

# Craven County



## Recreation and Parks Department

# Adult Co-Ed Softball Local Modifications/Rulebook

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*The United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) Official Slow Pitch Rule Book & National By-Laws will be used unless otherwise stated in the following document.*

## **LEAGUE FORMAT**

**MISSION:** The mission of the Craven County Recreation & Parks Department is to create safe and comprehensive recreation opportunities that promote individual growth, environmental appreciation, community spirit, and enhances the overall quality of life.

### **SECTION 1. REGISTRATION.**

1.01 Registration for teams, players, and free agents will open on the following dates:

- a. Spring: February 1
- b. Fall: June 1

1.02 Registration for teams will close on the following dates:

- a. Spring: April 1
- b. Fall: August 1

1.03 'A-League' will be considered the 'Open Division', and 'B-League' will be considered the 'Rec. Division'. The Open Division will be for teams focused more on competitive play and the Rec. Division will be for teams focused on having fun. Multiple divisions will only be offered if there are 10 or more teams registered for the season. If an Open Division and Rec. Division are offered, teams will only play the teams within their division (regular season and tournament).

1.04 If there are nine (9) teams or fewer registered for the season (and there is not a need for more than two games per field, per night), games may begin at 7:00pm and 8:10pm. If there are more than nine (9) teams, games will begin at 6:30pm, 7:40pm and 8:50pm.

- a. To avoid 8:50pm games, there may be multiple weeks throughout the season with double headers (games played on Tuesday & Thursday evenings).

1.05 There will be a ten (10) minute grace period for the first games of the night only (meaning the 6:30pm games or the 7:00pm games). All other games will start at the assigned game time; there will be no grace period. A team that is not ready to begin at game time will forfeit.

1.06 If there are nine (9) or fewer teams registered for a season, everyone will compete in the same regular season and tournament. Individual Open Division and Rec. Division tournaments will not be offered.

### **SECTION 2. REGULAR SEASON.**

2.01 Teams are guaranteed to be scheduled for a minimum (10) games total, plus any additional tournament games based on performance.

- a) Excessive rain during the season may cause a regular season game and/or tournament game to be canceled due to time constraints to finish the season. The spring season must end no later than June 30<sup>th</sup> due to the end of the County's fiscal year.

2.02 Rain outs will be rescheduled to take place the Tuesday following the originally scheduled game, or at the end of the season.

2.03 Any game suspended with less than 4 complete innings played will be resumed at the same point where it stopped. A team must resume with the same players or substitute for players that do not return. There will be no penalty for teams returning at least 10 players (Ex: If a team was playing with 12 and only had 10 for the make-up, there would not be two automatic outs).

2.04 Any game that is suspended with 4 or more completed innings will not be resumed later (the game will be considered finished, and the results will be recorded).

2.05 Forfeits will be recorded in the scorebook as 7-0.

### **SECTION 3. END OF SEASON TOURNAMENT.**

3.01 Teams will compete in a single or double elimination end of season tournament. The style of tournament will be based on the number of teams in the division for that season.

3.02 Single elimination tournaments will have 2 officials for each tournament game. Double elimination tournaments will have 2 officials for the semi-final and championship games, while the rest of the games will have 1 official.

3.03 Tournament seeding will be based on a team's regular season record. Standings are determined by

- a. Number of games won
- b. Head-to-head record (skipped for 3-way tie or greater)
- c. Fewest runs allowed, totaled across all regular season games
- d. Coin toss

3.04 The team with the higher seed will be designated as the home team and the team with the lower seed will be designated as the away team (Ex. The 1 seed will be the home team and the 4 seed will be the away team).

3.05 Tournament games cannot end in a tie

3.06 Tournament games have a time limit, except the championship game. The championship game does not have a time limit and can only be ended by completing a regulation game or the run rule. Tournament games may go into extra innings as necessary.

3.07 Tournament winners will receive a plaque and bragging rights.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **SECTION 4. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY.**

4.01 All participating players must appear on written lineups, reflecting the game's batting order, to be exchanged between the captains of each team before play begins.

