



**2021**  
**Pelican Park**  
**Softball**  
**Coaches**  
**Handbook**

## **1. ORGANIZATION**

### **A. Objectives**

The objectives of the Pelican Park Youth Sports Softball Board are to:

1. Provide a fun, safe and recreational Softball environment.
2. Teach sound softball fundamentals.
3. Promote sportsmanship within the team concept.

### **B. Pelican Park Youth Sports Softball Advisory Board**

The Softball Advisory Board is responsible for advising on youth softball activities for Pelican Park Youth Sports. The Softball Advisory Board consists of five members. The Board is elected by head coaches. Annual elections will be held mid-way through the Spring season. To be eligible for election to the Board, one must have been a head coached or served as an Age Group Director or an Advisory Board member within the past 2 years in the softball program. All candidates must have completed their tenure in good standing. If elected the board member is required to sign a code of conduct and a letter of acceptance of the Pelican Park Youth Sports Manual. If a board member cannot complete their term, Pelican staff may appoint a qualified individual to complete the term. The members will serve two consecutive year terms, with no prohibition on re-election. One half of the board shall be replaced each annual election. All Advisory Board members serve at the pleasure of Pelican Park and can be terminated from their position if the Park Board of Commissioners so desires.

The election process is done via email. The Recreation Supervisor will provide a deadline for all eligible candidates to submit their intentions to run for the board. Candidates must submit their resume along with there interest, goals, reason for running, etc. An email will be sent to all eligible voters providing the candidate's names and resumes, with a deadline requirement for submitting their vote. Eligible voters can only vote one time. Staff will send out a list showing who has cast their vote to all eligible voters. Any discrepancies will be addressed by the Park Director. All votes will be tallied by the Recreation Supervisor and one other staff member. In the event of a tie a runoff ballot will be sent to all eligible voters to break the tie. Election results will be provided to the Advisory Board at the next scheduled meeting and a recap will be emailed to all eligible voters.

Board meetings are scheduled by Pelican Park staff and are open to the public as needed. All past coaches and board members will be notified of meetings via email. Meeting notices are posted at the Pelican Park gym and Pelican 's office located in the Castine Center. Meetings cannot be held outside Pelican unless approved by Pelican staff. Unadvertised or unapproved meetings held outside Pelican are considered illegal and any business transacted at that meeting would be considered void. Board members who attend such meetings will be immediately removed from the Softball Advisory Board. Members of the public wishing to address the Board must notify the President or staff ideally two weeks prior to the meeting with a request to be placed on the agenda. All meetings are open to the public.

The Board will elect a president each year at the first meeting held after elections. The President/Chairman is a liaison with Pelican Park staff & Board and adherence to policies/procedures. The remaining members will serve as mentors/liasons for the various Age Group Directors and be responsible for one or more age groups. Typically, staff handles but the Board members may establish subcommittees to assist staff in handling issues like the following:

- **Special Projects** - responsible for coaches training, clinics, and certification program and coach evaluations; and various special projects.
- **Evaluation** – responsible for organization/coordination of player evaluations.

Board members serve as a representative of the program's coaches. They advise staff of trends, challenges, issues etc. to help develop a great softball program.

### **Attendance Policy**

The Advisory Board will enforce the following attendance policy: Board members that miss more than two meetings within a year without a valid excuse may be removed from the Board.

### **C. League Structure**

The Pelican Park program is designed to emphasize regular season recreational play. The Pelican Park program will offer play as follows:

- ⊖ 5/6-year-old T-Ball
- 7/8-year-old coach pitch
- 9/10-year-old player pitch (slow pitch)
- 11/12-year-old player pitch (slow pitch)
- 13/15-year-old player pitch (slow pitch)

The Board and staff will evaluate periodically if player participation numbers warrant dividing the two-year age groups into individual age leagues.

### **D. Pre-season Player Evaluation**

Pre-season player evaluations will be done for all players in age groups seven and older. T-ball (5 and 6) teams will be formed by the Recreation. Evaluation will consist of four to five softball skills including batting, infield, outfield, and pitching (if applicable). Pitching evaluations are mandatory and used in ages 9 and above. Each skill shall be evaluated ideally by two coaches. All coaches (those who have expressed an interest in head and assistant coaching) are asked to participate in the evaluation process. Coaches are also encouraged to evaluate the same station through the evaluation day(s) to maintain consistency. It is also recommended that Evaluators be fair, accurate and consistent as possible to ensure a safer and more balanced league/division. Evaluation scores will be the basis for determining which team a player will be assigned during the regular season.

### **Draft Procedure:**

**\*\*\* Note: if there are any restrictions in place due to Covid-19 then we will have the full blind team formation and following team formation process will be negated \*\*\***

### **7/8, 9/10, 11/12 & 13/15 yr old Age Groups**

The players would be ranked according to pre-season evaluation scores. Coaches and/or Age Group Directors will be allowed to adjust the player's rankings for fairness prior to the start of the draft. (ex: if coaches agree that a player that evaluated in the 5<sup>th</sup> round really belongs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round then that player would be moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> round).

