



YOUTH SOFTBALL HANDBOOK

**Starkville Sportsplex
Travis Outlaw Center
(662) 323-3394
405 Lynn Lane
Starkville, MS 39759
www.starkvilleparks.com**

Table of Contents

Code of Conduct	3
Rules and Regulations	4
I. Headquarters	4
II. Purpose	4
III. Governing Rules	4
IV. Communication	4
V. Start Smart (3-4)	5
VI. T-Ball (5-6)	5
VII. Coach Pitch (7-8)	7
VIII. 10 & Under (9-10)	9
IX. 12 & Under (11-12)	11
X. 18 & Under (13-18)	13
XI. League Director and Supervisor Duties	14

Important Contact Information

SPRD Office Telephone	662-323-2294
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William Pochop – SPRD Athletic Supervisor	wpochop@starkvilleparks.com
Department Website	www.starkvilleparks.com
League Website	www.starkvilleregistration.com
Department Facebook	Starkville Parks and Recreation Department
Department Twitter	@StarkvilleParks
Department Instagram	@starkvilleparks
Field Status Alerts	Text “@sprdfields” to 81010

Starkville Parks and Recreation

League Code of Conduct

PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

1. Participants should have proper equipment.
2. Participants should arrive on time to scheduled events.
3. Participants should notify their coach if they are to be late or absent from a scheduled event.
4. Participants should strive to exhibit good sportsmanship at all times, as described below.

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Parents should positively encourage their child regardless of the outcome of an event.
2. Parents should allow their child to participate without negative pressure of any kind.
3. Parents should work to ensure that their child does not intentionally injure other players.
4. Parents should help their child adhere to the written and unwritten rules of honesty, fair play, and good sportsmanship.
5. Parents should, when possible, provide their child with extra instructional opportunities.
6. Parents should, when possible, provide their child with opportunities to learn other sports so they have a more balanced development.
7. Parents should allow the assigned coaches to instruct their child without interference or influence.

SPORTSMANSHIP EXPECTATIONS

1. Participants, coaches, and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times.
2. Participants, coaches, and spectators are expected to abide by the rules and regulations of the sport in which they are involved.
3. Participants, coaches, and spectators are expected to show respect for facilities, equipment, sport officials, and all supervisors and SPRD personnel.
4. Participants, coaches, and spectators are expected to address game officials in a respectful manner. All individuals should not use profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures when addressing a game official, nor at any time attempt to influence or object to an official's decision.
5. Participants, coaches, and spectators are expected to exhibit socially acceptable behavior at all events or refrain from attending the events.
6. The City of Starkville Parks and Recreation Department has a zero tolerance policy for unsportsmanlike conduct as outlined herein.

SPORTSMANSHIP PENALTIES

1. Any individual who does not abide by the sportsmanship expectations set by the Starkville Parks and Recreation Department may be subject to penalty.
2. Any individual ejected from a contest must leave the playing area immediately upon notification of the supervisor.
3. Any individual shoving, striking, or physically abusing an official or supervisor will receive an automatic suspension for the remainder of the season.
4. Any incident that is determined to be unsportsmanlike by a game official or supervisor will be written up and reported to the Sport Coordinator.
 - a. First Report – Meet with Sport Coordinator at the SPRD office (405 Lynn Lane)
 - b. Second Report – One game suspension (may be issued at first report depending on the extent of the issue reported)
 - c. Third Report – Suspension for the remainder of the season and under review to continue participation in the following season.
5. Unruly coaches, players, or spectators may cost their team a forfeit if determined by the official or supervisor in charge.

Starkville Parks and Recreation League Rules and Regulations

I. HEADQUARTERS

- A. The governing authority shall be vested in the City of Starkville Parks and Recreation Department

II. PURPOSE

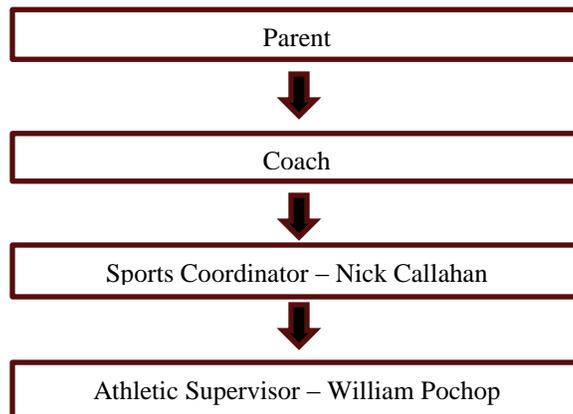
- A. The Starkville Parks & Recreation Youth Softball Program is organized to provide a recreational activity for girls ages 3-18. The program is designed for the following purposes:
 1. To aid in the physical development through fun and exercise.
 2. To teach the basic fundamental skills of the game of softball.
 3. To aid in the social development through good sportsmanship and moral character with adult guidance.
 4. To teach good attitudes and discipline to our youth participants.

III. GOVERNING RULES

- A. USA Softball Association rules will govern play with the exceptions covered herein.
SPRD reserves the right to update or adjust these rules at any point during the season as necessary for the betterment of the players and program.

IV. COMMUNICATION

- A. To help keep communication smooth and productive, there is a certain “chain of command” that we ask everyone to use.
 1. Parents should contact the coach with any questions.
 2. Coaches should contact the Sports Coordinator for further assistance.
 3. If additional assistance is needed, the Sports Coordinator will contact the Director.



V. START SMART SOFTBALL (3-4 YEAR OLDS)

A. What is Start Smart?

Start Smart Programs, created by the National Alliance for Youth Sports, help kids get ready for sport and succeed in life. It is an innovative step-by-step approach that builds confidence and self-esteem in a fun and safe sports environment.

B. Start Smart Softball

Start Smart Softball is a developmentally appropriate introductory softball program for children 3-4 years old. The program prepares children for organized tee ball and softball in a fun, non-threatening environment.

C. What to Expect?

Start Smart Softball prepares children and their parents for organized softball without the threat of competition or the fear of getting hurt. Age appropriate equipment from Franklin Sports® is used in teaching **throwing, catching, batting, running and agility**.

VI. T-BALL RULES (5-6 YEAR OLDS)

A. Game Management:

1. A game is limited to a one (1) hour time limit.
2. The game time will be kept and observed by the home plate umpire.
3. Games will end when the hour is up regardless of whether the home or visiting team is at bat.
4. Score will not be kept. This is not a win at all cost type of league.
5. Each team may have two (2) coaches on the field on defense, but must remain on the outfield grass at all times, and may not come in contact with the ball.
6. Coaches are to keep all players in the dugout at all times, except the batter and on deck batter.

B. Defense Rules:

1. All the players in the batting order will play in the field on defense. One player must be at each infield position but not inside the base running path before the ball is hit. Each team will have a pitcher and a catcher at their position
2. Time Out – Time out is called when **a player having possession of the ball**, reaches the infield area. When time out is called a runner will be awarded the nearest base. A base runner must be at least half way down the base line to be given the next base. This is a judgment call.

C. Batting:

1. Each team will bat all batters per inning.
2. Each batter gets a maximum of five (5) swings to hit the ball into fair territory.

3. An eight foot line will be drawn in front of home plate and the ball must be batted past (not to or on) to be a fair ball. These are judgment calls.
4. The batting order will consist of all the players on the team roster that are present at the game.
5. A batter throwing the bat:
First offense - the batter receives a team warning.
Second offense - any batter on that team throwing the bat is called out.
*A warning should never be issued or an out should never be called unless some player (normally the catcher) is placed in danger.
6. Coaches may position a batter in the batter's box.

D. Pitching

1. An eight foot circle will be drawn around the pitching rubber and the pitcher must stay inside this circle until the ball is hit.