4.02 All players must be registered through Rec. Desk and appear on the team's official roster to be considered an 'eligible player'.

4.03 If a team is unable to play due to their opponent forfeiting, all players currently on the roster will be assumed to have played that week and be awarded one games' eligibility. Players on a team that forfeits will not be awarded eligibility for that week's game.

4.04 If a game or games are cancelled by the Craven County Recreation & Parks Department for any reason and are not able to be rescheduled, all players currently on the roster for those teams will be assumed to have played that week and be awarded eligibility for the cancelled games.

4.05 Players must have played in at least two regular season games to be eligible to play in the end of season tournament.

4.06 When an illegal player is discovered, they are disqualified from the game.

- a. If an illegal player is discovered during a game, the illegal player will be disqualified for the remainder of the competition.
- b. If an illegal player is discovered after a completed game (regular season OR tournament), the results of the game will stand – win or loss.

### **SECTION 5. ROSTER.**

5.01 Each game shall have two (2) participating teams: the Away team, who bats first each inning, and the Home team, which bats last each inning.

5.02 Team rosters shall consist of at least ten (10) and no more than twenty (20) players.

5.03 Players can be removed from the roster at any point in the regular season if they have not participated in a game. Once they have participated in a game, they are on that roster for the entire season.

5.04 New players (male or female) may be added to the roster at any point during the regular season, so long as they do not cause the roster to exceed the maximum limit.

5.05 Any roster changes are not official until they have been communicated to the Craven County Recreation & Parks Department from the team captain by email.

5.06 All players must be at least sixteen (16) years of age by the first scheduled game.

## **THE PLAYING FIELD & EQUIPMENT**

### **SECTION 6. THE PLAYING FIELD.**

6.01 The batter's box shall be 3 feet wide, thus forming a rectangle of 7 feet by 3 feet. The lines marking the batter's box are considered to be part of the batter's box.

6.02 The Catcher's Box shall be 10 ft long from the rear outside corners of the batter's box on each side of home plate, thus forming a rectangle 10 ft long and 8 ft 5in wide. The Catcher's Box is that area where the catcher must remain (including hands/glove) while and until a pitched ball has reached or passed home plate or is batted.

- a. If the catcher does not stay in the Catcher's Box while and until a pitched ball has reached or passed home plate or batted; the following will take place:
  - a. Catcher will have up to (2) warning to stay in the Catcher's Box
  - b. Any additional times after the 2<sup>nd</sup> warning of the Catcher not staying in the Catcher's Box, the batter will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base.

6.02 Double First Base

- a. All runners should use the orange bag if there is a play at first base and the fielder should use the white bag. The fielder may not use the orange bag to make an out. If the fielder's foot is completely on the orange bag while making the play at first, the runner will be considered safe at first base.
- b. If on a play to first, and the runner collides with the first baseman on the white bag, interference will be called, and the runner will be out. All other base runners will return to their original bag.

6.03 The pitching rubber will be 53ft from home plate.

### **SECTION 7. EQUIPMENT.**

7.01 Pitchers are required to wear a softball safety mask while pitching.

- a. Softball helmets may be worn by players and coaches at any time.
- b. Pitchers shin guards are optional.

7.02 Catcher's are encouraged to wear a mask/helmet while playing defense.

7.02 Metal cleats are not allowed.

- a. The first offense will result in a 2-game suspension.
- b. A second offence will result in the player being suspended for the remainder of the season.

7.03 Teams will hit their own balls (12" balls for everyone).

- a. The only softballs that are legal for Craven County Recreation & Parks league play include the USSSA 12" Classic M Ball and the USSSA 12" Pro M Ball.
- b. Teams may not use the 12" Stadium M Ball.
- c. If the wrong ball is used, all play stands.
  - a. First Offense: The team will receive a warning, and the illegal ball(s) will be removed from play.

- b. Second Offense: The team will receive an automatic out and the illegal ball(s) will be removed from play.
- c. Third Offense: The team may have to forfeit the game in progress as well as additional games.

