

City of Jackson Parks and Recreation Dept.

2026 Softball Program

- Softball Coordinator:** James Wagner
(517) 990-6288
softball@cityofjackson.org
161 W. Michigan Ave.
Jackson, MI 49201
- Softballs:** **All Leagues will be using**
52 core 300 compression Softballs
Men & Seniors use the 12" ball
Women use 11" ball
- Bats:** Any bat deemed illegal by USA is NOT allowed in the City of Jackson Softball Leagues. Only bats on the ASA certified list will be legal in league play. Please check the USA Softball of Michigan website for a list of legal bats. Bats again this year must have an approved **2026 sticker** to be used in league play.
- Practice:** Teams may reserve fields for practice beginning Monday, April 1st. Reservations are \$5.00 for one hour, and must be made on the 5th floor of City Hall.
- USA Registration:** With your entry fee, you will be registered with USA Softball of Michigan. Each team will receive a Rules Book and Scorebook.
- New website:** www.usasoftballmi.org
Other websites: gosoftball.com
registerUSAsoftball.com

District Commissioner, James Connors, 734-216-678



LEAGUE PLAN & ENTRY FEE PROCEDURE

<u>ENTRY FEES:</u> Includes USA Softball of Michigan fee			
\$550	Men	Tuesday & Thursday	14 games
\$450	Men	Sundays	12 games
\$650	Men	Tuesday & Thursday DH	20 games
\$550	Women	Thursdays	14 games
\$650	Senior	Mondays Double Header	20 games
\$450	Co-ed	Mondays and Sundays	12 games

REGISTER ON LINE

Just scan the QR Code to register online and e-mail your roster to James Wagner at softball@cityofjackson.org or register on the 5th floor of City Hall (161 W. Michigan Avenue) between Tuesday, March 10 thru Monday April 13, 2026.



ENTRY FEE & UMPIRE FEE

With your entry fee, each team will be registered with USA Softball of Michigan, along with a scorebook and rule book. Since the umpires are not on payroll with the Recreation Dept., they are considered independent contractors. The USA SOM will cover the insurance for each umpire and team that is registered.

TEAMS WILL NOT BE SCHEDULED UNTIL ENTRY FEES ARE PAID IN FULL

NOTE: Roster sheets are the responsibility of the manager and MUST BE SIGNED by each player before participating in the softball program.

On game days, each team will have to pay the field umpire \$15.00 each. Since they are independent contractors, they will be collecting each teams' money before the game starts.

BACK>>>>>>>>>>

FIELD RESERVATIONS:

1. Reservation weeks begin on Monday and go thru Sunday. You must come to the Recreation Office between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to reserve a practice field for that week or fields may be reserved on Friday for the following week. **NO PHONE RESERVATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** There will be a \$5 fee per hour for use of practice field.
2. Each team may reserve a field twice a week. Reservations will be taken on the hour only, i.e. 6:00, 7:00, 8:00. . .

SEASON BEGINS SUNDAY, MAY 3rd, 2026

SCHEDULES:

Schedules can be picked up at the Recreation Department the week of April 20th. Please phone 788-4040 if you would like us to hold your schedules. Schedules will be posted on the City of Jackson website under Parks and Recreation. www.cityofjackson.org

RAIN-OUT PROCEDURE:

Every effort will be made to make up rain out games on your league night. If there is not a way to make up a game on your normal league night, we may have to make up on a Friday. The rainout line is 517-788-4690.

STORM POLICY:

If thunder and lightning are observed or dark clouds are approaching, our umpires have been instructed to stop play and advise everyone involved to seek shelter until playable conditions return. The safest places are a sturdy building or a car. Stay away from metal sheds or under trees. Remember that NO ball game is important enough to risk the danger of being struck by lightning. We can always resume games at a later time.

LOCAL TOURNAMENTS:

Information received by the Recreation Department will be posted at the City Hall Office. Teams are usually notified by mail and/or email when a local tournament is sponsored or information is available in the Sports Section on www.mlive.com.

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Jackson Recreation Department

2026 SOFTBALL RULES

The Jackson Recreation Softball League will follow the rules of the USA Softball of Michigan with the following exceptions and additions:

PLAYERS:

1. Must be 18 years old and/or a High School graduate.
2. Must properly and completely fill out roster information.
3. Must conduct themselves properly with an emphasis on good sportsmanship.

PRE-GAME PRACTICE

1. Teams must be ready to take the infield when the umpire calls for their team.
2. **No batting practice is allowed on the game field, home plate or back stop**

LINE-UP CARDS

1. All official line-up cards are to be given to the scorekeeper **two minutes** prior to game time. Line up cards will be provided by Recreation Department.
2. **Managers are to use first and last initial when filling out line-up cards.**
3. No line-up changes after first pitch has started game.

PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

1. Prior to the start of the game, the manager shall submit to the scorekeeper a line-up of **as many batters as he/she chooses.**
2. If a team begins play with 11 players, that team may continue the game with 10, 9 or 8 players, or if a team begins play with 10 players, that team may continue with 9 or 8 players. Failure to complete the game with 11 or 10 players results in passing a batter with no penalty. Exception, due to ejection, becomes a forfeit.
3. A team may never legally start or continue a game with less than 8 players.
4. Any player can rotate in field at any time, as long as they are in the batting order.
5. If a team starts with 8 or 9 players any additional players may be added to the bottom of their batting order at any time. **Any player added after the start of the game must play in the field a half inning before being allowed to bat.**
6. Any player may be withdrawn and re-entered once, providing such player occupies their original place in the batting line-up upon re-entry.

7. In case of injury, and all substitutes have already been entered in the game, the opposing manager may pick the player of his/her choice to run for the injured player. A player being removed and replaced under this provision may not return to the line-up.
8. If a player has to leave a game because of an injury and there are no replacements, that player may be scratched from the batting order without a penalty of an out. The injured player may return to the lineup, with the exception of an unconscious player. .

GAME REGULATIONS

A limit of five over-the-fence home runs per team will be in effect for all games played in the City Recreation League. The penalty for over-the-fence home runs in excess of five is the batter being called out and each base runner returned to the base occupied prior to the pitch.

1. The three-ball, two-strike system with the batter allowed one extra foul ball after one strike will be in effect.
2. The game will be seven innings and played under the rules set forth by the Joint Rules Committee of Softball with the following exceptions:
 - a. The game will be terminated and official if: the home team has a 10-run lead after 4 ½ innings. (The visiting team must bat at least 5 times). And if either team has a 10-run lead after the completion of any succeeding inning or 15 runs after 4 innings.
 - b. The game will be official if 5 or more completed innings have been played or 4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
 - c. Games called for any reason before 4 ½ or 5 innings have been completed shall be resumed at the exact point they were stopped. **TIME LIMIT IS 1 HOUR AND 10 MINUTES**
3. Five-run limit per inning for Senior & Women's lower division teams (will be determined by the Recreation Department) will be limited to 5 runs per inning, except for the final inning of the game in which each team can score an unlimited number. The umpire must announce the last inning unless it is the seventh inning. TEN-run rule applies for all games.
4. Players are not allowed to remove dirt from batters boxes or alter batter boxes. Any player refusing to go by this rule is subject to ejection.
5. Any runner who has obtained first or third base will be allowed to stand in foul territory, as long as they maintain contact with the base during pitch. This rule is for player safety and is optional. This rule applies to orange bag at first base also.
6. Batter is declared out on a third strike foul tip caught by catcher. Batter is declared out on any foul tip and caught by catcher.
7. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning.
Comment: Allows for all Adult Slow Pitch Divisions of Play to use a Courtesy Runner once per inning. If the courtesy runner is on base when it is their turn to bat in the lineup they will take an out for that spot in the lineup.

BETWEEN INNING WARM-UP

1. Teams will be permitted to have an infield ball for practice before 1st inning only.
2. Teams will be permitted to throw the ball around the infield after put outs.
3. Player and manager conferences shall not exceed 1 minute in length. Conferences shall not exceed 1 per inning or 3 total/game.

PITCHING REGULATIONS

1. The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc of at least 6 feet from the ground, but no more than 10 feet at its maximum height.
2. Pitchers are allowed 3 warm-up pitches for the first inning and 1 pitch the remainder of the game.
3. Women pitchers will use 11 inch softballs with an USA approved core rating of 52 and a compression of 300. Men pitchers will use 12 inch softballs with an USA approved core rating of 52 and a compression of 300.
4. Pitched balls that hit any part of the strike zone mat are strikes.
5. Pitchers may stand up to 6 feet directly behind pitching rubber to deliver a pitch.
6. PITCHING RULE:
 - a. **Preliminaries:** The pitcher must take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet with the 'pitcher's box'. This is the proper pitching position prior to the delivery of the pitch. Note: The pitcher's box is defined as 24 inches in width and 6' long, as defined by USA Softball of Michigan.
 - b. **Starting the Pitch:** The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion with the ball after the required stop. While in the required pitching position, prior to the required stop, any motion may be used.
 - c. **Legal Delivery:** The pivot foot must remain in the proper pitching position until the pitched ball leaves the hand. If a step is taken, it may be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot remains in the proper pitching position and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

**THE JACKSON RECREATION DEPARTMENT RESERVES THE
RIGHT TO BAN ANY BAT OR SOFTBALL THAT IS DETERMINED TO BE
DETRIMENTAL TO THE GAME.**

PROTEST

1. If a manager feels that an official has misinterpreted a rule, They must register his intent to protest immediately after the play occurs and before the next pitch. They must notify the umpire and the scorekeeper that he intends to protest, following the proper procedure.
 - a. The scorer will note on the protest form when the protest was made and the reason for playing the game under protest.
 - b. The manager will file a written protest stating all the details of the protest and present this protest along with \$10 to the Jackson Recreation Department in City Hall (5th Floor) before 5:00 p.m. the following working day. **DO NOT LEAVE MONEY WITH THE SCOREKEEPER.**
 - c. If the protest is allowed, the money will be returned. If disallowed, the money will not be refunded.

