

MALLARD CREEK OPTIMIST SOFTBALL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What happens if I register late? Depending on the number of girls on the team(s) at the age group the player will either be put on a wait list or added to a roster. This is done in agreement with the coaches and softball commissioner.
2. What is the registration fee used for? MCOC and NMFL are run completely by volunteers. ~75% of the registration fees pays for the use of the fields and lights. MCOC rents the fields from Mecklenburg County at a rate of \$25/hour for the field and \$17.50/hour for lights. ~20% of fees go towards paying umpires. ~25% goes towards uniform purchases and balls. This, of course, adds up to over 100% - the difference is offset by sponsorships, concession stand and fund raising.
3. What is supplied with uniform and what do I need to get? The league provides the jersey (shirt) and socks. If a player has a uniform in good condition from the previous season she can use that again and you receive a \$20 discount. Occasionally the commissioner will require all or older uniforms to be replaced to insure our sponsors are properly recognized. You will need to provide black shorts or softball pants.
4. Why are all the teams the same color? By having all the girls wear the same color each season we are 1) recognizable as being MCOC Softball and 2) allow the girls to use the same uniforms for more than one season.
5. What if my daughter wants to change her uniform number? At registration, make a request to the Softball Commissioner directly or via the registration form. If that number is not already used by a girl on that team, the change will be made with the purchase of a new uniform.
6. Why do we have to do concession duty? The concession stand raises funds for the organization and helps keep costs down. Even though softball plays half of the games at other parks or at times when the concession stand is not open, the primary purpose is to assist in keeping the registration costs down. The concession staff ensures the softball teams are not scheduled as many shifts due to playing away games at other fields.
7. How are coaches picked? We are always in need of head coaches and assistant coaches and they are usually the parent(s) of the player(s) on the team. A deep understanding of softball (or baseball) is not required, but we do want to ensure that our coaches are there to help all the girls on the team and follow the guiding principles of the Optimist Club and provide a good environment and example. The Softball Commissioner will make final determination on coaches. If you are interested in coaching or have questions, please contact the commissioner or an existing coach for information.
8. Why do coaches need to be Optimist Club members? By becoming a member, the organization and the coach gain protection via insurance through Optimist International and provides background checks of the adults working with the children. Optimist International also requires that all coaches be members. There is an annual cost of membership, but that is generally offset by deduction for your child(ren)'s registration for each season and each sport.
9. What happens on skills day? Girls are assessed by the coaches on their softball skills. If there are enough girls for more than one team at the age level, the coaches will use the assessment to finalize the rosters.
10. How are teams picked? If there are multiple teams at an age group, the coaches will work together to balance the teams.
11. How many girls on a team? 8U and 10U field ten girls at a time, the older age groups field nine. We prefer to have 2-3 girls more than the number that are fielded to allow for players not available for a game and to maximize field time and at bats. We have fielded teams with between 9 and 13+ players.