7.05 All bats will be tested prior to the start of the season and a CCRPD low residue tamper proof label will be affixed to the approved bat. The senior bats will have a different color label.

- a. If a bat is used that has no current CCRPD label, the batter is out.

7.06 Bats will be legal for Craven County Recreation & Parks league play only if the bat is manufactured by an approved USSSA bat manufacturer on the USSSA approved bat manufacturer list and has the 2020 USSSA Certification Mark.



7.07 No bat is legal for Craven County Recreation & Parks league play if it is damaged in any way. Damaged bats include those with damage to the knob or end cap, those which have loose knobs or end caps, and those with cracks or dents in the bat material.

7.08 No bat is legal for Craven County Recreation & Parks league play if any of the graphics on the bat have been worn off.

7.09 No bat is legal for Craven County Recreation & Parks league play if the paint has been worn through and the actual bat material is showing.

7.10 No bat is legal for Craven County Recreation & Parks league play if there is a foreign substance on the barrel or taper of a bat. Foreign substances included among other substances, pine tar, stick-em type products and even dirt or mud, but only if the substance adds to the thickness of the barrel or covers key graphic information such as the USSSA Certification Mark, the serial number of the bat, the model or manufacturer name, official softball, etc.

## **SECTION 8. ALTERED BAT DIRECTOR INSPECTION AND SUSPENSION.**

8.01 The umpire or league director may at any time ask to inspect a bat that is believed to be illegal and has been brought to their attention. The owner and/or user may either:

- a. Withhold the bat from inspection and accept an immediate one-year suspension from Craven County Recreation and Parks league play with no right to appeal; or,
- b. Allow the umpire and/or league director to inspect the bat and reach a conclusion as to whether the bat might be altered. If the bat is thought to be altered, the bat will be ineligible for the rest of the game.

8.02 If a player is found to be using an illegal, altered bat, they will be suspended from league play. A first-time offender will be suspended from league play for one (1) year. A second time offender will receive a permanent suspension.

## **OFFICIALS**

### **SECTION 9. UMPIRES.**

9.01 Regular season games will be officiated by one (1) authorized official, the Head Umpire. The Head Umpire governs all game play, issues all final rulings, and has final authority on equipment issues.

9.02 Tournament games will be officiated by two (2) authorized officials, the Head Umpire and Assistant Umpire (depending on tournament style). Single Elimination (2) officials for games, and Double Elimination (1) official until the semi-final and championship games which will have (2) officials.

9.03 Prior to each game, the Head Umpire will conduct a meeting with the captains of each team to address any ground rules in effect, to ensure the exchange of team lineups, and to identify designated captains who will be authorized to discuss calls with umpires during the game.

9.04 Umpires may make rulings on any points not specifically covered in the rules (at the time of occurrence), but the ruling shall not be deemed as a precedent for future rulings.

### **SECTION 10. SCOREKEEPING.**

10.01 When possible, the Craven County Recreation & Parks Department will provide scorekeepers. Adult Athletics Scorekeeper is a part-time position through the Craven County Recreation & Parks Department that when filled, will be utilized for the Adult Co-Ed Softball League.

10.02 If the Craven County Recreation & Parks Department cannot provide Adult Athletics Scorekeepers for any reason, the Home team shall provide a responsible and qualified person to serve as the official scorekeeper (this can be done by a player, spectator, family member, etc.).

10.03 If the Home team cannot provide a responsible and qualified person to serve as the official scorekeeper, it will be the Away team's responsibility.

10.04 In the event that neither team can provide a responsible and qualified person to serve as the official scorekeeper, the Home and Away teams shall work together to ensure that a score is kept and recorded.

10.05 Scorekeepers are responsible for:

- a. Recording the events of the game, including runs scored, outs, and the final score of the game.
- b. Collecting each team's roster and recording the batting order as well as any substitutions
- c. Keeping the official game clock and announcing the last inning
  - If the Craven County Recreation & Parks Department is unable to provide an Adult Athletics Scorekeeper, the umpire will be responsible for keeping the official game clock.