- d. Protests on player eligibility must be registered with the Jackson Recreation Department within 24 hours after completion of the game.
- e. If a team uses an illegal player in a playoff or championship game that team will forfeit per Softball Coordinator, no protest necessary.

CONDUCT

1. Any team member having been expelled from one game shall be ineligible to play or participate in the team's next Jackson Recreation game including league and/or playoffs. A second expulsion may result in a 3-game suspension. A third expulsion may result in a season suspension. (Must be written up by the scorekeeper and signed by the umpire.)
2. Any team member who intimidates or uses physical violence toward any umpire, scorekeeper, or league official before, during or after a game, may be suspended indefinitely from the league and any sports sponsored by the Jackson Recreation Department.
3. Any team member having used physical violence toward another player, manager, or spectator may be suspended from the game and for a minimum of his team's next 2 Recreation League games.
4. The Jackson Recreation Department, for due cause, can suspend team members and managers.
5. Team members may appeal suspension. They must appeal within 1 week of the suspension by presenting this request in writing to the Jackson Recreation Department.
6. If an umpire is physically attacked (any physical contact) by any team member and/or spectator that team will forfeit game immediately.
7. Any use of alcohol in the dugout, near dugout, bleachers, or near softball field may result in suspension from that game and the teams next game.
8. Each player is responsible for his or her conduct before, during and after the game.
9. Any player intentionally colliding with a catcher at home may be subject to automatic ejection. Catchers are not allowed to block the plate or baseline. To avoid collision on a play at home base, the offensive player must avoid contact with the catcher and catcher may not block the plate or baseline without the ball. (City League rule to stress safety).
10. No hanging jewelry is allowed during play.
11. Use of illegal ball. **The pitcher is responsible** to check the ball before he/she pitches it. If the ball is illegal the team batting will be given a warning and the ball will be put out of play. If it happens more than once the batter will be called out and the manager will be subject to ejection.
12. Use of an illegal bat, player will be automatically ejected from the game.
13. Any bat which has been altered, the manager and offending player will receive a 6 game suspension and must apply in writing for a hearing and reinstatement.
14. Any bat or ball that is on the USA certified list at the beginning of the season will not be removed from play if that bat or ball is ruled illegal by the USA at any time during the season. However, the Jackson Recreation Department reserves the right to ban any bat or softball that is determined to be dangerous to the game.
15. **The manager is responsible for the following:**
The eligibility of all players upon their respective team. They will be held responsible for the appearance of the players and their conduct on and off the field. Before, during and after each game.

Guidelines for Lightning Safety

All individuals participating in or observing an outdoor softball event are responsible for their own safety and should monitor threatening weather conditions. Before each practice, warm-up time, or game, the home plate umpire should appoint an individual as the designated “weather watcher.” If the home plate umpire is the only official at the event, then the home plate umpire should be responsible for the duties of the “weather watcher.” The individual will make the call to stop play, remove individuals from the field, and announce a warning to the spectators

The designated weather watcher should be aware of weather conditions at all times, including observing the conditions and keeping abreast of the weather forecast. As a means of monitoring local weather, the designated weather watcher can consult the National Weather Service for current information. All storm warning and storm watches should be heeded.

When the weather becomes dangerous, the designated weather watcher will announce that all play activities are suspended and all individuals, both players and spectators, should seek appropriate shelter. No place is absolutely safe from lightning threat; however, some places are safer than others. Large, enclosed structures (substantially constructed buildings) tend to be safer than smaller structures or open structures. In general, a fully enclosed vehicle with the windows rolled up tends to be safer than being outside so long as contact with metal surfaces inside and outside the vehicle is avoided. The following areas are not appropriate shelter and should be avoided:

Any area of higher elevation; wide-open areas such as sports fields, tall isolated objects such as flag poles, light poles, or trees; metal fences and metal bleachers, unprotected open buildings like dugouts, picnic pavilions, rain shelters and bus stops.

When determining whether or not to suspend play, the designated weather watcher should use his/her common sense and good judgment. If a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during an activity or contest (regardless of whether lightning is seen or thunder heard), postpone or suspend the activity until the hazard has passed. Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds and thunder or lightning. Even storms that are many miles away can pose a lightning danger. This may mean the appropriate decision is to suspend activities even before the first sight of lightning or sound of thunder.

All individuals should have the right to leave an athletic site or activity, without fear of repercussion or penalty, in order to seek a safer structure or location if they feel they are in danger from impending lighting activity. **Safety is the number one consideration**, the activity can be made up later.

If activity has been suspended due to lightning, the designated weather watcher should wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder prior to resuming activity. Each time additional lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the minimum 30-minute waiting period should be reset. A clear sky or lack of rainfall are not adequate indicators for resuming play. The minimum 30-minute return-to-play waiting period should not be shortened. Play should not be resumed even after the 30 minute waiting period if any signs of thunderstorm activity remain in the area or if the weather forecast indicates the threat is not over.

NO LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES CAN GUARANTEE ABSOLUTE SAFETY. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY PERSON TO BE AWARE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO BE SAFE. USE COMMON SENSE AND GOOD JUDGEMENT. PLAN AHEAD AND MAKE SAFETY YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.