Any player that did not evaluate may be adjusted for fairness based on the previous year's scores or knowledge of the players from the coaches and/or AGD and/or Softball Advisory Board at the draft table.

The first six (6) rounds of players will be slotted by the evaluation score, unless adjusted for fairness. Example:

<b>Team #</b>	<b>1st Rd.</b>	<b>2nd Rd.</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Rd.</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Rd</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Rd</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Rd</b>
1	#1	#12	#13	#24	#25	#36
2	#2	#11	#14	#23	#26	#35
3	#3	#10	#15	#22	#27	#34
4	#4	#9	#16	#21	#28	#33
5	#5	#8	#17	#20	#29	#32
6	#6	#7	#18	#19	#30	#31

If a head coach's or 1<sup>st</sup> designated assistant coach's daughter falls within the first six (6) rounds, then they will be automatically assigned that team number. For example, in a six-team league: if Coach ABC's daughter is the number one pick of the draft then he would be assigned Team #1 and get the #12<sup>th</sup> pick. If coach EFG's daughter is the #9 pick of the draft, then he would be assigned team number #4 and get the #4 pick.

#### **Adjustment for coaches:**

If two coaches are automatically assigned the same team number, then the following process will apply.

- If a coach has a Higher round daughter, they keep that team
- Lower round coach takes their daughter if no conflict. If conflict they will trade up within same round (if possible) if not they will trade down within the same round to first open team without a coach

**If a head coach and assistant coach's daughters fall in the blind portion, then those 2 players will be seeded together automatically. All other assistant coach's daughters will be picked in the round that she evaluated or was adjusted for fairness too.**

Both the head coach and the assistant coach's daughter cannot be picked for the same team if they are ranked in the 1<sup>st</sup> round.

The coaches that did not automatically get assigned a team will then use cards to pick their team corresponding by number. The coaches who are not assigned a team from the blind rounds will take their daughter in the evaluated or adjusted too round.

For round seven (7) and below there will be an open draft. Coaches will be allowed to pick players to accommodate friendships, neighbors, talent, carpooling etc. The order in which coaches pick their choice of players will be in serpentine order.

### **E. Coach Selection**

All individuals interested in becoming a head coach or an assistant coach shall make their name, and desired age group available to a Pelican Park by completing the Pelican Park Head Coaching Application. The criteria for the selection of Head Coaches are set by the Park and include results of parent evaluation forms from previous seasons or sports. Any ejections from games, reports of bad behavior will be looked at and accounted for.

Qualifications for Head Coach include previous coaching experience, baseball knowledge, people skills, relates well to kids, even-tempered and time to commit. Head coach selection should not occur until completion of the evaluation process.

The head coach can designate one assistant coach prior to the start of the team formation. If both head coach and the designated assistant coach's sons evaluate in the first round the coaches cannot coach together. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to ensure that all volunteers adhere to all policies set forth by the Board.

### **ALL COACHES MUST PASS THE PARK'S BACKGROUND CHECKS.**

### **F. Coach Expectations**

The following is not an all-inclusive list designed to dictate the behavior of coaches. However, it is a guidance document for what the Pelican Park expects of each coach. The intent of these expectations is that all, including but not limited to, coaches and the Board, are moving the entire program toward an overall higher level of performance and competition for all the girls in the program.

*All coaches, Age Group Directors and advisory board members must sign a code of conduct before assuming responsibilities. All coaches serve at the pleasure of the Park and can be removed with or without cause by the Park.*

1. **Responsibility** – Head Coach is responsible for the actions of themselves, their assistant coaches, parents, and players. Failure to address inappropriate behavior by anyone associated with their team may result in their suspension. You are the culture leader for your team, players, and parents. Your attitude toward the game and officials will be reflected in your players and parents. Set a good example for all to follow and expect a positive attitude from your players and parents. Any problems with players and parents should be reported to the AGD or Pelican Park for resolution.
2. **Teach the girls** – Teach them to hit, field, and throw. Teach them how to play different positions. Each player must play an infield position by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> inning. Teach them all the fundamentals of the game. Teach the girls all the skills

necessary to play the game. Do not focus just on the top two or three players, all the girls should noticeably improve throughout the season.

3. **Do not coach to win at all costs** – While Pelican Park softball is a recreational league, we do keep score, and we keep score to determine a winner and a loser. Thus, there is a degree of competitiveness in this league. However, the main objectives remain teaching fundamentals, sportsmanship, how to work together, and to have fun. An element in teaching not just how to win, but also how to lose with dignity and grace. Teaching good sportsmanship is a necessity.
4. **Do not quit just because you theoretically can not win** – If your team is down by 10 runs after the fourth inning there is no way that your team can win. Regardless, go on and play the fifth inning (presuming the time limit has not expired), and play it to win. The girls should be learning to play, and to play hard even in the face of insurmountable odds. They should not be learning how to give up and quit!
5. **Do not argue with officials or fans** – A coach or assistant coach may face discipline for arguing with umpires, fans, or score keepers. Likewise, no one ever agrees with all the umpire's calls. Those that you do not agree with they are a part of the game, accept them and move on. File an official protest per the procedure outlined in the manual if you need further satisfaction. Complete an official's evaluation form located in each field's game bucket. The Parks official liaison will discuss the document with the official's association representative and request that the official be retrained or removed if necessary. The coach's code of conduct states that the coaches will be supportive of the officials and will assist wherever possible to ensure a positive experience for all.
6. **Do not waste time between innings** – The objective should be for the game to be played to the designated inning limit. To do that the coach must not waste time between innings. Have the catcher ready to take the field. Quickly get the first batter up to the plate and the second batter on-deck. Do not waste time with cheers between half innings. Move the game along to provide more playing time for the girls.
7. **Pre-game in field practice** – Not allowed. Limit pre-game warm up to the half of the outfield closest to your bench.
8. **Defensive coaching** – Only the 7/8's can have coaches in the field, positioned past the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> baseperson, and in foul territory. For all other age groups any defensive coaching must be done from inside the dugout. The dugout coach may not exceed 3-5' away from the opening of the dugout.
9. **Pool player rule** – Teams may begin a game with six players; fewer than six players are considered a forfeit. A team must have 6 players from his/her own team before adding pool players. A team with 6 or 7 players may add 3 or 4 pool players to round out their squad to 9 (11/12 & 13/15 leagues) or 10 (7/8 & 9/10 leagues) players, using the following guidelines:
  - A pool player must be a registered player from the same age group and same league. Under no circumstances is it permissible for a player from another age group to be a pool player.
  - A coach may take only as many pool players as necessary to make 9 or 10 players depending on the number of fielders allowed in that age group. For example, if a 9/10 team had only six players, the coach may take four pool players.

- Pool players must be on the list of approved pool players (4<sup>th</sup> round draft picks or below). Games played with approved pool players do count in the standing. Coach's choice whether to use pool players. **Players that do not evaluate may not be pool players.**
  - The pool player must wear her own team jersey, bat last in the line-up, and play in the outfield only.
  - A regular team member who comes late to a game will replace any pool player(s).
10. **Coach is responsible for equipment** – Equipment bags are signed out to each coach at the beginning of the season. The coach is responsible for making sure that the equipment stays in good order and that they always have the necessary safety equipment, facemasks, chinstraps, etc. If equipment becomes damaged or out of good working order, it is the coach's responsibility to contact Pelican Park for replacements. Equipment checks should be done prior to the start of a game. Game starts should never have to be delayed to chase down equipment.
11. **Forfeits** – Should there be a game forfeit, it is expected that a practice game be played. If both teams forfeit a game, a loss will be given to both teams. The girls and parents who showed up for a game are entitled to play a game, even if this means splitting one team to get an even number on both sides and playing a short-sided game. This is still a learning opportunity for the girls and should not be lost. Note that the scheduled umpire will most likely not call the game. At this point, solicit a parent or one of the coaches to be the umpire.
12. **Scorekeepers** –The home team is responsible for providing a parent volunteer to keep score, who serves as the official scorekeeper. The official scorekeeper works directly with the official. Scorebooks are kept at the field in the game bucket. It is encouraged to have the scorekeeper from the visiting team sit with the official scorekeeper so they can ensure the score is correct and playing time is correct.
13. **Ball Sizes:**
- 5 & 6 yr old leagues – 11" safety ball
  - 7/8 yr old league – 11" safety ball
  - 9/10 yr old league – 11" .47 core ball
  - 11/12 yr old league –11" .47 core ball

## **G. Parent/Player Code of Ethics**

All parents are required to sign a code of conduct prior to the beginning of season play to ensure that the expectations of the organization are clearly understood. Parents sign on the back of the registration form if they register in office and click agreement if they register on-line.

## **H. Season Play**

### **1. Games/Practice Time**

Pre-season practices usually begin around April 1<sup>st</sup>. Preseason practice for each team ages 7 and above is usually schedule one or two times per week. Once the games begin teams ages 7 and above usually practice once and play two games each week. Each team will be scheduled to play the maximum number of games allowable during the period of the regular season (usually 12 games). Pelican Park is responsible for all schedules. Age groups 7 and up will play a single elimination tournament at the end of the regular season. T-Ball 5- & 6-year-old play an eight-

game season with no season ending tournament. They practice before a game and if space is available, once during the week.

## **2. Rainout Games**

Any game that is cancelled prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning will be replayed as a new game. Every attempt is made to make up rained out games. These games may be played on days that are not normally used if we incur many rainouts. Pelican Park will distribute make-up schedules to the coach a minimum of 48 hours prior to the game and post on the website.

## **I. Playing Time**

Does not apply in the 5/6-year-old league, all players play and bat each inning in that league.

- No player shall sit out defensively for two consecutive innings.
- No player shall sit out 2 defensive innings in a game unless all other players have sat out an inning.
- All players will play at least half of the game. Each player must play an infield position by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.
- The catcher position is considered an infield position.
- In all age groups, free substitution and **batting of the entire lineup will be followed**. Health issues are exempt from this rule and must be denoted to the official and the opposing coach.
- All players present at the start of the game must be included in the batting lineup and remain in the lineup for the entire game. Any player arriving after the start of the game must be placed at the bottom of the batting order. A regular team member who comes late to a game will replace any pool player(s).
- If a player is injured / sick and leaves the game, the player's batting slot is deleted. If a player leaves the game for any other reason, the team must take an out for each time the player's at-bat comes up. If a player does not take her turn at bat, except for injury reason, the player is out of the game. Players cannot play defense only.

## **J. Umpires**

The following umpiring plan will be implemented throughout Pelican Park:

\* T-Ball and 6-year-old – no umpire

\* All other ages – 1 umpire.

## **K. Scorekeepers**

Coaches for the home team will be responsible to appoint a team parent to keep score in the Official Score Book. The home team coach will be responsible to return the completed score book to the game bucket located at each field. If a parent wishes to be trained as a score keeper, they can contact Pelican Park and a training session will be scheduled. The visiting team may also keep score, but they must use their own book for scorekeeping. Score is not kept for T-Ball and 6-year-old leagues.

## **L. Tie breakers for post season tournament play are determined by:**

1. Head-to-head record
2. Flip a coin by staff, ideally with affected coaches & AGD present if possible.  
The flip of the coin will be videoed for validation.



## **M. Safety**

The following equipment will be used during games and practices:

- Facemasks will be required on helmets for ages 6 and above while batting, running and on-deck. On deck batting is not allowed for players ages 8 and under.
- Safety balls are used for 5-8, 9-10 will use an 11" ball. 11 and above will use a 11" ball.
- Steel cleats are prohibited.
- Throat protectors will be required for catchers' age nine and up.

## **N. Training/Certification**

Head Coaches are encouraged to attend coach's certification clinics. All coaches and Age Group Directors are required to sign a Code of Conduct.

## **O. Game Protest**

The following process will be used to address protests in game situations:

- (1) Notify umpire and state intent of protest regarding point in question. Judgment calls cannot be protested. All details must be noted in the score book including the time, both coaches' signatures, and the officials must sign the score book, except if they refuse. The game will continue after the protest has been noted.
- (2) Provide the Pelican Park staff a written description of the incident within 24 hours from start of the game.
- (3) All protests are to be brought to the Staff/Recreation Supervisor for ruling. A ruling will be made within 72 hours if possible.

## **R. Field or Complex Area Coach/Director/Parent Conduct**

- No alcohol, drug, or tobacco usage.
- No use of foul or abusive language.
- No violent play or physical abuse.
- Pelican Park rules are posted at each complex.
- **No unsportsmanlike conduct.**

## **S. Disciplinary action**

*This is a recreational play and arguing with the umpires is not tolerated. Violators of this policy will be dealt with in a serious manner and depending on the situation it may result in their immediate removal as a coach and could eliminate them from future coaching considerations. Coaches serve at the pleasure of the Park and can be removed with or without cause by the Park.*

Disciplinary action regarding any infraction will be handled in the following manner: Any misconduct by a coach, spectator or player is to be reported to Pelican staff. Recreation Division Staff will determine whether or not infraction can be resolved or if it must escalate to Pelican Park's disciplinary committee.

The discipline committee consists of 3 members of the Recreation Department. This committee will address any discipline issues that the staff deems necessary. Before any action can be taken a written complaint must be submitted to Pelican Park. The Softball Advisory Board President may attend but is not eligible to vote. Any appeal of

the Discipline Committee goes to the Administration Board's Youth Sports Committee. Any appeal of the Youth Sports Committee goes to the full Administration Board.

Any coach ejected from a game by the umpire must leave the field/complex immediately. They will also serve a one game suspension or will be banned from coaching depending upon the circumstances may be referred to the disciplinary committee.

All coaches, Age Group Directors and advisory board members must sign a code of conduct before assuming responsibilities.

#### **U. League affiliation**

Affiliation with a national association is not mandatory. Park Staff and the Advisory Board will work together to research and determine the proper affiliation and if affiliation is needed. Presently the softball program is affiliated with PONY softball and is subject to change. A registration fee is paid to register every team in our program for ages 7 and above. Registration allows for post season all-star teams to be formed and to participate in PONY tournaments.

#### **CLINIC NIGHT**

Objective: To give a forum to all girls in each age group to improve their skills.

1. A Clinic Night Program for a particular Age Group will only be formed if a coach from that age group volunteers to run the Program.
2. All coaches are encouraged to participate.
3. The Clinic Night Coach will have the responsibility to conduct the clinic program and to solicit additional coaching help.
4. Clinic Night will be open to all registered players in an age group and will be held on a weekend night following regular season games. Scheduled times and fields will be determined after the Drafts.
5. Program will be offered if field space available.
6. Clinic Nights will be 1 ½ - 2 hours.