## GAMEPLAY

### SECTION 11. REGULATION GAMES.

11.01 Regulation games will last seven (7) innings.

- a. In the event of a tie score at the end of the seventh inning, the game shall continue in extra innings as time allows.
- b. If the Home team already leads the game when the bottom of the final inning is reached, that team wins the game instantly and the game is over.
- c. If the Home team takes the lead during the bottom of the final inning, that team wins instantly, and the game is over.

11.02 Regulation games will have a time limit of one (1) hour and ten (10) minutes. No new inning will begin after the one (1) hour and ten (10) minute mark has been reached.

- a. If there is a tie at the end of a regulation game, and time has expired, the game will result in a tie.

11.03 Run Rule: The umpire will call off the game if:

- a. The Home team is up by 20 runs after the top of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.
- b. The Away team is up by 20 runs after the bottom of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.
- c. The Home team is up by 15 runs after the top of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning.
- d. The Away team is up by 15 runs after the bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning.
- e. The Home team is up by 10 runs after the top of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning.
- f. The Away team is up by 10 runs after the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning.

11.04 Home Run Rule: Teams are allowed five (5) home runs per game.

- a. All homeruns after five (5) will be counted as an out.
- b. Homeruns can be hit by 5 different players or in any combination.

11.05 An official protest must be made to the plate umpire so that he can inform both team captains that the game is being played under protest. The scorekeeper must mark the book at the point the protest begins. A protest fee of \$20.00 must be paid to the Recreation Department within 24 hours, along with a written statement about the protest. If the protest is won, the fee will be returned, and the game will be resumed at that point at a later date. If the protest is lost, the fee will be kept by the Recreation Department. All protests during tournament games must be resolved before the next pitch is thrown.

11.06 If you know in advance that your team is going to forfeit a game, you MUST contact the Recreation & Parks Department by 4:30pm on the day of the game. If a team does not forfeit by 4:30pm, your team will be penalized with a \$50.00 forfeit fee. The forfeit fee will have to be paid before the team plays their next scheduled game.

- a. If a team forfeits a night that is rained out, then that forfeit carries over to the makeup date.
- b. Any team that forfeits 3 games will be dropped from the schedule.

## **SECTION 12. BATTING.**

12.01 The team will bat ten (10) players; thus six (6) males and four (4) females for the batting lineup.

- a. There must be four (4) females on the playing field or on the team's batting order. A team may play with less than four (4) females, but an out will be recorded each time her position comes to bat.
- b. There can be no more than six (6) males in the batting order or on the playing field at one time.
- c. If teams start with ten (10) players, they must finish with ten (10), or an out will be recorded for each position dropped from the lineup. The same goes for teams that start with twelve (12) players.
- d. Any time a team starts a game with less than nine (9) players, a 10-run rule is in effect at any time after a complete inning. If both teams start a game with less than nine (9) players, the 10-run rule is in effect for both teams.

12.02 There are no requirements for batting order (males and females do not have to alternate in the lineup).

12.03 If a man is walked, intentionally or unintentionally, the woman (her option) will be awarded first base. Other base runners will advance if forced.

- a. If the female decides to take her at bat instead of advancing to first base, the male will still be awarded second base. The male is not required to touch first base.

12.04 Female Batters

- a. A line will be placed at 180 feet along the outfield.
- b. A female may choose to hit an 11in softball instead of a 12in.
- c. When females are at bat, all outfielders must stand behind this line until the ball is hit.
- d. When females are at bat, all infielders must remain in the infield (dirt) until the ball is hit.
- e. If a team has ten (10) players, four (4) of the players must stand behind the line. If a team has nine (9) players, three (3) of the players must stand behind the line. If a team has less than eight (8) players, the team will not have outfielders behind the line.
- f. Outfielders may cross the line once the ball has been hit, regardless of where the ball is hit.
- g. The player at bat will be awarded first base if the outfielders cross the line before the ball is hit.
- a.

