

**COLUMBIA COUNTY YOUTH ATHLETIC  
PROCEDURES**

Adopted by the Columbia County Board of Commissioners on May 4, 2010

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**RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT**

Striving to enrich lives by providing outstanding recreation programs, facilities, and activities.

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Columbia County Parks and Recreation Information:  
Call (706) 863-7523

Bobby Waters Gymnasium:  
Call (706) 868-3458

*Any policy or procedure not covered in this document will be determined by the Columbia County Recreation Department as individual and general situations occur.*

## COLUMBIA COUNTY YOUTH SPORTS

- League rules for each of the following sports are issued by the League Coordinator each season.
- Registration is one (1) month prior to season except the registration for football in July.
- Coaches will inform parents/guardians of practice and game cancellations due to weather.

Sport	Season	Players	Age Control Dates	Age Groups	Player Selection	Coaches Per Team
Baseball Fall	August - October	12-13 per team	May 1, next year	7 & 8 - Machine Pitch 9 & 10 - Mites 11 & 12 - Midgets 13 - 15 - Juniors	See draft procedure	3
Baseball Spring/Summer	March – June  (All-Stars July-August)	12-13 per team	May 1, current year	5 B.A.T.S 6 T-Ball 7 Jr. Pitching Machine 8 Pitching Machine 9 & 10 - Mites 10 Minors (must try out) 11 & 12 - Dixie Youth 13 & 14 - Dixie Boys	See draft procedure  Evaluations For Minors	3
Basketball Winter	December – March	7-9 per team	January 1, next year	6 – G.Y.M.R.A.T.S.  <u>BOYS</u> <u>GIRLS</u> 7 Pee Wee                7 & 8 Mites 8 Mites                    9 & 10 Bantam 9 Mighty Mites        11 & 12 Midget 10 Bantam 11 & 12 Midget 13 – 15 Junior	See draft procedure  Evaluations for ages 9-15	2
Basketball Summer	June – July	8 per team (co-ed)	August 1, current year	10 – 12 Midget 13 – 15 Junior	See draft procedure	2
Cheerleading	September – November		September 1, current year	6-10 years old (no mascots allowed)	By staff	
Football	September – November	16- 24 per team	September 1, current year	6 – Flag                      100 lbs. max 7 – Pee Wee                105 lbs. max 8 – Mites                    115 lbs. max 9 – Jr. Bantam            125 lbs max 10 – Bantam                135 lbs. max 11 - 12 - Midget        155 lbs. max  (No exceptions to required weight limits)	See draft procedure  Evaluations for ages 7-12	4
Soccer/Fall	August – October (All-Stars – November- December)		August 1, current year	* 5 year olds (fall only) Under 8 (6 & 7)            (8 vs. 8) Under 10 (8 & 9)        (9 vs. 9) Under 12 (10 & 11)      (8 vs. 8) Under 14 (12 & 13)      (11 vs. 11) Under 18 (14 - 17)      (11 vs. 11)	See draft procedure	3
Soccer/Spring	March- April					
Softball	March – June (All-Stars – July-August)	12-13 per team	January 1, current year	6 & 7 – T-Ball 8 & 9 - Pitching Machine 9 & 10 – Mites 11 & 12 – Ponytails 12-14 – Junior Girls	See draft procedure  Evaluations for 9 – 14	3

## INFORMATION FOR YOUTH AND PARENTS

1. Eligibility requirements for participants:
  - A. Be a resident of Columbia County or pay a **DOUBLE** nonresident fee per sport, per child. Out-of-County participants are not eligible for All-Star teams.
  - B. First-time participants must register at Patriots Park. The registration form must be signed by parent/guardian if participant is under 18. At that time, parents/guardians must provide proof of age for participant with either a birth certificate or driver's license and pay the registration fee. Repeat participants may register on-line at [www.columbiacountyga.gov](http://www.columbiacountyga.gov).
  - C. Have returned all equipment or uniforms from a previous sport, if applicable.
  - D. Youth may not participate in a middle/high school sport and the same sport at the Recreation Department if recreation games and originally scheduled school games overlap.
  - E. Participants will be ineligible for the recreation program in the same sport if they have dressed out for one school game regardless if they played or not.
  
