penalty: If an outfielder stands in front of the Arc Line, the batter will be awarded a walk. Please note this rule will be in effect as soon as the DPW marks the fields. Home teams are required to put out the orange cones on these lines. They are located in the green storage boxes. The line was created so that outfielders can't play too shallow when women are batting. When women are batting outfielders must stay behind this outfield Arc Line and all infielders must play on the dirt of the infield.
15. **Re-Entry:** Any of the starting players may withdraw and re-enter once, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever he/she is in the lineup. The pitcher is governed by the provisions in the USSSA Official rule book. A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter.
16. The first game on weekdays will begin at 6:00 PM. A team must have nine players to begin play.
17. There will be no infield practice before games.
18. If there is no umpire at the field, the game will be rescheduled unless BOTH team managers agree that the game was official. The Parks and Recreation Department must hear from both managers that they want to count the game.
19. **Game Time Limit:** There is a 1.25 hour time limit on games. No innings will start AFTER the 1.25 hour time limit, however you can finish the inning that you are in. There will be no game time limits in the playoff round.
20. **FORFEITS:**
- a. Teams that forfeit three games during the course of the season will be dropped from the league and no money will be refunded.
 - b. A forfeit caused by an injury to a player (or players) during a game will be recorded only as a loss and will not apply to the three game forfeit rule.

- c. If a team knows in advance that a game has to be forfeited, and the Parks and Recreation Department is notified at least 24 hours in advance (by Friday for a Sunday or **Monday game**), the game will be recorded as a loss, rather than a forfeit.
21. The winning team manager is responsible for calling or emailing the Parks and Recreation Department with the score the following day.
22. The DPW Parks and Recreation Division determines if fields are in playing condition. In the event of inclement weather, an announcement of the cancellations will be made. Decisions to cancel games will not be made before 3:30 PM on weekdays and 8:00 AM on Sundays. For cancellation information, call the Parks and Recreation Department's cancellation hotline at 413-587-1044 or check our website at www.northamptonma.gov/recreation.
23. In the event that games are cancelled because of poor conditions, no team will be allowed on the field. Any team found in violation of this rule will be suspended from further play and no money will be refunded.
24. Once games are underway, the game umpire will make all decisions concerning the condition of the playing surface.
25. Games that are postponed because of inclement weather will be played where space allows on Sundays or at the conclusion of the season.
26. One umpire will be scheduled for regular season games. Two umpires will be assigned to the championship game of the playoffs.
27. The home team will keep the official scorebook. A scorekeeper must be provided by the home team.
28. A supply of new balls will be kept at the fields. One new ball will be used per game that the home team will keep. The home team is responsible for supplying a second ball that is in good condition.
29. All players, coaches and fans are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. Any player, manager or fan who harasses or abuses a game official or another player is subject to the penalties outlined in the Parks and Recreation Department's policy statement regarding verbal and physical abuse.
 - a. Managers are expected to keep team players in control at all times. It is the manager's responsibility to encourage team members to take responsibility for their actions and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. In an effort to promote team sportsmanship and reduce unsportsmanlike behavior, if a player is ejected from a game, the team manager is automatically ejected as well. Both are subject to the fines and penalties outlined below.
 - In with other league policies, a \$10.00 (\$15.00 for non-residents) fine is assessed to any player that is ejected from the game. The fine must be paid in cash at the Parks and Recreation Office before the player is eligible to play again. There is also a one game suspension as outlined in the player conduct regulations.
30. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at any of the playing areas. Games will be forfeited if alcoholic beverages are found in the playing area.
31. All teams are responsible for their members' conduct arriving at, during and leaving the game. Any team members found driving in an unsafe manner at any of the playing fields will be suspended from the league.

32. All protests dealing with a playing rule of the IUA must be made to the home plate umpire before the next pitch to thrown and must be followed by a written protest within 48 hours to the Parks and Recreation Office.
33. Protests dealing with special league rules must be filed in writing within forty-eight hours to the Parks and Recreation Office. Protests of eligibility of player may be filed at the Parks and Recreation Department.
34. Any action involving the league that is not covered by these rules and regulations shall be handled by the Director of Parks and Recreation, Parks and Recreation Supervisor and/or the Parks and Recreation Commission.
35. At all league meetings, each team will be represented by the team manager, or one person acting in his/her place. All others will be asked to leave unless specifically invited to a particular meeting.
36. The spirit of the Coed League is to have equal numbers of male and female participants as aligns with their gender identity.
 - a. Non-binary participants may be placed in any position for the purpose of roster requirements and lineup alteration.
 - b. If a team has 5 men and 4 women they will be able to play when they add a “ghost hitter” to their lineup. The ghost hitter will be put in the lineup as the 10th batter and will take an automatic out. The fifth female player can take the place of the ghost hitter if they arrive to the game after it has started (*the 1st and 9th hitter will no longer have to alternate turns taking the automatic out*).
 - c. If the male batter before the ghost hitter is walked he will only be awarded first base.
 - d. If both teams are using ghost hitters the automatic out rule will still apply to both teams
 - e. If a team has only 4 men, 6 women are allowed to play, with no penalties assessed. A team **must** have 4 men in order to play a game. A team cannot play with 6 men and 4 women.
37. Due to abuses to game officials, any player observed, suspected of or leaving the playing area to consume alcoholic beverages will be warned and/or ejected from the game. Any player who refuses to leave the field or continues to abuse a game official will cause the forfeiture of the game for his or her team.
38. All players must have played in at least four games to be eligible for the playoffs.
39. The higher seeded team at the end of regular season will be the home team throughout playoff games.
40. **Open Wound Rule:** No player will be allowed to continue playing with an open wound until the bleeding has been stopped, cleaned and covered. To avoid problems, all teams should carry a first aid kit as part of their equipment. An umpire will give reasonable time to stop the bleeding and cover the wound before a substitute is required.
41. Teams must supply their own equipment (i.e. bats, catcher’s masks, gloves, etc.).
42. In the case of a tie in the standings between two or more teams at the end of the season, these are the order of the tie breakers that will be used
 - a. **Head to Head Games:** The team with the most wins against the team they are tied with will be the higher seed.

- b. **Coin Flip:** If two teams have the same amount of wins and losses against each other, a coin flip will be used to determine the higher seed
- c. **Three Way Tie:** If three teams are tied in head to head wins, a random order generator will be used to determine the seeding.

S A F E T Y R E G U L A T I O N S

In playing organized sports, the participant must be aware of any and all risks to personal injury. The game of softball carries with it some obstacles that can cause serious injury. Other players, equipment, fences, boundaries, benches, etc. all pose potential areas of injury.

Remember this is a recreational sport. Keep your body under control to avoid collisions. Be aware of all ground rules. Keep all equipment away from playing areas and be considerate of the safety needs of you and your co-participants.

The Parks and Recreation Department strongly recommends the use of face masks for catchers. Team managers should ask all potential catchers if they would like to wear a mask. If the answer is yes, it is the responsibility of the team/manager to purchase one. Failure to wear one could cause serious injury and/or death.

Please be aware that the DPW's Parks and Recreation Division maintains the fields. Report all maintenance problems or any unsafe field conditions to us at 413-587-1040 and we will contact the DPW.

H A V E A F U N S E A S O N !

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Email: recreation@northamptonma.gov

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM