



**Spring 2024  
Pelican Park  
Softball  
Coaches  
Handbook**

## **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.

#### **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. League affiliation**

Affiliation with a national association is not mandatory. Park Staff 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.

##### **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 (fast pitch)
- 11/12-year-old player pitch (fast pitch)
- 13/15-year-old player pitch (fast pitch)

While Pelican Park is not a member of PONY League, we will be using their rule book if the league specific rules listed below do not address a rule.

##### **D. 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, softball 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.

**ALL COACHES MUST PASS THE PARK'S BACKGROUND CHECKS. ID cards designating you as an approved coach MUST be presented on request.**

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 daughters 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.

**Code of Conduct:** *All coaches 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. Additionally, 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.*

**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.**

**E. 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.

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. 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 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. **Coach is responsible for equipment** – Equipment bags (Containing Catcher's Protective Equipment) are signed out and a supply of softballs given 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 doesn't fit or becomes damaged/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. Equipment bags must be turned into the Park office/staff immediately after your last game of the season.

**F. EQUIPMENT RULES-** will be used during games and practices:

- **Facemasks will be required on batting helmets for ages 5 through 12 while batting, running and on-deck. On deck batting is not allowed for players ages 8 and under. Ages 13-15 may wear a face mask but not required.**
- **Fielders masks must be worn by all pitchers and defensive infield players in all age groups.**
- **Metal cleats are prohibited.**

**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 – 12" .47 core ball

13-15 yr old league – 12" .47 core ball

**G. GAME BUCKETS** – Each bucket (Will be at scorer’s table on game days) contains game balls, score books, pencils, band aids, umpire timesheets, age specific rules, incident report, umpire evaluation form, field evaluation form, and a pool player list. Please use the field evaluation 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.

## **H. UNIFORMS**

1. **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.
2. **Team Uniforms** – Team uniforms consisting of shirts, socks and visors will be issued prior to the start of the season. Coaches may distribute the uniforms at any time during preseason practices once received, but the earlier the better. Coaches should assess their team and issue uniforms according to size and not by favorite number. Softball pants/shorts, belt and fielder’s mask are not provided. If a uniform is too small (not if they do not like the way it looks), the coach will liaise with Pelican staff to determine if there is an avenue to resolve. If there is not an available solution, the player may wear a plain jersey or t-shirt-preferably the same or similar to the team uniform shirt color.

## **I. PRACTICE**

1. **Practice Schedules-** All practices are scheduled on the day of the team formation. Pre-season practices usually begin the week after team formation.
2. There will be two practices per week pre-season; and then 1 practice per week during the season once the games start. An alternative date may be scheduled upon availability if a regularly scheduled practice was cancelled due to park or field closure (weather, etc.). Post season practices to prepare for tournament and/or championship games must be requested and will depend upon field availability. Unscheduled practices may take place on an available Silver field, but note these fields are first-come/first-serve.

Any requests for additional scheduled 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. For all practices 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. Encourage all parents to call **the Pelican Park Sports Hotline for field conditions – 626-1444 before coming to the Park.**

**2. Practice Time** – Each team is given a 1 hr practice time slot. Please have your team off the field at the end of your on-field 1hr practice time to allow the next scheduled team on the field for their practice. After the 1 hr scheduled on-field practice time, your team may elect to utilize the batting cage (near 3<sup>rd</sup> base side) for ½ hr. For safety reasons, only one team is assigned to a practice field at a time. However, organized scrimmages between teams utilizing their scheduled practice times are allowed.

**3. 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.

**J. 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.** Each team will be scheduled to play the maximum number of games allowable during the period of the regular season (Ages 7 and above 12 games). Pelican Park is responsible for all schedules.

### **K. POST SEASON**

1. **Tournaments** - 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. **Tie breakers** for post season tournament play are determined by:

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

3. **Awards – the girls will receive the following awards:**

- Participation awards for ages 5- & 6-year-old
- Participation awards for all teams is age groups 7 - 12
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place season awards for ages 7/8, 9/10, 11/12, and 13-15
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place tournament awards for 7/8, 9/10, 11/12, and 13-15

**L. 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. 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”.

### **M. PRE-GAME PRACTICE**

1. **On-field Practice** – Not allowed within the infield in order to preserve the condition and baseline marking of the field. Limit pre-game warm up to the half of the outfield closest to your bench. The opening team on defense may take the field 5 minutes before gametime for pitching and fielding warm-up.

2. **Pre-Game Batting Cage Usage**- Since sometimes there will be 6 teams playing on three fields and there are only 3 batting cages, the home team may utilize the batting cage on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of the field as part of their warm-up. This will even out over the season given each team has the same amount of home games. The visiting team may only use the batting cage near them (1<sup>st</sup>

base side) if there are no games or the home team on the adjacent field is not utilizing it for their warm-up.

**N. 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 the dugout or dugout area. The dugout coach may not exceed 3-5' away from the opening of the dugout.

**P. WET FIELD CONDITIONS- PRACTICE OR GAME CANCELLATION** – 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. 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

**Q.. 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.

**R. 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.

### **S. Playing Time**

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

- The following rules are the restrictions for playing times ages 7-15
  - Players may not sit 2 consecutive innings
  - Players may not sit for a total of 2 innings until everyone has sit out for 1 full inning.
  - Players must play at minimum of half the game.
  - Any exceptions must be approved by Pelican Park staff.
- **7-8 y/o and 9-10 y/o Leagues: 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 of defensive positions for on-field players is allowed 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. In the event of an injured player on defense, a substitution of a player on the bench is allowed.

**T. 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 an unregistered player, or 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 (5<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).

## U. Umpires

The following umpiring plan will be implemented throughout Pelican Park:

\* T-Ball and 6-year-old – no umpire

\* All other ages – 1 umpire.

\* 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.

## V. Scorekeepers

**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 and a training session will be scheduled.** It is encouraged to have the scoreboard operator from the visiting team sit with the designee recording within the scorebook so they can



ensure the score is correct and playing time is correct. **Coaches for the “AWAY” team will be responsible to appoint a team parent to operate the scoreboard.** Score is not kept for T-Ball.

#### **W. 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.

**X. 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.

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

**Z. 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.

### **End of Season Pelican Park All-Star Game Selection Procedure**

Towards the end of the season, parents will be prompted to have their players submit to their coach 3-4 players from their team (Quantities may be adjusted based on the number of teams) that they feel would best represent their team in the All-Star Game.

Coaches will tally and communicate the top vote-getters for each team to Pelican Park staff/All-Star Game coordinator.

The head coaches with the #1 and #2 record in the REGULAR SEASON will be named All Star game head coaches (#1 will be home team). If either coach is not available, the coach with the #3 record will be asked and so forth. The head coach may appoint any head coach or assistant coach within the age group league to fill out their maximum 3 member All Star Game coaching team.

### **Invitational, District, Regional and National All-Star Team 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.

**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 at least the next game. If the individual returns to the game area, the associated team (if applicable) will forfeit the game. The Recreation Superintendent will review all ejections.
- “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. Cheering, positive and competitive team chants are allowed. However, deliberate clanging of bats or loud screams during the pitch are not allowed. 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.
- 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.
- HBP – If the coach pitcher hits the batter, the batter continues to bat
- The max run per inning rule is for ages 7 -12:
  - For the first, second, and third innings there will be a six (6) run max
  - For the 4th and additional innings there will be a twelve (12) run max, this will give a team an opportunity to catch up.

- If a team is ahead by 12 runs after 3 complete innings, 10 runs after 4 complete innings, or 8 runs after 5 complete innings the game will be called.
  - The max run per inning rule is for ages 13-15:
    - For the first, second, and third innings there will be a six (6) run max
    - For the 4<sup>th</sup> and additional innings there will be no run maximum.
    - If a team is ahead by 12 runs after 3 complete innings, 10 runs after 4, or 8 after 5 complete innings the game will be called.
- Infield Fly will be enforced for ages 9-15
- 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/playtime - All players present must be in the batting lineup and remain in the batting lineup for the entire game. 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. 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. Players can't play defense only. 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).
- 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.
- Dugout coach (non base coach) must be within 5 feet of opening to the dugout.
- Do not waste time in 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.
- 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. Head-first sliding is not allowed, except when returning to a base already attained.
- All outfielders should be standing on the grass playing their position before the release of the pitch.

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

- **11” Dixie 5 safety softballs will be always be used.**
- **Players must use an approved t-ball bat.**
- 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.
- 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

- **11” safety softballs will be always be used.**
- **Bats must adhere to the following guidelines:**
  - **Bat barrel diameter may not exceed 2 ¼”**
  - **Bat length may not exceed 34 inches**
  - **Bat weight may not exceed 38 ounces**
- **Games will consist of 6 innings or a time limit of 1 hour and 10 minutes, whichever comes first.**
- **A new inning cannot be started if there are less than 5 minutes remaining in the time limit.**
- **Pitching Distance – 30’**
- 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.
- The batter is out after 3 strikes or 5 pitches, whichever occurs first. A foul ball on the 5<sup>th</sup> and subsequent pitches will not result in an out. 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 cannot 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. Once that occurs, 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. If the base runner has not passed the halfway point when time is called by a defensive player inside the pitching circle, she must return to the previous base.**
  - **“Possession by a defensive player in the pitching circle” also includes instances of the pitching coach having possession of the ball.**
  - **“Possession by a defensive player in the pitching circle” also includes instances of the ball obviously being thrown to the pitcher inside the circle, but the ball is mishandled by the pitcher. (We are not going to keep running if the pitcher misses the ball)**
- **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 9-10 age group

#### Game Regulations

- **11” .47 core softballs will be always be used.**
- **Bats must adhere to the following guidelines:**
  - **Bat barrel diameter may not exceed 2 ¼”**
  - **Bat length may not exceed 34 inches**
  - **Bat weight may not exceed 38 ounces**
- **Games will consist of 6 innings or a time limit of 1 hour and 20 minutes, whichever comes first.**
- **A new inning cannot be started if there are less than 3 minutes remaining in the time limit.**
- **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.**
- **Defensive players cannot 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. Once that occurs, 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. If the base runner has not passed the halfway point when time is called by a defensive player inside the pitching circle, she must return to the previous base.

