

# 2012 SOFTBALL COACHES MEETING AGENDA

At Rec Sports, we act as if our future is dependent on you. It is!

Thanks for choosing to play in our programs. **The sports complex belongs to all of us.**

- **For you-The sports complex is a great place to go to have fun, see friends, and meet people.**
- **For us-It's a family business and our life savings is in the sports complex.** We have spent a great deal of time and money to develop the sports complex. We appreciate your confidence and trust. We need you and we appreciate your participation.

## The History of the Sports Complex since opening in 1994

**What does the future look like? More teams will result in more improvements.**

- We are thankful that you have chosen to play in our programs. We couldn't do it without you.
  - If you don't like something, please let us know. If you do like our programs, please recommend us to others.
1. **Rec Sports Drinking Policy:** We did far more than any other sports complex to prevent drinking. We all know there is not a drinking problem at the sports complex. We have to continue to prove it. We will continue to do more than any other sports complex. ***Coaches must cover this drinking policy with every player. This will be strictly enforced. There will not be any warnings.***
    - a. ***Any player or spectator that is drinking will be written up and must immediately leave the premises. If the person does not leave immediately the sheriff will be called.***
    - b. ***The player or spectator will still be responsible for any fines assessed by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission or the Sheriff's Department. The maximum fine from the LCC would be \$300. This payment would be made to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission or the Sheriff's Department.***
    - c. ***Three strikes you're out policy***
      - i. ***Strike 1: The player or spectator is immediately ejected. There will also be a \$50 fine. The player is not eligible to play until the fine is paid.***
      - ii. ***Strike 2: The player or spectator is immediately ejected. There will also be a \$100 fine. The player is not eligible to play until the fine is paid.***
      - iii. ***Strike 3: The player or spectator is immediately ejected. The player will be suspended for the remainder of the season.***

**Rec Sports will not receive one cent of this money. The money will be donated to Mothers Against Drunk Drivers.**

- d. We need your help. What can be done?
  - i. Clearly explain the drinking policy to each player and spectator that is affiliated with your team. **Please sign the form that indicates that you have been informed of the "Three Strikes-You're Out" Drinking Policy. Teams will have to sign this the first night of play**
  - ii. We need the 700 to 1000 people that come to the sports complex each night to help prevent drinking alcohol at the sports complex.
  - iii. Umpires will go over this with each team at home plate before each game the first two weeks of the season. If your team is starting later, then please ask umpires to cover this with your team before your first game.
- e. Umpires will explain this policy to the teams at the fields.
- f. Two umpires are scheduled for each game. The base umpire will walk the parking lot at the conclusion of the first, third and fifth inning. The home plate umpire will walk the parking lot at the conclusion of each game. The umpires will fill out a form to verify that there is no drinking.
- g. Umpires shirts will have "Three Strikes-You're Out" on the back of the umpire shirts.

## 2. Why Play Softball In the Rec Sports Leagues Flyer

3. **Vote on Preference for Awards: Plaques or sponsor Trophies.** We will have both options available. We also have different color combinations for shirts.
4. **Tournament Discounts for our league teams:** League teams will get \$75 off their first tournament and \$50 off their second tournament.
5. **Tournament Flyer: Once a Month Tournaments for Beginner/Intermediate Teams**
  - a. Men's Silver and Bronze and Coed: The Recreation Tournaments would be a great fit for your teams.
  - b. Men's Gold, Silver, and American league teams would fit well in any Moonlight Tournament.
6. **Playoff Format:** Most leagues it's strictly best record. In our softball leagues every team makes the tournament and the tournament winner receives the awards. 7<sup>th</sup> place vs. 10<sup>th</sup> place and 8<sup>th</sup> place vs. 9<sup>th</sup> place, etc
  - a. The tournament is single elimination and the teams are seeded according to record.
  - b. The first and second place teams will receive a bye until the semifinals.
  - c. Teams could play up to six games in the tournament. We figure teams will play two games. You may play one but you may play six.
7. **Hall of Fame Nominations:**
8. **NSA Excess Accidental Medical Insurance Plan:** go to [www.playnsa.com](http://www.playnsa.com) to get information on team insurance.
9. **Weather Number (222-5010) or [www.recsportsonline.com](http://www.recsportsonline.com)**
  - The message is posted at 4:45 please call after that time.
  - If you have any concerns, please contact Rec Sports at 532-2255. The best time to call is between 3:30 and 5:00 pm during school and 9:00 am to 11:00 am in the summer.
  - Schedules and standings will be on the web. Games will not always be posted on the website at the start of the summer and fall season
  - In the event of lightning extreme caution should be taken on all fields. We are responsible for the safe-play conditions for all softball players. If lightning occurs games should be stopped immediately until the conditions are safe to resume play. Please tell teams to wait until a decision has been made by the lead umpire on the lighted fields to cancel the games for the evening. The lead umpire will make the final decision whether games will be cancelled or continued.
10. How to find players to fill out your team or to field a tournament team.
  - a. Facebook
  - b. Craig's List:
  - c. Individual player list on our website
    - i. Click on Need A Team/Player
    - ii. On the next screen, click on View Players Looking for a team
  - d. Softball Scrambles
11. **Softball Scramble: George Vander Hyde**
12. **Rosters** -A maximum of 20 players will be allowed on the regular season roster. Teams may make unlimited roster changes until July 15 in the summer and October 1 in the fall. Teams may make additional roster changes after these time, however, these additions will not be eligible for the playoffs. The signed Waiver of Liability/Roster is the official roster. Players who do not sign the waiver of liability/roster sheets are not eligible to participate. Protests are allowed beginning the third week a team plays.
  - a. **Player Eligibility Protests** - In regular season games, the protest must be turned in along with a \$25.00 per player protest fee at the point of occurrence. If the protest is lost, this fee will not be returned. However, if the protest is won, the \$25.00 will be returned and the protesting team will be awarded a victory and the team using the illegal player will be given a loss. If a player participates without signing the sheet, they will lose a \$25.00 per player fee and they may be dismissed from the tournament or league. In playoff games, the opposing team will get two player protests before the first pitch at no charge. Any additional player protests or if a protest is registered during the game, then the opposing team will pay \$25 per player. Rosters will be available for protests.
  - b. **Playoff Rosters: In order to participate in the playoffs each of the following three requirements must be met:**
    - i. Players must sign the waiver of liability/roster.

- ii. Players can only play on one team in the same division unless approval is given by the league director.
- iii. Playoff rosters are limited to 16 players. Each team must submit a list of players (The list doesn't need to be signatures) eligible for playoff participation by July 15 in the summer session and October 1 for the August session. If teams do not turn in the list then, playoff rosters will be limited to the first 16 names on the signed waiver/roster. Players must play in 40% of games to be eligible for the tournament. If a team uses a player that is not on their roster in a playoff game, it will result in a forfeit. The appeal must take place prior to the conclusion of the game. If there is an appeal, the awards will not be passed out until the players eligibility is verified. The only exception to this rule is if it can be proven the player has participated in at least 75% of a teams games, then a lead umpire, can rule that the player is eligible. If a team appeals an illegal player, then they must follow the appeal process described above. Rosters may be checked in playoff and championship games.
- c. **Non-Playoff Games:** Will be handled through the umpire at the point of discovery. If the protested player is immediately removed at the point of discovery, then the game will continue on with no protest allowed. However, if the protested player continues to play, then the umpire shall verify this player's name through driver's license or other proper identification and the appeal will be handled as described above.