## **Age Group Director Responsibilities (Advisory Board if no director is selected)**

Please refer to section one of the Policies and Procedures Manual, which outlines Pelican Park's responsibilities for Age Group Directors. The following are specific responsibilities requested by the Softball Advisory Board.

### **1. Discussion prior to the draft.**

- Coach Expectations
- Discuss the SAB handbook rules including Pelican Park exceptions
- Age group specific rules – discuss at length – rules can not be changed this season.

*Note: Rulebooks and equipment are to be handed out at the Draft.*

**2. Communicate with all coaches throughout the season** – E-mail should be used if possible, so that all coaches receive the same information. If coaches do not have e-mail this will not be effective. This is particularly necessary when rules interpretation is involved. The AGD is the primary conduit of information from Pelican Park and the SAB to the coaches. The AGD is first line of contact for and coach/league issues or problems. The AGD will then either resolve the issue or direct it to Pelican Park or the SAB as appropriate for resolution. In order for the season to proceed in a smooth and orderly fashion, it is imperative that the AGD maintain open communications with coaches, Pelican Park, and the SAB.

**3. Post season traveling All Stars** – Staff will be responsibility for soliciting coaches for the post season traveling all-star team, schedule tryouts and practices. Post season traveling all-stars practices or games can not conflict with regular season or end of season tournament. Staff will also ensure that information regarding tryouts is distributed to all teams. All players are eligible to try out for All-Stars in their respective age group. Once the team is formed, responsibility for management of the team, including participation in tournaments will shift to the Head Coach for the post season traveling all star team. These teams do not receive funding from the Park but are given practice slots and a certificate of insurance. Tournament participation must not conflict with the end of the Pelican Park softball season.

## **All-Star Selection Procedure**

The all-star teams are only formed during the Spring season. Every player in the league will be given an all-star letter of intent form to fill out and return by the third week of play. Only players that have returned the letter of intents to the Park will be placed on the ballot for the coaches to vote for the all-star team. The team cannot be selected before the halfway point of the regular season. All-star practices and tournaments may NOT interfere with regular season play.

All star players will be selected by the votes of the league head coaches and the age group director and must be in good standing with the advisory board and Pelican Park for that age group. A minimum of 12 players with a maximum of 15 players will be selected for each team. Prior the vote of the team the all-star coach will decide on how many players they will be taking on the team.

Ages 7-15 will select all star teams to participate in invitational, district, regional and national tournaments. All costs are absorbed by the participants and/or sponsors.

The head coach of the all-star team will be selected by a vote of the league head coaches and the age group director in that age group. To be considered for coaching the All-Star team, the candidate must be an active coach, age group director for the league, or a coach in another active league. The candidates must be in good standing with Pelican Park.

All coaches cast one vote. If no coach receives a majority, the coach with the least number of votes will be excluded from the second round. If two coaches are tied for the least number of votes, there will be one re-vote. If there is still a tie, they both will be excluded. This will be repeated until a coach is selected.

## **GIRLS SOFTBALL**

### **COACHES INFORMATION FROM PELICAN PARK**

Thank you for volunteering as a Pelican Park Youth Sports softball coach. We could not have a successful softball program without your volunteer hours. We have prepared some general information regarding Pelican Park and the softball season.

**TROPHIES** – the girls will receive the following trophies:

Participation trophies for ages 5- & 6-year-old

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place season trophies for ages 7/8, 9, 10, and 11/12

Participation trophies for all teams is age groups 7 - 12

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place tournament trophies for 7/8, 9, 10, and 11/12

**AWARD T-SHIRTS** – The 13/15 age group will receive 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place season and tournament shirts.

**PRACTICE SCHEDULES (PRESEASON)** – All practices are scheduled on the day of the team formation. Any requests for additional practices cannot be honored. Once practices are assigned any conflicts with the day or time of your practice scheduled should be addressed to the Recreation Supervisor. Practices will begin shortly after the team formation with 2 preseason practices per week then to a once weekly season practice schedule. For safety reasons, only one team is assigned to a field at a time. All practices scheduled through the Park and at the Park, the team as well as coaches, are covered under secondary medical insurance. We discourage teams from practicing outside of the Park because it makes the coaches personally liable for themselves as well as the team. Please have your team off the field at the end of your practice time to allow the next scheduled team on the field for their practice.

**PRACTICE SCHEDULES (SEASON)** – Practices for the season will be determined at the team formation. All practices scheduled through the Park and at the Park, the team as well as coaches, are covered under secondary medical insurance. We discourage teams from practicing outside of the Park because it makes the coaches personally liable for themselves as well as the team. The procedure for practices will be the same as above; with the exception that 1 practice per week is issued during the season.

**GAME SCHEDULES** – When game schedules are complete the park will furnish copies for all parents on your team. Schedules will be on Pelican Park letterhead with the sports hotline listed on the bottom of the schedule. The schedules will also be posted on the Pelican Park web site: [www.pelicanpark.com](http://www.pelicanpark.com). Encourage all parents to call **the Pelican Park Sports Hotline for field conditions – 626-1444 before coming to the Park.**

**GAMES** – Ages 7 and above will play a 12-game season with a single elimination tournament. Age 5 and 6 will play an 8-game season.