### **Batter / Runner Regulations**

- Bases will be set at 60'
- **Batter / Runner must wear helmet with a face mask**
- **No metal cleats are allowed**
- Players cannot lead or steal prior to the pitch. The ball must pass the plate before the runner can attempt to steal the next base.
- If a batter in the batter's box gets hit by a pitched ball, it is a Hit by Pitch. The batter will advance to the next base.
- Runners cannot steal home plate.
- The batter may be called out should they be found using an unapproved bat

### **Pitching Regulations**

- Pitching distance is 35 feet.
- **Four (4) balls will constitute the Hybrid Player Pitch / Coach Pitch Rule. Intentional walks are not allowed.**
- **Hybrid Player Pitch / Coach Pitch will apply to half of the season. Once a batter gets to 4 balls, the coach of the batting team will come into the game. The coach pitcher will pick up the count (i.e. 4-2 count and will inherit 2 strikes) and strikes will be called on the coach. The batter will be out after 3 strikes. A foul ball on the last pitch will extend the at-bat. The umpire will have the judgment to allow an extra pitch if the Coach Pitcher throws an unhittable pitch.**
- 4 balls constitute a walk starting with Game 7,
- The pitching limit is 2 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 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 three 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 chest protector.
- Shin guards are required in fast pitch.
- The catcher must be positioned in the Catchers box until the pitched ball is batted or reaches the catchers' box

### **Softball rules for the 11/12 and 13-15 age groups**

### **Game Regulations**

- **12" .47 core softballs will be always be used.**
- **Bats must adhere to the following guidelines:**
  - **Bat barrel diameter may not exceed 2 ¼"**
  - **Bat length may not exceed 34 inches**
  - **Bat weight may not exceed 38 ounces**
- **Games will consist of 6 innings or a time limit of 1 hour and 20 minutes, whichever comes first.**
- **A new inning cannot be started if there are less than 3 minutes remaining in the time limit.**
- One base awarded on a walk
- **Play stoppage:**
  - **The ball remains alive until the umpire calls "TIME" which is only done when the ball is returned to the pitching circle and all runners are on bases. At that moment, all runners must stay on their bases.**
  - **If a runner is in between bases when a defensive player has the ball in the pitching circle, "TIME" will not be called. In this instance, the runner must either immediately return to the previous base, or she must attempt to advance (she cannot just hover in between bases). In either case, the defensive team has the choice to attempt a play on the runner.**
  - **If the defensive team does not choose to attempt a play on the runner, the runner can advance but must stop at the next base.**



## **Batter / Runner Regulations**

- Bases will be set at 60'
- **Batter / Runner must wear helmet with a face mask**
- **No metal cleats are allowed.**
- Players cannot lead or steal prior to the pitch. The ball must pass the plate before the runner can attempt to steal the next base.
- If a batter in the batter's box gets hit by a pitched ball, it is a Hit by Pitch. The batter will advance to the next base.
- 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**

- Pitching distances as follows
  - 11/12 – 40'
  - 13/15 – 43'
- The pitching limit is 2 innings per game for ages 11-12 (3 innings for 13-15).  
**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 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 chest protector.
- Shin guards are required in fast pitch.
- The catcher must be positioned in the Catchers box until the pitched ball is batted or reaches the catchers' box
- The ball count on the player will be 4 balls. Once a batter gets to 4 balls, then she will get a walk.

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

# SOFTBALL QUICK REFERENCE

	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-15
Pitch Type	Tee	Coach	Fast Pitch (Hybrid)	Fast	Fast
Must Play Infield by 3 <sup>rd</sup> Inning	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	No
Face Masks on Batting Helmets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Optional
Fielders Masks for all Defensive Infield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ball Size	11"	11"	11"	12"	12"
Post Season Tournament	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participation Awards	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NO
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Season Awards	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Tournament Awards	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Defensive Coaching on Field	No	Yes- Behind 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> in foul territory	No	No	No
# of Players on Defense	10	10	10	9	9
Pitching Plate Distance	35	35	35	40	43
Base Distances	?	55	60	60	60
Dropped 3 <sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule in Effect	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Infield Fly Rule in Effect					
# of Innings Pitchers Can Pitch					
Game Timeframe					
Bat Requirements					