### 13. Suggestions for rule changes

### 14. Important Rules

- a. **Rule 11: Game Time:** If a game begins under forfeit conditions, the home plate umpire should advise both managers.
- b. **Rule 12: Home Run Rule:** Three with the one up. Teams can go one up in the bottom of the seventh inning in league play. In the Thursday night Gold Division the home run rule will be four with no one up rule.
- c. **Rule 20: Bat Ruling-** When purchasing bats we strongly recommend that you get a guarantee from the store that NSA will certify this bat. We would also get a guarantee that if the associations ban the bat that the store will recertify the bat to bring it into compliance or give you a credit toward a new bat. Unfortunately, bat rulings sometimes happen in the middle of the season because bat companies continuously introduce new models.
- d. **Rule 24: Mercy Rule-** There is a 20 run mercy after 3 innings. **There is a 15 run mercy rule after 5 innings in the championship.** The losing team will get additional bats. If there is a clear mismatch you have the following options:
  - a. End the half inning before three outs occur.
  - b. Allow the team that is winning to only bat through their line-up even if three outs have not occurred.
  - c. Have the team that is getting mercied bat multiple innings.
  - d. Allow the team that is getting mercied to have six outs in an inning.
- e. **Rule 25: Extra innings:** Will begin by putting the last batter on second base and starting with one out. Teams can use their courtesy runner for the runner that starts at second base.
- f. **Rule 29:** If a team signs up for 16 games, they will play 14 regular season games plus two playoff games. Teams will only play one game if they get beat the first game of the tournament. However, teams may play as many as six games.
- g. **Rule 35: Hitting Up The Middle:** Safety is our number one priority. If a player jeopardizes the safety of the pitcher, it is the umpire's discretion to warn the batter, call the batter out, or eject the batter. Teams must use a person with extremely quick reaction time at the pitching position. The pitcher is the most vulnerable player on the field. It is the responsibility of the teams to put the player with the best reaction time and best fielding mechanics at the pitching position.
- h. **Rule 52: Positioning for women hitters:** The defensive team must have four outfielders at least 50 feet on the outfield grass until the time of contact for female batters. If there is a violation, the umpire will signal a delayed dead ball. At the conclusion of the play, the offensive team has the choice to take the hit at the time of the violation or to take an automatic walk.
- i. **Rule 53. Positioning** – Teams cannot use five man infields for coed games.
- j. **We will be allowing the same bats that NSA allows.** The NSA website is [www.nsanorth.com](http://www.nsanorth.com). There is a link from our website to this website. Click on Approved Equipment on the left-hand column. It is about two-thirds of the way down the page. Any exceptions will be distributed in writing.

## 15. Fundraiser Opportunities:

- a. Run a Saturday softball tournament at the sports complex. Pay a rental fee of \$125 per field or keep 50% of the profits. All teams must pay a \$20 sanction fee for insurance purposes. All umpires must be certified through NSA. The cost is \$20 per team for sanctioning and \$100 for awards.
- b. Sell fence sponsorships for \$300. Pay for the banner and keep 50% of what's left. Banners cannot compete with Westwood at the Crossing restaurant.

## 16. Improvements

- **We have hired a full-time maintenance person. Andy Bird worked for two years at Fifth Third Ball Park and one year at Comerica Park.**
- 280 tons of stonedust the past five years.
- **Lights on fields 2 and 4. We have received approval for lights on fields 1 and 3.** If we get enough additional teams, we will install lights on field 1.
- Continued grading in the parking lot and the access road.
- Watering the infields before game time when it's dusty.
- Rakes and water for batters boxes.
- **We will continue to use the higher quality port-o-johns with hand sanitizers that were used last year.** Port-o-johns are located by field 1 and additional toilets by fields 2, 3, and 4.
- Schedules and standings on the website. We have also added win/loss percentages to make the tournament seeding easy to calculate.
- Individual Player Lists
  - a. On the Home Page below the sports, click on "Need a Player/Team"
  - b. There is a link at the top of the page that says "View Individual Player List." Click on this link.
  - c. Go to softball and click on this. There are about 100 names on the list.

## 17. Field Rentals: \$15 for an hour and a half. The only times that are available are Saturday's and Sunday's when the season begins. Download a Facility Use Permit and mail it to us with a check.

## 18. Our goal is to communicate with each coach and team.

- Website
- Personal calls
- Monthly group emails.
- Automated calls as registration reminders. This saves money and saves you a spot in the league. If you don't like it, you can hang up.

## 19. Umpire Fees

- \$20 with a partner, \$30 for umpiring alone.
- Most umpires are doing an awesome job getting to the fields on time, treating teams and players with respect, giving teams their money's worth, allowing teams to play as much time as possible, dressing in uniform, and working for the benefit of the entire Rec Sports program.
- If umpires are not taking time to interact with our existing teams and make our program a positive experience for them. Please notify our Lead umpire on field 2. Team input is critical in this process.
- Umpires are expected to address the concerns of our customers.
- We have been making changes to continue to improve our umpiring staff.

## TIME LIMITS

### 20. Time Limits: We must strive to play every inning of every game.

- Our goal is to keep games moving in a prompt and orderly fashion, to keep games on schedule. However, we must create an environment that allows players a relaxing, recreational opportunity.
- Time Limits – Our time limit rule states that no inning begins after 55 minutes of play unless there is sufficient daylight. If the game is within two runs or less, the time limit will be extended to 60 minutes if there is at least one hour per game for remaining games. The first week of the season we will have approximately two hours and 15 minutes to play two games. Each week we will gain 11 minutes of daylight. In June and July we will often have approximately three and a half hours to play these three games. If we have three and a half hours of daylight, one hour and ten minutes should be allowed for each game.
- The first inning allow five warm up pitches and an infield ball. In subsequent innings, allow one warm up pitch and no infield balls.

- If teams aren't hustling, then they are not as concerned about the time limit. These teams may be more interested in just playing for recreation. If teams are hustling, be flexible on the time limit because you can probably make up time in subsequent games.
- If a game is running behind, umpires should start notifying teams at least 25 minutes before calling the game. Tell each team that no inning will start after a specific time on your watch. Let each team see your watch so that there is no misunderstanding about calling the game for a time limit. Place the start time on your scorecard for verification purposes.
- Late summer/Fall sunset times – After June 21, the sunset is one minute and thirty six seconds (1:36) earlier than the day before. This figures out to approximately eleven minutes per week.

**NOTE: Darkness times are based on Wednesday's of each week. There will be a 1:36 adjustment for each day. If it is a sunny day, add 10 minutes to the darkness time.**

|              | Start Time | Games | Sunday<br>Games | Monday<br>Games | Tuesday<br>Games | Wednesday<br>Games | Thursday<br>Games | Friday<br>Games | Darkness |
|--------------|------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------|
| April 10,    | 6:00 PM    | 2     |                 | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 0               | 8:14     |
| April 17     | 6:00 PM    | 2     |                 | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 10              | 8:25     |
| April 24     | 6:00 PM    | 2     |                 | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 10              | 8:36     |
| May 1        | 6:00 PM    | 2     |                 | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 12              | 8:47     |
| May 8        | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 8               | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 12              | 8:58     |
| May 15       | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 8               | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 12              | 9:09     |
| May 22       | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 4               | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 0               | 9:20     |
| May 29       | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 0               | 0               | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 16              | 9:31     |
| June 5       | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 16              | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 16              | 9:42     |
| June 12      | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 16              | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 16              | 9:53     |
| June 19      | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 16              | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 16              | 10:04    |
| June 26      | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 16              | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 0               | 9:53     |
| July 3       | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 16              | 0               | 0                | 16                 | 16                | 16              | 9:42     |
| July 10      | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 16              | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 16              | 9:31     |
| July 17      | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 16              | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 16              | 9:20     |
| July 24      | 6:00 PM    | 3     | 16              | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 16              | 9:09     |
| July 31      | 5:45 PM    | 3     | 16              | 16              | 16               | 16                 | 16                | 16              | 9:04     |
| August 7     | 6:00 PM    | 2     | 16              | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 14              | 8:53     |
| August 14    | 6:00 PM    | 2     | 16              | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 14              | 8:42     |
| August 21    | 6:00 PM    | 2     | 16              | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 14              | 8:31     |
| August 28    | 6:00 PM    | 2     | 16              | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 0               | 8:20     |
| September 4  | 6:00 PM    | 2     | 16              | 0               | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 14              | 8:09     |
| September 11 | 5:50 PM    | 2     | 16              | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 14              | 7:58     |
| September 18 | 5:40 PM    | 2     | 16              | 14              | 14               | 14                 | 14                | 14              | 7:47     |
| September 25 | 6:00 PM    | 1     | 16              | 12              | 12               | 12                 | 12                | 12              | 7:36     |
| October 2    | 6:00 PM    | 1     | 16              | 12              | 12               | 12                 | 12                | 12              | 7:25     |
| October 9    | 6:00 PM    | 1     | 16              | 12              | 12               | 12                 | 12                | 12              | 7:14     |
| October 16   | 5:50 PM    | 1     | 16              | 12              | 12               | 12                 | 12                | 12              | 7:03     |
| October 23   | 5:40 PM    | 1     | 16              | 12              | 12               | 12                 | 12                | 12              | 6:52     |

21. Common Questions and Complaints: **Answers are in bold.**

- Time Limit Scenarios: **Keep this packet and refer to it if the situation arises. This keeps umpires accountable and keeps games going their full distance.**
- It's game time and there are seven players from the home team that are at the field. **Talk with the other team. See if they are willing to let you pick up players from other teams or if they are willing to provide a catcher. Find out if the game will be played as a scrimmage or if it will count in the standings.**
- Its game time and it starts to rain. **Keep your team around to see if the rain will pass quickly. It helps to know the weather report. Resume the game if there is no lightning, and the fields are playable. If your**