VII. COACH PITCH RULES (7-8 YEAR OLDS)

A. Game Management:

1. Each game will have a one (1) hour time limit that will be kept by the home plate umpire.
2. Each team must have at least eight (8) players present at the scheduled game time.
3. Game time is forfeit time. *However*, if one team is present with at least eight (8) players ready to play, they may choose to allow a five-minute grace period to the opposing team.
4. The five minutes will not be counted in the hour time limit. This is the umpire's time.
5. Seven players or less a game time or after the grace period will result in a forfeit.
6. The unoccupied ninth spot in the order will be recorded as an out, each time it occurs in the game.
7. The time limit will start for each game when the first pitch is delivered.
8. The umpire or supervisor's watch will be the official time.
9. The time limit can be altered if there is a delay for some reason.
10. Only the supervisor or the umpire can alter the original starting time.
11. **The home team shall occupy the 3rd base dugout.**
12. **Home & Visitor will be indicated on Game Schedule.**
13. Starkville Parks and Recreations will* provide an on-Site Supervisor, one (1) scorekeeper and two (2) Umpires per field, per game.
14. *Exceptions can be made due to the number of officials that are available.
15. A maximum of five (5) runs per inning will be allowed, or one completion of the batting order, or three (3) recorded outs, whichever comes first.
16. There must be at least 5 minutes left of the official game time in order to start a new inning. Otherwise the umpire will declare that the time limit is over, and the team that is ahead runs scored shall be declared the winner, regardless of the inning.
17. However, both teams must have completed the same number of innings at bat (unless home team is ahead).
18. If an inning is started before the time limit expires, the inning must be completed in full (unless the home team is ahead or as soon as the home team scores the winning run).
19. Scores WILL be kept. A maximum of five (5) runs per inning will be enforced.
20. This is not a win at all cost type of league, but scoring is an important aspect of the game that is vital to learning fundamentals and execution in the game of softball.
21. The department's goal is to provide educational and fun experiences to the children.
22. **Only in Tournament Play** – If a game is tied at the end of regulation, each team will be allowed their turn at bat with the last recorded out in the previous inning being awarded second base in the extra inning. This procedure will continue until a winner is decided. (International Tie Breaker).
23. If a player is injured on offense or defense, she will be removed from the game for the remainder of that inning (without penalty), but may return in the next inning if physically able.
24. If a temporary fence is present during a game, any hit ball that flies the fence will be deemed a home run. Any hit ball that lands short of the fence and bounces over the fences or rolls under the fence will be deemed a ground-rule double.

25. Each team may have two (2) coaches on the field on defense, but must remain on the outfield grass at all times, and may not come in contact with the ball.
26. Coaches are to keep all players in the dugout at all times, except the batter and on deck batter.

B. Defense Rules:

1. Unlimited free substitution will be permitted on the defense.
2. Ten (10) players will be permitted on the defense.
3. An arc will be painted in the grass – outfielders must stand outside the arc before the pitch.

C. Batting:

1. Each batter gets a maximum of five (5) Pitches to hit the ball into fair territory.
2. If the batter does not put the ball in play after 5 pitches, the batter will be recorded as an out. It is the coach's responsibility to teach this to their team.
3. An eight foot line will be drawn in front of home plate and the ball must be batted past (not to or on) to be a fair ball. These are judgment calls.
4. The batting order will consist of all the players on the team roster that are present at the game, and **all batters MUST have two (2) at-bats**, if time allows.
5. **The side will be retired after three (3) recorded outs, five (5) runs scored, or upon batting one complete time thru the batting order, whichever comes first.**
6. Coaches for the batting team must be at home plate to tell players when to slide if a play at the plate may occur.
7. Players **MUST** slide if there is a play at the plate.



VIII. 10 & UNDER RULES (9-10 YEAR OLDS)

A. Game Management:

1. Each game will have a one (1) hour time limit that will be kept by the home plate umpire.
2. Each team must have at least eight (8) players present at the scheduled game time.
3. Game time is forfeit time. *However*, if one team is present with at least eight (8) players ready to play, they may choose to allow a five-minute grace period to the opposing team.
4. The five minutes will not be counted in the hour time limit. This is the umpire's time.
5. Seven players or less a game time or after the grace period will result in a forfeit.
6. The unoccupied ninth spot in the order will be recorded as an out, each time it occurs in the game.
7. The time limit will start for each game when the first pitch is delivered.
8. The umpire or supervisor's watch will be the official time.
9. The time limit can be altered if there is a delay for some reason.
10. Only the supervisor or the umpire can alter the original starting time.
11. **The home team shall occupy the 3rd base dugout.**
12. **Home & Visitor will be indicated on Game Schedule.**
13. Starkville Parks and Receptions will* provide an on-Site Supervisor, one (1) scorekeeper and two (2) Umpires per field, per game.
14. *Exceptions can be made due to the number of officials that are available.
15. A maximum of five (5) runs per inning will be enforced.
16. There must be at least 5 minutes left of the official game time in order to start a new inning. Otherwise the umpire will declare that the time limit is over, and the team that is ahead runs scored shall be declared the winner, regardless of the inning.
17. However, both teams must have completed the same number of innings at bat (unless home team is ahead).
18. If an inning is started before the time limit expires, the inning must be completed in full (unless the home team is ahead or as soon as the home team scores the winning run).
19. During regular season play, games may end in a tie.
20. **Only in Tournament Play** – If a game is tied at the end of regulation, each team will be allowed their turn at bat with the last recorded out in the previous inning being awarded second base in the extra inning. This procedure will continue until a winner is decided. (International Tie Breaker).
21. If a player is injured on offense or defense, she will be removed from the game for the remainder of that inning (without penalty), but may return in the next inning if physically able.
22. If a temporary fence is present during a game, any hit ball that flies the fence will be deemed a home run. Any hit ball that lands short of the fence and bounces over the fences or rolls under the fence will be deemed a ground-rule double.

B. Defense Rules:

1. Unlimited free substitution will be permitted on the defense.
2. Ten (10) players will be permitted on the defense.

3. An arc will be painted in the grass – outfielders must stand outside the arc before the pitch.
- C. Batting:
1. All players will be listed in the batting order and will take their scheduled turn at bat.
 2. **All players must have two (2) at-bats**, if time allows.
 3. The side will be retired after three (3) recorded outs, or five (5) runs scored*, whichever comes first. (**see rule A-16*)
- D. Running:
1. Runners can only steal one base at a time, and may only steal when the pitch cross the plate
 2. Runners may advance one base on over throws.
 3. Runners may not steal home, even on a passed ball or wild pitch.
 5. There is no advancing to first base on a dropped third strike.
 6. Once the pitcher has returned to the circle with the ball in hand, all running must stop.
 7. Courtesy runners will be allowed for the pitcher and catcher, but if the courtesy runner is on base when her turn in the order occurs – it will be an out.
 8. Coaches for the batting team must be at home plate to tell players when to slide if a play at the plate may occur.
 9. Players **MUST** slide if there is a play at the plate.
- E. Pitching:
1. Pitchers must start with both feet on the rubber, however, she will be allowed to take one step back to gain momentum (one foot **MUST** remain in contact with the pitching rubber during any steps taken behind the rubber).
 2. Once her stride foot touches the ground on her step towards the plate, her pivot foot must remain in contact with the ground until the ball is released from her hand.
 3. There will be **NO WALKS**. Once a count of 4 balls is reached on a batter, a coach from the team at bat will come in and throw 2 pitches to the batter.
 4. The coach must remain in the pitching circle when pitching.
 5. Once the coach comes in to pitch, the batter must put the ball in play within two pitches or an out will be recorded. Runners cannot steal during this procedure.
 6. A pitch count of three (3) strikes will result in the batter being out.
 7. Pitchers may receive five (5) warm-up pitches between innings and five (5) warm-up pitches in relief.



IX. 12 & UNDER RULES

A. Game Management:

1. Each team must have at least eight (8) players present at the scheduled game time.
2. Game time is forfeit time. *However*, if one team is present with at least eight (8) players ready to play, they may choose to allow a five-minute grace period to the opposing team.
3. The five minutes will not be counted in the hour time limit. This is the umpire's time.
4. Seven players or less a game time or after the grace period will result in a forfeit.
5. Each game will have a one hour thirty minute time limit that will be kept by the home plate umpire.
6. The time limit will start for each game when the first pitch is delivered.
7. The umpire or supervisor's watch will be the official time.
8. The time limit can be altered if there is a delay for some reason.
9. Only the supervisor or the umpire can alter the original starting time.
The unoccupied ninth spot in the order will be recorded as an out, each time it occurs in the game.
10. **The home team shall occupy the 3rd base dugout.**
11. **Home & Visitor will be indicated on Game Schedule.**
12. Starkville Parks and Recreations will* provide an on-Site Supervisor, one (1) scorekeeper and two (2) Umpires per field, per game.
13. *Exceptions can be made due to the number of officials that are available.
14. The side will be retired when either three (3) outs are recorded, or five (5) runs are scored in the half inning.
15. There must be at least 5 minutes left of the official game time in order to start a new inning. Otherwise the umpire will declare that the time limit is over, and the team that is ahead runs scored shall be declared the winner, regardless of the inning.
16. However, both teams must have completed the same number of innings at bat (unless home team is ahead).
17. If an inning is started before the time limit expires, the inning must be completed in full (unless the home team is ahead or as soon as the home team scores the winning run).
18. **Only in Tournament Play** – If a game is tied at the end of regulation, extra innings will be played until a winner is decided.
19. If a player is injured on offense or defense, she will be removed from the game for the remainder of that inning (without penalty), but may return in the next inning if physically able.
20. If a temporary fence is present during a game, any hit ball that flies the fence will be deemed a home run. Any hit ball that lands short of the fence and bounces over the fences or rolls under the fence will be deemed a ground-rule double.

B. Defense Rules:

1. Unlimited free substitution will be permitted on the defense.
2. Ten (10) players will be permitted on the defense.

C. Batting:

1. All players will be listed in the batting order and will take their scheduled turn at bat.
2. Bunting is permitted.
3. Advancing on a dropped third strike is allowed.