2. Other registration considerations:
  - A. Late registration will result in the participant being placed on a waiting list and will be charged a \$10 late fee.
  - B. Participants **may not** request a coach, team, or to be placed with another participant.
  - C. If a participant requests to change teams after the league draft is over, the participant will be removed from the current team and placed on the bottom of the waiting list and placed on another team if and when space becomes available.
  - D. No participant may play on two recreation teams during the same time period – excluding travel teams.
  - E. If an incorrect birth date was put on the registration form, the participant will be placed in the appropriate league if space is available. Otherwise, the child will be placed on the waiting list.
  - F. Refunds will be issued upon the request of the parent or guardian, less 25% administration fee, if the team has not played a game. After the team has played its first game, no refund will be issued. All requests for refunds must be made in writing and will be approved by the Recreation Manager. Eligibility for full refunds are reviewed and approved by the Recreation Manager.
  - G. The Columbia County Recreation Department provides a supplemental insurance policy as part of the registration fees. In the event that a child receives medical attention due to an injury sustained during practice or in a game, please contact the Patriots Park administrative office at (706) 863-7523 the next day for further information.
  - H. Recreation teams must obtain an approved Travel Permission Slip before traveling to any out of county tournament. These forms are available from the Recreation Department Main Office. Expenses will be up to individual teams.
  - I. Equipment
    1. Participants will be issued the appropriate equipment and uniform for each sport.
    2. Parents/guardians shall be responsible for replacing any equipment or uniforms that are damaged or lost at the current replacement cost.
    3. If a team wishes to purchase their own uniform, then they must purchase uniforms that are the color designated by the league coordinator.
    4. All football players need to bring a change of clothing to their last ball game, so the Recreation Department Staff may collect uniforms.

## PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF ETHICS

1. Any parent having knowledge of his/her child currently playing in a league under false age or identification will be suspended from that program and the possibility of future programs.
2. Parents and spectators should remember that the recreation programs are for the children to learn fundamentals, techniques, sportsmanship, and teamwork and to have FUN! Please do not get caught up in the “winning is everything” attitude.
3. Parents should also remember to support all children participating in the program and not draw attention to themselves by being rude, arrogant, overbearing, or undignified. Youth are influenced by observing parent and spectator behavior.
4. No parent or spectator should use tobacco products, drugs, or alcoholic beverages during any youth activity including practices or games. County Ordinances prohibit these activities.
5. Any parent or spectator acting in an un-sportsmanlike manner that is detrimental to any league, player, official, coach, or another spectator, will be subject to the following disciplinary action by the Recreation Department:
  - A. Unsportsmanlike conduct (i.e., language or actions unbecoming to the league) – individual(s) must leave the Park immediately and will be suspended from the next game.
  - B. Touching/striking a coach or official or damaging County property – individual(s) will be suspended indefinitely from attending practices and games.
6. Parents and spectators should remember coaches are volunteers and are giving their time to help youth learn the game. Please do not complain or offer advice while being a spectator.

## DRAFT PROCEDURE FOR TEAM SELECTION

Draft procedure:

1. Player evaluations will be conducted for ages nine and above except for soccer (due to league age make-up)
2. All players eligible for the draft will be numerically listed on a draft sheet.
3. Every child will be placed in the draft each year.
4. The head coach's child is automatically placed on his or her team. Any coach who does not have a child participating in the league will have the opportunity to select one player from the draft prior to beginning team selection.
5. Team coaches will select players until all teams have the same number of players or until all players are selected. Each round of the draft will begin with team coaches randomly drawing numbers for draft order.
6. If a league has sufficient teams to divide into two or more divisions, then teams within those divisions will be determined by random draw. (Dixie Baseball special provision: To effectively promote parity in the Dixie Youth Program, the Program Specialist will place the teams in divisions.)
7. After registration, no child can move from one league or sport to another without going on the bottom of the waiting list for that sport.
8. Coaches will not be allowed to switch players after the team selection procedure has been declared complete.
9. Cheerleading selection will be coordinated by the Program Coordinator.
10. The team selection procedure will be conducted by the League Coordinator.
11. No team practices will begin until the draft procedure has been completed. Practices will be limited to four (4) days per week before the season opens and two (2) days per week after the season begins. Practice is limited to no more than 2 hours per day. Any coach in violation of this rule will be subject to disciplinary action.