**team is not able to wait around, please notify umpires so they can send the other team home and move right in to the next game rather than backing all games up for the night.**

- It's June 20 and a team would like to make a roster addition. **Add them to a new roster sheet that has your team name and night on the top. Turn this in to the Lead umpire on field 2.**
- A team says, "We were visitors both games tonight." **This may be necessary to balance out the schedule. Were you the home team the last time you played that team or the next time you play that team.**
- A team says, "Clark doesn't care about a problem that they brought up." **Clark does care. He has a lot of him time, money and life invested in this sports complex. He will always try to do what is in the best interest of the entire program. This doesn't mean that you will always agree completely with the decisions that are made. We are looking at the entire league not just your team.**
- A team doesn't like the trophies or T-Shirts. **Don't take the awards that night. Call us with the style and color combination that you like. We want you to display the trophy and wear the shirts.**
- We've been the visiting team 70% of the time this season. **Please contact Clark via email and/or phone and we will correct this.**
- We've played that team more times than the other teams. **That is because some teams play 28 games and other teams play 12. We also look at parity of the teams when we schedule. Most teams prefer to have close games against the same team than a perfectly balanced schedule where they get blown out much more frequently.**
- On games that are not completed at the field. Umpires keep \$5 for the first inning and \$3 for each additional inning.
- If the game goes at least 4 innings, then the umpires will not return any money to the teams.
- Field Maintenance Issues: Please notify Hank Bolt and leave a note on the seat of the Mule utility vehicle in the shed. If the issue is not resolved in one week, please notify Clark Ver Hulst immediately.

## 22. Special Scheduling Accommodations

- There are teams that must have late games because they work until 6:00 p.m. or later.
- Some teams must have early games because of young children.
- We accommodate teams by allowing them to play 16, 20, 24 or 28 games. **The seeding will be based on win loss percentages.**
  - a. **Because some teams are playing 16 games and some teams are playing 28 games and because of parity reasons teams will not play each other the same number of games.**
  - b. **Because of double headers and different leagues playing on different fields, teams will not play the same number of games on each field.**
  - c. **When scheduling is tight, teams will play double headers against the same team so that switching fields is minimized. Switching fields delays games and causes games to get cut short.**

## 23. Forfeit philosophy: Everyone loses with a forfeit. Rec Sports and umpires will do all they can to prevent a forfeit.

- What we do to prevent forfeits:
  - a. Sign players up at the field until July 1 for the summer league and October 1 for the fall league. Teams may make three roster changes after that time. Teams may make additional roster changes with the approval of an umpire or Rec Sports.
  - b. We allow you to start with 7 players
  - c. Bat first to give you more time
  - d. Other team supplies the catcher
- Let us know ahead of time
  - a. Even the day of- Call another team or ump and try to pick up a game for another team
  - b. More time means the better chance of saving you money
  - c. Avoid paying double ump fees
- Be honest if your team is short players.
  - a. Talk with the opposing team:
    - i. May give you players
    - ii. Allow you to pick up players from other teams
    - iii. Allow you to add spectators
  - b. Find another team who is willing to stay and play a double header. The team that is stepping in to play gets their choice if they want to take the game as an official game.

- c. The amount of the forfeit fee must be paid prior to the next game.
24. NSA requires that softballs are 44 cor or less. We use the best softballs in West Michigan. Many cities are going to a softball that is 40 cor 375 compression.
25. Waiver Forms
26. Website: [www.recsportsonline.com](http://www.recsportsonline.com)
- Individual Player Lists
  - Info on all programs for all sports
  - Registration forms
  - Renting out fields/facility use permits
  - Join mailing lists
  - Waiver/signed rosters
  - Cancellation info after 4:45
  - Rule sheets
  - Check the weather
  - Directions
  - Pictures
  - League Standings
27. Our philosophy on Recreation Programming
- 10 and 11 team leagues
    - a. Play everyone once and then divide into two divisions if necessary.
    - b. If there is a team that is definitely too good for the league, we have given a second set of awards.
  - 14 team leagues may break into two divisions
  - **We can switch your team to another night or another location to make this a great experience for you.**
  - 6 to 8 week schedules allow us to make the changes
    - a. **If you have a request, let us know. We want you to have a good experience so you keep coming back.**
28. Drawings.