## **SECTION 13. PITCHING AND FIELDING.**

13.01 A female or male may pitch.

- a. If a female pitches, then a male must catch. If a male pitches, then a female must catch.

13.02 The Pitching Strike Zone Mat will be used. The ball must be pitched underhanded at a slow speed.

- a. The pitched ball must arch three (3) feet after leaving the pitcher's hand and before it passes any part of home plate. The pitched ball shall not rise more than ten (10) feet above the ground.
- b. A pitch will be ruled a strike when the ball lands touching any part of the strike zone mat and meets the arch/height requirement.
- c. Home plate is not considered part of the strike zone. Any pitch that lands solely touching home plate will be ruled a ball.

- d. The speed of the pitch and height of the pitched ball are left entirely to the judgement of the umpire.
- e. The Pitching Strike Zone Mat dimensions will be 32in. x 19in.

13.03 No “fake pitching” is allowed from the pitcher.

13.04 There are no restrictions for placing players in the field or positions other than the pitcher and catcher.

#### **SECTION 14. INJURIES, BANDIT RUNNERS, & EJECTIONS.**

14.01 In cases of injury or illness, a time-out may be requested for participant removal and replacement with a teammate as a substitute. If the participant later returns to play, the participant must be inserted in the same written batting order position previously held.

14.02 If a player is injured, becomes ill and cannot continue, or leaves the game for any reason out of their control, the written batting order will continue in the same formation, less the removed player.

- a. A player removed from the batting order for injury, illness, or other reason out of their control does not constitute an improper batting order and there is no “automatic out” when the player’s spot in the in the order is reached.
- b. Teams may opt to use an available substitute in place of the removed player.

14.03 Teams may use one (1) male and one (1) female bandit runner at any time during the game. Male bandit runners may only replace male runners, and female bandit runners may only replace female runners. The bandit runner must remain the bandit runner for the entire game; you cannot change your bandit runner once the game has started. The exception to that rule will be if the bandit runner is injured and unable to play the remainder of the game. The team can then choose another bandit runner to take their place.

14.04 The intention to use a bandit runner must be declared to the Head Umpire prior to the pitch EXCEPT in the case of an injury to the batter running from home to first base, a bandit runner may be used without previously declaring it.

14.05 If a player’s turn to bat comes up while they are on the field as a bandit runner, their position as a batter is recorded as an automatic out.

## OTHER

### **SECTION 15. OTHER.**

15.01 Players and coaches are not allowed to smoke in the playing area; this includes dugouts. Smoking is allowed in designated smoking areas as well as the parking lots only.

15.02 Alcoholic beverages will not be allowed at any time on any County property or properties used by Craven County; this includes the parking lots and softball fields.

- a. Anyone caught with an open container of alcohol will be automatically suspended for 2 games. A second offense will result in suspension for the remainder of the season.
- b. If in the opinion of the umpire, Program Manager, or any CCRPD staff member, a player has been drinking, they will be ejected from the game and asked to leave the facility.

15.03 There will be no profanity or vulgar language. Any player who uses profanity or vulgar language may be ejected or removed from the playing field.

15.04 Any player or captain who is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct will be suspended for the remainder of that game, plus the team's next two (2) scheduled games. A second offense may warrant a greater suspension. The player or captain will be withheld from games in other Craven County Leagues if seasons coincide. Suspension will be determined by the Program Manager and the Recreation & Parks Department.

- a. Ejected players must leave the sight and sound of the facility within two (2) minutes. If a player fails to leave after an ejection, the game in progress will be forfeited.
- b. Suspended players will not be allowed to watch, or help in any way, with games in the league that they are suspended from until they serve the full suspension.

15.05 The spirit of these rules is to ensure a fun environment and participant enjoyment. All games are to be played in a sportsmanlike manner. If necessary, the Craven County Recreation & Parks Department will address any inconsistencies, discrepancies, and misunderstandings in accordance with the spirit of these rules.