**COACHES UNIFORMS** – Each team receives 3 coach shirts. If your shirt does not fit, please call Pelican Park. Coaches must wear their coach's shirts when they are on

the field. **\*\*\* ID cards designating you as an approved coach MUST be worn at all games and practices\*\*\***

**EQUIPMENT** – Each coach will be issued and sign out an equipment bag at the draft. If you must switch equipment due to size or damage, please contact staff. Equipment bags must be turned into the Park office/staff immediately after your last game of the season.

**UNIFORMS** – Team uniforms consisting of shirts, socks and visors will be issued the night of the team formation. Coaches may distribute the uniforms at any time during preseason practices, but the earlier the better. Coaches should assess their team and issue uniforms according to size and not by favorite number. Softball pants or shorts are not provided. If a uniform is too small (not if they do not like the way it looks), have the parent call staff with the uniform information and we will try to assist.

**PICTURES** – Pelican Park contracts an annual bid for a photographer to take team and individual photographs. It is not the responsibility of a coach to contract for these photographs. The photographer will arrange the time for your team to have their pictures taken. If you are unable to make the scheduled shoot, please make arrangements with the photographer to reschedule the photo shoot.

**GAME BUCKETS** – Each bucket contains game balls, score books, pencils, band aids, umpire timesheets, age specific rules, game report for newspaper, incident report, umpire evaluation form, field evaluation form, and a pool player list.

**UMPIRES** – If an umpire does not show up for a game call facility staff at **985-966-6645**. Tell them your age group and field so that they can call the umpire scheduler. Facility staff will come to the field to tell you the umpire's status. If an umpire is a no-show, please write this information on the umpire time sheet in the game bucket and begin the game with a parent or coach volunteer.

**FACILITY STAFF** – There are three Park facility staff members scheduled per shift. The Park facility staff monitors both gyms, as well as activities on the fields. One of the Park facility staff always carries a cell phone. Please call them at 985-966-6645 if there is a problem on the field. They can also be identified by their blue polo shirt that is monogrammed with the park logo and "Pelican Park Staff".

**RAINOUTS** – Make-up games are scheduled through Pelican Park. Rainouts are made up *if it is possible*.

**PRACTICE FIELD** – Fields are **not** chalked for practices and bases may or **may not** be at the proper distance. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE COACHES TO MOVE BASES**. If you come out for an unscheduled practice, you **MAY NOT** practice on a field that has been prepped for a game. Park crew or facility staff will ask you to move.

**GAME FIELD** – Park crew will prep the fields and set the bases for the first game. If a change in base distance is needed, park crew is responsible for making the base change. Fields are not re-chalked for each game throughout the day. On a busy

Saturday fields may need re-raking; a rake is kept at each field so that coaches can rake the field before a game if so desired.

**WET FIELD CONDITIONS** – During the week the Park Superintendent and a Recreation Supervisor will determine whether the fields are playable. On the weekend it is the Manager-on-Call's responsibility to determine field playability. Every effort is made to have fields playable even when wet.

**FIELD MAINTENANCE FORM** – A field evaluation form is in the game bucket. Please use this form to inform the park staff of maintenance concerns. If you notice an unsafe condition, please fill out the form and place it back in the game bucket or in the night drop box located at the Castine Center.

**SPORTS HOTLINE** – The hotline is updated at 3 PM Monday through Friday, 7 AM on Saturday and 10 AM on Sunday. It is also updated throughout the day, *as needed depending upon weather conditions*. The hotline phone number is 985-626-1444. Please remind parents to call the hotline for field conditions. Information regarding field conditions is not provided through the Park's office.

**TRASH PICK-UP** – Please remind the players to pick up their trash in the dugout after their game. The less trash to pick up the more time the park crew can spend on fields.

Please feel free to contact Pelican Park with any questions and problems. We are looking forward to great softball season.

**PELICAN PARK SPORTS HOTLINE**  
**626-1444**

**Pelican Park Youth Sports  
Official Softball Rules  
Common to All Age Groups**

Any rules not addressed in the handbook will follow the current PONY softball rule book. The rule modifications to PONY rules are below.