## YOUTH ATHLETIC COACHES POLICIES & ETHICS

1. All coaches (i.e., head coaches, assistant coaches, and volunteers) must do the following:
  - A. Must be 18 years old and/or not attending high school. Special requests will be reviewed by staff.
  - B. Fill out a Background Consent form. Only coaches who have filled out criminal background checks that have been run by the Columbia County Sheriff's Department and evaluated by Recreation staff may assist with practices and be with the team during games.
  - C. Attend the required coach's clinics or show proof of online re-certification each year in each sport he/she wishes to coach.
  - D. Study the rules of the game, adhere to the rules, and gain a thorough knowledge of the sport.
  - E. Head coaches are allowed to have their own child on his/her league team.
  - F. Encourage the youth to learn and play the game and not draw attention to themselves.
  - G. Be a worthy example to the youth under their supervision, refraining from the use of tobacco products or drugs in the vicinity of the youth. Coaches should not drink any alcoholic beverages on the day of games or practices prior to working with the youth.
  - H. Be fair and unbiased in their decisions regarding the playing of children.
  - I. Be dignified, courteous, positive, friendly, calm, and always alert; never rude, arrogant or overbearing during practice and games. Coaches displaying conduct considered to be detrimental to and not in the best interest of the Recreation Program as a whole may be placed on probation or dismissed as a volunteer coach.
  - J. Should keep in mind that the youth are more important than the game or the ambitions of any single player or parent.
  - K. Ensure each youth receives adequate playing time during each game.
  - L. Cooperate and be professional in their association with fellow coaches and officials.
  - M. Assist in the collection of any uniform or equipment that is the property of the Recreation Department. These items must be returned no later than one week after the last game.
  - N. All-Star coaches, upon accepting the responsibility to coach, are required to undergo an additional criminal background check and accompany their team to all games. Failure to do so may result in immediate suspension from the program.
  
2. Coach selection will be as follows:
  - A. A coach meeting the requirements in section 1 and returning to the same age group in the same sport will have the first opportunity to coach a team in that same sport and age group again.
  - B. A coach meeting the requirements in section 1 and who coached in that sport last season in another age group will have the first opportunity to move up or down in age groups if an opening occurs.
  - C. Volunteers and parents who meet the requirements in section 1 above.

3. Disciplinary action for the first offense of un-sportsmanlike manner or any action by a coach that could prove detrimental to the players, officials, spectators, or league includes:
- A. Language unbecoming to the league (suspension next game and must leave the park).
  - B. Not playing youth for the required time – those youth must start the next game and must play the required playing time for previous and current game.
  - C. Fighting (suspension indefinitely).
  - D. Touching or striking an official (suspension indefinitely).
  - E. Unsportsmanlike conduct at an athletic event (suspension next game and must leave the park immediately).
  - F. Damage to county property (suspension indefinitely).
  - G. Thrown out of a game (suspension next game, and must leave the park immediately).
  - H. Having knowledge of players in the league or tournament under the Columbia County Recreation Department, the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association, Dixie Baseball & Softball, or Georgia State Soccer Association, under false age or identification, will be suspended.

At the first offense, verbal counsel will be given with a written statement of the violation with expectations for compliance with written documentation by the Athletic Supervisor and League Coordinator. Suspension will be at the discretion of the Columbia County Recreation Department Manager.

Second offense of any of the above infractions will result in coaching status review by Recreation staff before being allowed to coach another game.

Any policy or procedure not covered in this document will be determined by the Columbia County Recreation Department as individual and general situations occur.

If a coach or parent sees an accident, the Field Supervisor onsite should be contacted and notify the Administrative Office (8 AM –5 PM) at Patriots Park the following work day at (706) 863-7523. Accident/Incident reports can also be faxed to (706) 868-3340.

## CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK PROCEDURES

1. All coaches, assistants, and volunteers must fill out a Criminal Background Check consent form before being accepted as a coach. All-Star coaches must submit an additional criminal background consent form before working with an All-Star team.
2. Only the Athletic Supervisor may take the forms to the Sheriff's Department and pick them up.
3. If anything shows up on the Criminal Background Form, the following procedure will be implemented:
  - A. The Athletic Supervisor will notify the League Coordinator.
  - B. League Coordinator calls the individual to set up a meeting immediately.
  - C. Within two (2) days, the Athletic Supervisor and the League Coordinator will meet with the individual to discuss the problem.
  - D. The individual will have no contact with the team until after the above meeting.
  - E. The following actions will result:

<b>Immediate Dismissal</b>	<b>Coaching But Under a 1-Year Probation</b>
Simple Battery, where the victim is a minor	Alcohol related violations (DUI in last 2 years)
Aggravated Battery, where the victim is a minor	
Cruelty to Children	
Contributing to the delinquency of a minor in the last 5 years	Contributing to the delinquency of a minor more than 5 years
Any sexual offense	
Violation of any controlled substance act. (Felony in last 10 years)	Violation of any controlled substance act. (Misdemeanor in last 5 years)
Murder or Felony Murder	
Crimes involving family violence	
Any felony or attempt to commit any felony not listed above within last 5 years	Any felony not listed above later than 5 years
Any other crime that bears upon fitness to have responsibility for the safety and well being of children. (Felony within the last 10 years)	Any other crime that bears upon fitness to have responsibility for the safety and well being of children. (Misdemeanor within the last 5 years)

*The above chart is taken from National Recreation and Parks Association Guidelines*

## SELECTIONS FOR ALL-STAR PLAYERS AND COACHES

1. All-Star players must possess and demonstrate the following:
  - A. Ability and skill within the sport
  - B. Good attitude and sportsmanship
  - C. Be coachable
  - D. Make practices and games
  - E. Be a team player, not an individual player
  - F. No history of behavioral problems during the season or during previous All-Star competitions
  
2. Selection Process for All-Star teams:
  - A. All -Star nomination sheets will be mailed to each head coach prior to the end of the regular season and are to be returned to the Recreation Department one week prior to the selection meeting.
  - B. Coaches will be notified by e-mail, phone, or mail by the Recreation Department of the date and time of the selection meeting at least one week prior.
  - C. All-star meetings will be conducted by the appropriate league coordinator with the assistance from at least one additional Recreation staff member.
  - D. All coaches must sign in at the selection meeting.
  - E. Each child on the All-Star selection sheet will be listed on a master ballot. A player can be added to the ballot by the staff if a player has intentionally or unintentionally been left off the list.
  - F. Coaches will then vote on the first nine players in baseball and softball and the first eight in soccer. Remaining players will be decided by the three coaches and Recreation Department staff. No alternates will be added without approval of the Athletic Supervisor and the Recreation Department Manager.
  - G. Dixie Baseball Provision: Once players are nominated from each league division, they will receive an invitation to an all-star evaluation. The evaluation will be used to determine the first nine players for each All-star team (one team per division). The evaluation will be conducted by the Columbia County Recreation Department with the scoring of players being performed by a minimum of five qualified sport specific candidates selected by the Athletic Supervisor. After the evaluation and selection of the first nine players, recreation the staff will select the all-star coaches. The coaches will then select the final three players to make up the all-star team consisting of 12 players.
  - H. After completion of the All-Star selection, if a selected player(s) is unable to participate, then a replacement player(s) will be added to the team from the players listed on the master ballot. No players will be allowed to participate on an All-Star team unless they were originally on the All-Star master ballot.
  - I. No All-Star baseball or softball practice will start until established dates.
  - J. If an All-Star team wishes to purchase additional uniforms, then they must be in the Recreation Department colors of navy, light blue, and/or white and must bear the name of Columbia County.
  - K. World Series travel will be provided by the Recreation Department. No transportation will be provided to district or state tournaments.