12. How do I know what team and coach my daughter is on? You will be notified either on skills day or the following Monday.
13. When do practices start? Typically, they will start the week immediately following the skills day.
14. When are practices and how long are they? Before the first game, teams generally practice twice a week. The dates and time are determined by the coaches based on their availability and availability of fields. Teams may practice on two weekdays or one weekday and Saturday. 8U and 10U are given priority for 6:00 practice times on weekdays. Teams continue to practice throughout the season. Days and times may change due to field availability and if/when the team plays that week. Weekday practices are generally 1 ½ hours while Saturday practices are generally 2 hours.
15. How long is the season? Skills day is August 4th and weather permitting the season ends on November 10th.
16. How long is a game? Games are played for 85 minutes or 6 innings whichever comes first (16u is 105 or 7 innings). If time is up and the inning is not finished, the inning is completed.
17. What days and times are the games played? Game scheduling is subject to team, umpire and field availability. Teams can have games during the week or weekend. There is no guarantee of a set number of weekday or weekend games. 8U and 10U weekday games are played at 6:30; 16U typically plays at 8:00; 12U will be a mix of 6:30 and 8:00 games. Saturday games will vary between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. for all age groups.
18. Where are the games played? Mallard Creek park is our home field. For away games, we need to travel to the fields that are used by the other organizations which are located Cornelius, East Lincoln and Huntersville.
19. How much will my daughter play? Each girl on the team bats in rotation (i.e., if there are 12 girls on the team, all 12 girls bat in rotation throughout the game). As there are limits to the number of girls that can take the field defensively in an inning, no girl can sit two innings until everyone else has sat at least one inning. Each team is scheduled for 12 regular season games and all teams make the playoffs (a.k.a. "tournament").
20. What if I see something I don't like or worries me? Our coaches work to ensure that all the girls are safe, learning the game and having fun. If you see something dangerous, please point it out to a coach immediately. If you have other concerns, please address with one of the coaches at an appropriate time. If you are not comfortable addressing the coach about the issue, please feel free to connect with the MCOC Softball Commissioner at mcocsoftball@gmail.com. You may also contact the MCOC president Stewart Mallard at smallard1@bellsouth.net. We suggest that you start with your coach and/or commissioner before reaching out to Stew.
21. What happens if there is bad weather before or during a game? Due to the compressed schedule as well as field and umpire availability we will attempt to play each game as schedule while maintaining the safety of the players. However, there are times when the fields are deemed unplayable in advance of the game; the coaches will be notified of this and they will forward the information to the team. Rules state that only Commissioners, Umpires, and field superintendents (MCOC Board) have the authority to cancel or suspend games. If you are not notified of a cancellation, please arrive at the field as scheduled. If the fields or weather are deemed unplayable or unsafe by the umpire (the decision is usually made with the input of the head coaches), the game will be postponed or suspended. Postponed or suspended games will be re-scheduled for another day. A game is considered an official game if four (4) innings have been completed. If the Home team is leading after 3.5 innings the game is official.

22. We've never played before

- a. What equipment do we need? Each girl will need their own glove. Girls are required to wear a fielder's mask and a batting helmet with facemask – each team will have a few to borrow, however, most prefer to have their own. Cleats are recommended, but not required.
- b. Where should we get the equipment? The most common places are Academy and Dick's Sporting Goods – both are sponsors. Double Diamond Sports (a sponsor) in Kannapolis and Players Sporting Goods in Derita are old-school sporting goods store and have knowledgeable staff. There are two Play it Again Sports stores (Mooresville and Pineville). Other choices include Wal-Mart and online.
- c. What size bat? There are several rules of thumb regarding the correct length and weight of the bat as well as plenty of web sites to assist. However, we suggest that if you are not sure what size is needed, to work with your coach and try the bats the other girls have to determine the optimal size.
- d. What size glove? This is a little more clear cut than bats, but still has some variation. The primary decision is based on the age group which determines the size of ball being use. 8U = 10", 10U = 11", older girls use a 12" ball (this is in comparison to baseball using a 9" ball). This link has a good chart <http://www.directsports.com/sizing-charts/>. For smaller girls in 8U, a glove in the 10" range is good so as not to be too big. For 12U and older, we suggest something in the 12" range. We don't recommend that you spend a lot on a glove, but you will want to get a glove that is flexible and easy to open and close (and fairly easy to break in). Working with the coach or trying gloves from other girls is also a good way to gauge the correct size.
- e. Why do we need a fielder's mask and what kind should I get? We require this for the obvious reason to provide protection to our girls. You will find many debates about this online, but you will find that they are becoming very common at all levels of softball including NCAA Division 1. A facemask on the batting helmet is required for the same reasons. There are several brands of fielder's masks and all are good. Some are plastic while others are metal and the prices, of course, vary. The important thing is to find something that is comfortable and provides good vision.

23. What about travel / tournament teams? After developing their skills, some girls decide that they would like to play at a more competitive level and play on teams that play in tournaments. Some of those girls choose to solely play on a tournament team while others balance both recreation ball and tournament teams. MCOC Softball is supportive of girls moving on to play in tournament play or trying to balance both. The MCOC board of directors has expressed support for the (re) development of softball tournament teams made up of the girls playing on MCOC's rec league softball teams. We have had recent success with teams playing local (Top Gun) tournaments and in Little League's summer tournament. We are looking at the options and interest (players and coaches) in continuing to develop this with the option of playing limited local tournaments in parallel to the Little League schedule.

24. I have more questions, who do I talk to? Please feel free to bring your questions to the team's coaches or to the Softball Commissioner at mcocsoftball@gmail.com.