D. Running:

1. On the release of the pitch, a base runner may steal more than one base at a time, and may steal home at her own risk.
2. Courtesy runners will be allowed for the pitcher and catcher, but if the courtesy runner is on base when her turn in the order occurs – it will be an out.
3. Once the pitcher has returned to the circle with the ball in hand, all running must stop.
4. Players **MUST** slide if there is a play at the plate.

E. Pitching

1. Pitchers must start with both feet on the rubber, and **MAY NOT** take one step back to gain momentum.
2. Once her stride foot touches the ground on her step toward the plate, her pivot foot must remain in contact with the ground until the ball is released from her hand.
3. Pitchers may receive five (5) warm-up pitches between innings and five (5) warm-up pitches in relief.
4. Once the pitcher has returned to the circle with the ball in hand, all running must stop.



X. 18 & UNDER RULES

A. Game Management:

1. Each team must have at least eight (8) players present at the scheduled game time.
2. Game time is forfeit time. *However*, if one team is present with at least eight (8) players ready to play, they may choose to allow a five-minute grace period to the opposing team.
3. The five minutes will not be counted in the hour time limit. This is the umpire's time.
4. Seven players or less a game time or after the grace period will result in a forfeit.
5. Each game will have a one hour thirty minute time limit that will be kept by the home plate umpire.
6. The time limit will start for each game when the first pitch is delivered.
7. The umpire or supervisor's watch will be the official time.
8. The time limit can be altered if there is a delay for some reason.
9. Only the supervisor or the umpire can alter the original starting time.
The unoccupied ninth spot in the order will be recorded as an out, each time it occurs in the game.
10. **The home team shall occupy the 3rd base dugout.**
11. **Home & Visitor will be indicated on Game Schedule.**
12. Starkville Parks and Receptions will* provide an on-Site Supervisor, one (1) scorekeeper and two (2) Umpires per field, per game.
13. *Exceptions can be made due to the number of officials that are available.
14. The side will be retired when either three (3) outs are recorded, or ten (10) runs are scored in the half inning.
15. There must be at least 5 minutes left of the official game time in order to start a new inning. Otherwise the umpire will declare that the time limit is over, and the team that is ahead runs scored shall be declared the winner, regardless of the inning.
16. However, both teams must have completed the same number of innings at bat (unless home team is ahead).
17. If an inning is started before the time limit expires, the inning must be completed in full (unless the home team is ahead or as soon as the home team scores the winning run).
18. If a game is tied at the end of regulation, each team will be allowed their turn at bat with the last recorded out in the previous inning being awarded second base in the extra inning. This procedure will continue until a winner is decided. (International Tie Breaker).
19. If a player is injured on offense or defense, she will be removed from the game for the remainder of that inning (without penalty), but may return in the next inning if physically able.
20. If a temporary fence is present during a game, any hit ball that flies the fence will be deemed a home run. Any hit ball that lands short of the fence and bounces over the fences or rolls under the fence will be deemed a ground-rule double.

- B. Defense Rules:
 - 1. Unlimited free substitution will be permitted on the defense.
 - 2. Nine (9) players will be permitted on the defense.

- C. Batting:
 - 1. All players will be listed in the batting order and will take their scheduled turn at bat.
 - 2. Bunting is permitted, and it is allowed to advance to first base on a dropped third strike
 - 3. The side will be retired after three (3) recorded outs, or ten (10) runs scored

- D. Running:
 - 1. On the release of a pitch, a base runner may steal more than one base at a time, or may steal home at her own risk.
 - 2. Courtesy runners will be allowed for the pitcher and catcher, but if the courtesy runner is on base when her turn in the order occurs – it will be an out.
 - 3. Players MUST slide if there is a play at the plate.

- E. Pitching
 - 1. Pitchers must start with both feet on the rubber, and MAY NOT take one step back to gain momentum.
 - 2. Once her stride foot touches the ground on her step towards the plate, her pivot foot must remain in contact with the ground until the ball is released from her hand.
 - 3. Pitchers may receive five (5) warm-up pitches between innings and five (5) warm-up pitches in relief.

XI. SPRD ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

- A. The League Director and Supervisor shall have broad supervisory powers, including:
 - 1. Game schedules
 - 2. Rule interpretations
 - 3. Official assignments
 - 4. Awards
 - 5. Maintenance
 - 6. General management of the league
 - 7. Adjustments and clarifications to the published rules when necessary
 - 8. Maintain full charge and be responsible for keeping the game under strict control at all times
 - 9. Keep the benches clear and in order
 - 10. See that participants keep their temper, self-control, and composure at all times