3. Selection Process for All-Star coaches:
  - A. Very knowledgeable of the rules, fundamentals, and techniques of the sport
  - B. An example of outstanding character (e.g., calm, courteous, dignified, and never rude arrogant or overbearing) during the season and not on probation
  - C. Focused on needs of the youth and not the coach's own ambition
  - D. NYSCA certified
  - E. Able to make all practices and games
  - F. The Recreation Department League Coordinator will select up to three (3) coaches to coach the All-Star team with the Recreation staff and the Athletic Supervisor selecting the head coach.
  - G. An assistant coach is eligible to be selected as an All-Star coach.
  - H. The Recreation Department reserves the right to go outside of the league to select a coach if they feel it is in the best interest of the program. (For example, a first place finish in the league does not justify a coaching position for an all-star team.)
  
4. National Level Tournaments:
  - A. County pays for player transportation
  - B. Tournament host teams pay for participant food and lodging

## **ADVERSE WEATHER INFORMATION**

### **1. Storms**

- A. The following procedures will be utilized by the Recreation Department staff, officials, participants and citizens in the event of the severe weather during outdoor activities.
- B. During outdoor activities Recreation Department staff will monitor a portable lightning detection device.
- C. When the device indicates an approaching storm the staff will use the following guidelines to determine appropriate action.
  - 1. Indication of lightning 20-40 miles away – Recreation staff will closely monitor the detection equipment.
  - 2. Indication of lightning 8-20 miles away – Recreation staff will put the game or event official on alert that a storm is approaching.
  - 3. Indication of lightning 3-8 miles away – Recreation staff will notify the game or event officials to cease all activities immediately for a minimum of 30 minutes from last detection of lightning in this range.
  - 4. The recreation staff and officials will advise participants, spectators and staff to seek cover away from the field in a nearby building or in their vehicles and wait for an all clear notice or for the activity to be called off.

### **2. High Heat**

- A. Replacement of lost fluids and periodic rest is essential to the health of anyone participating in outdoor activities during hot and humid conditions. The definition of rest is minimal physical activity with no running or vigorous activity. Rest should be accomplished in the shade or an air conditioned environment if possible.
- B. It is recommended that during periods of high heat and humidity athletes should drink a minimum of 8 ounces of fluid an hour and as many as 16 ounces during more extreme conditions.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF ATHLETIC OFFICIALS AND UMPIRES

1. An athletic official or umpire must do the following:
  - A. Complete an official/umpire application and register as a Columbia County vendor.
  - B. Attend a required training program to become certified if not a member of the Georgia High School Association or Georgia Youth Soccer Association. This clinic will cover rules, positioning, and field awareness and other sport-related topics.
  - C. Be knowledgeable of the rules of the game, know the appropriate hand signals and signs and be able to maintain order during the game.
  - D. Call a fair game and not draw attention to themselves.
  - E. Be a worthy example to the youth playing the game.
  - F. Be fair and unbiased in their decisions regarding all games.
  - G. Cooperate and be professional in their association with fellow officials/umpires, youth league coaches, players and spectators.
  - H. Be dignified, courteous, positive, friendly, calm and always alert; never rude, arrogant or overbearing.
  - I. Keep in mind that safety is more important than the game or the ambition of the player, coach, parent, or themselves.
  - J. Will not use tobacco products or drugs in the vicinity of any youth or athletic facilities or drink any alcoholic beverage before or during or a game.
  - K. Furnish own uniform and any equipment needed to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the game.
  
2. Athletic Official or Umpire game responsibilities include:
  - A. Arrive at assigned facility 30 minutes prior to game time.
  - B. Be knowledgeable of the rules for the league.
  - C. Be in the prescribed uniform and have the appropriate equipment to call the game.
  - D. Walk and inspect the field and game equipment for safety.
  - E. Check players to ensure that they are in the appropriate uniform.
  - F. Have teams ready to play at game time and within five minutes prior to game breaks.
  - G. After a game, officials should leave the playing area as a crew and avoid any undue conversation with spectators.