- Unsportsmanlike conduct (abusive language or insulting sign language) by coaches, players, parents, or fans toward the umpires, other coaches, players, parents, or fans is not permitted. A team may receive one warning and then the coach, player, parent, or fan will be ejected from the game area as defined by the umpire. An individual ejected from the game shall sit out the next game also. If the individual returns to the game area, the associated team (if applicable) will forfeit the game. The behavior of anyone ejected from the game is subject to review by the Pelican Park Discipline Committee.
- “Batter Chatter” directed at the opposing team is not allowed: e.g., “Hey batter.... swing.” Cheering and positive comments to your own teammates is allowed.
- “Noisemakers” It is considered unsportsmanlike conduct to use artificial noisemakers (i.e., bells, whistles, shakers, beepers, horns, air horns, etc.) to distract or disparage a player, coach, or umpire/official/referee. A team may receive one warning and then the coach, player, parent, or fan will be ejected from the game area as determined by the umpire. The coach is responsible for their spectators. If it cannot be determined who in the stands is creating the problem the coach will be penalized. An individual ejected from a game shall sit out the next game also. If the individual returns to the game area, the associated team (if applicable) will forfeit the game. The behavior of anyone ejected from the game is subject to review by the Pelican Park Discipline Committee.
  - Unsportsmanlike behavior is judged and determined by the individual/referee/umpire. (If a coach feels the other team is displaying unsportsmanlike behavior they should talk with the official. The official will monitor. If necessary, give fans and coach a warning. If it continues the official will take appropriate action.)
- At the start of the game, the umpire will have the scorekeeper record the official start time.
- A minimum of 6 players to start the game.
- The umpire’s judgment and calls are final and can’t be argued.
- If a base coach comes in contact with a base runner during live action, the runner is out
- Chin straps on the helmets are optional
- There is a 5 run maximum run rule per inning



- HBP – If the coach pitcher hits the batter, the batter continues to bat
- If a game is interrupted by bad weather or any other reason, the game becomes official after 3 innings. If interrupted prior to 3 innings, game will be replayed from beginning.
- No substitutions - All players present must be in the batting lineup. If a player is injured or sick and leaves the game, the player's batting slot is deleted. If the player leaves the game for any other reason, the team must take an out for each time that batting turn comes up. If a player does not take her turn at bat, the player is out of the game. Players can't play defense only.
- Double First Base – On a ball batted to the infield, the batter running to 1<sup>st</sup> base must use the outside orange base. The defensive player will use the white base to make the play, while the runner will use orange base. The defensive player may not block the orange base in anyway. In this case, if the batter running to 1<sup>st</sup> base on an infield hit touches the inside white base, the batter is out. Once the runner reaches 1<sup>st</sup> base safely, the runner can use the inside white base. On a ball batted to the outfield, when running past 1<sup>st</sup> base, the runner can use the inside white base.
- Players must evaluate at the pitching station during evaluations to pitch during the season for ages 9 and above.
- Dugout coach (non base coach) must be within 5 feet of opening to the dugout.
- No player will sit out defensively for more than 1 inning per game until everyone on the roster has sat out at least one inning.
- Playtime for all players – All players present at the game must be included in the batting lineup and remain in the lineup for the entire game. Any player arriving after the start of the game must be placed at the bottom of the batting order. A regular team member who comes late to a game will replace any pool player(s).
- Sliding is not mandatory. When a defensive player has the ball and the runner remains on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player, the runner is to be declared out.
- Pool Player Rules - Teams may begin a game with six players; fewer than six players are considered a forfeit. A team must have 6 players from his/her own team before adding pool players. A team with 6 or 7 players may add 3 or 4 pool players to round out their squad to 9 (11/12 & 13/15 leagues) or 10 (7/8 & 9/10 leagues) players, using the following guidelines:
  - A pool player must be a registered player from the same age group and same league. Under no circumstances is it permissible for a player from another age group to be a pool player.
  - A coach may take only as many pool players as necessary to make 9 or 10 players depending on the number of fielders allowed in that age group. For example, if a 9/10 team had only

- six players, the coach may take four pool players.
  - Pool players must be on the list of approved pool players (4<sup>th</sup> round draft picks or below). Games played with approved pool players do count in the standing. Coach's choice whether or not to use pool players. **Players that do not evaluate may not be pool players.**
  - The pool player must wear her own team jersey, bat last in the line-up, and play in the outfield only.
  - A regular team member who comes late to a game will replace any pool player(s).
- All outfielders should be standing on the grass playing their position when the pitch is thrown.

### **5/6-YEAR-OLD T-BALL OFFICIAL RULES**

- Games will consist of 5 innings or a time limit of one hour, whichever comes first. All innings will be completed once started. The games are scheduled for 1 and ½ hours apart to allow the 1<sup>st</sup> ½ hour to be used for practice.
- All players play each inning, both offensively and defensively. All infield positions will be played correctly except for no catcher. The outfield will consist of all other players.
- All players will bat off the tee each inning.
- No outs will be registered or acknowledged
- Base runners may advance 1 base per batter.
- Base paths are approximately 35 feet.
- No catcher will be used. An adult will stand behind the batter in the catcher position.
- Positions will be rotated between the players.
- RIF #1 safety balls will be always used.
- In preparation for next season: during the last 3 games of the season with both coaches in agreement, allow the batter 3 pitches. If the batter does not hit the ball after 3 pitches, the batter hits off the tee.

### **Softball rules for the 7-8 age group**

- An arch pitch is required during coach pitch. Arc height can't exceed 6 feet. Pitches with arc above 6 feet will be ruled a dead ball.
- During Coach Pitch, after the ball is hit fair, the pitcher must clear the opposite side of the field that the ball is hit or move forward or backward to not interfere. When the coach pitcher interferes with an offensive player then the play stands. When the pitcher interferes unintentionally with a defensive player, the umpire has the option to call a base runner out. If interference is deemed intentional by the umpire, then the runner will be called out.
- A batter is allowed 5 pitches, whether balls or strikes. A foul ball on the fifth pitch or any additional pitches will entitle the batter to one more pitch. There are no called strikes or balls or walks.

- The player pitcher must have one foot in the dirt circle when playing the defensive position. A player may only play the pitcher position for 3 innings per game.
- **Defensive players will no longer be able to request “time” at any position in the infield.** The ball must be in the possession of a defensive player in the pitching circle before the umpire will grant time. The base runners will be allowed to advance to the next base if in the umpire’s judgment she is past the halfway point between the bases (as should be marked by a line near the base path) at the instant that timeout is called by the umpire.
- Defensive coach must stand in foul territory and behind the offensive coaching box area.
- Overthrow of 1<sup>st</sup> base – Limit overthrow of 1<sup>st</sup> base to only one additional base for all runners. It is not a dead ball. The runners advance at their own risk. If a throw is attempted by the fielder to any base, the one base limit is no longer in effect.
- Coach/Parent behind home plate – A coach or parent can stand near the backstop to retrieve wild pitches to help speed up the game. The coach/parent is allowed near the backstop when their team is on defense and must refrain from coaching while in this position.
- **All players must play an infield position by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.** The catcher position is considered an infield position.

### Softball rules for the 9-15 age groups

#### **Game Regulations**

- Coach/Parent behind home plate – A coach or parent can stand near the backstop to retrieve wild pitches to help speed up the game. The coach/parent is allowed near the backstop when their team is on defense and must refrain from coaching while in this position.
- Walks for ages 9 and up – one base awarded on a walk
- **For 9/10 age group only: All players must play an infield position by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.** The catcher position is considered an infield position.
- Play stoppage –
  - **Age 9 and up** - The ball remains alive until the umpire calls “TIME” which is only done when the ball is returned to the pitching circle. At that moment, all runners must stay on the base.

#### **Batter / Runner Regulations**

- Bases will be set at 60'
- Batter / Runner must wear helmet with a face mask
- Players cannot bunt the ball
- Players cannot steal bases. The ball must pass the plate before the runner can leave the base.

- If a batter in the batter's box gets hit by a pitched ball, it is a ball. No base will be awarded.
- The batter can foul the ball unlimited times without penalty of an out.
- The batter may be called out should they be found using a bat on the Banned bat list (list is in the back of the handbook)

### **Pitching Regulations**

- Players must evaluate at the pitching station during evaluations to pitch during the season.
- Pitching distances as follows
  - 9/10 – 38'
  - 11/12 – 40'
  - 13/15 – 43'
- ***For 9/10 league only & will apply to the first 6 games only...***When the ball count on the player will be 4 balls. Once a batter gets to 4 balls, the coach will come into the game. The coach pitcher will pick up the count and strikes will be called on the coach. The batter will be out after 3 strikes or 3 coach pitched balls. The 3<sup>rd</sup> pitched ball must be hit into play or she will be out.
- 4 balls constitute as walk for games 7- end for 9/10 and all games for 11/12 & 13/15.
- The pitching limit is 3 innings per game. **Pitching any part of an inning is considered an inning.**
- The Pitcher shall take position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet in contact with, but not off the side of, the pitcher's plate.
- While the pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate and throughout the delivery, both the pivot and non-pivot foot must be within the length of the pitcher's plate when on the ground and on the pitcher's plate
  - Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must come to a full and complete stop, with the ball in front of the body. The front of the body must face the batter.
  - This position must be maintained at least one second and not more than 10 seconds starting the delivery
  - The pitcher shall not be considered in pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch
- The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of her windup after the required pause.
- Prior to the pause any windup can be used.
- The pitcher must deliver the ball with a perceptible arc and reach a height of at least four (4) feet from the ground while not exceeding a maximum height of ten (10) feet from the ground.
- The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves hand. If a step is taken, it can be forward or backward, provided the pivot foot is in contact with the pitching plate when the ball is released, and the step is within 24 inches of the pitcher's plate and simultaneous with the release of the ball
- The pitcher may use any windup desired, providing:
  - She does not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter
  - Her windup is a continuous motion

- She does not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the pitching motion
- She delivers the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip
- She does not continue to wind up after she releases the ball
- She does not pitch the ball behind her back or between her legs.
- The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, or bounce the ball while in the pitching position in order to prevent the batter from striking it
- The starting pitcher is allowed two warmup pitches to start the game. No warmup pitches in consecutive innings are allowed. A new pitcher is allowed two warmup pitches.
- The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken her position or is off balance because of the previous pitch.

### **Catcher Regulations**

- Catcher must wear a Catchers helmet with throat guard and chest protector.
- Shin guards are not required in slow pitch.
- The catcher must be positioned in the Catchers box until the pitched ball is batted or reaches the catchers' box
- The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch.
- The ball count on the player will be 4 balls. Once a batter gets to 4 balls, then she will get a walk.