

Parks Recreation and Cultural Resources Department
Athletic Committee

AGENDA

Monday, April 15, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.
Cary Town Hall
Room 11130

Web Site: www.townofcary.org

AGENDA TOPICS

- A. Call to Order – *Andy Kirk, Chair***
- B. Adoption of Agenda**
- C. Adoption of Minutes – *March 18, 2019 Athletic Committee Meeting***
- D. Public Speaks Out**
- E. Reports**
 - PRCR Advisory Board Update-*Andy Kirk, Chair*
 - Teen Council Update-*Revanth Bobba, Teen Council Representative*
 - Staff Update-*Ted Jeffcoate*
- F. Special Request Process**
- G. Age 9-10 Pitching rules**
- H. Identify Topic of Discussion for next committee meeting**
- I. Upcoming Events**
 - Spring Youth Baseball/Softball games begin April 15
 - 35 & Over Basketball season ends April 16
 - Youth Volleyball Skills Classes begin April 16
 - Spring Adult Volleyball tournaments begin May 8
 - Youth Volleyball League practices begin May 13
 - 40 & Over Basketball registration begins May 13
- J. Adjourn**

**Cary Parks Recreation and Cultural Resources Department
Athletic Committee Meeting**

**March 18, 2019
Cary Town Hall
Room 11130**

Call to Order/Roll Call

Andy Kirk called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Members Present – Andy Kirk, Brian Ainslie, Peter Bolac, Kathy Hackett, Reginold Jones, Rick Jones, David Morehead

Absent – John Ackiss, Walker Reagan, Marie Swepson, Revanth Bobba

Staff –Ted Jeffcoate and Aubrey Clayton

Adoption of Agenda

The committee reviewed the March agenda.

Action: Rick Jones made a motion to approve the March agenda, second by Kathy Hackett, motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Adoption of Minutes

The committee reviewed the February 18, 2019 minutes.

Action: Peter Bolac made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, second by Brian Ainslie, motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Public Speaks Out

None

PRCR Advisory Board Report – Andy Kirk

Andy gave a brief report on upcoming Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources events.

Dodgeball Tournament to benefit Play it Forward scholarship program

Koka Booth Amphitheater has launched a new web page.

The Downtown Park master plan was approved by Town Council with an expected completion date in fall 2022.

Teen Council Report

No report

Staff Update – Ted Jeffcoate

Ted reported on the following items.

Review of spring adult and youth sports league participation numbers.

Cary Road Race, Saturday, April 6th.

Staff has received feedback on the special request process from members of the Bronco committee, a group of volunteers with extensive baseball experience. This committee assists with player evaluations. An agenda item will be added to the March meeting to hear feedback from the Bronco committee members, discuss the special request process, ways to improve the process and more follow up with the players/coaches after the requests are approved.

Baseball/Softball Coach Training Overview

Staff reported on the current trainings/information available to volunteer coaches.

NAYS clinics (required for first year coaches)

USA Baseball free coach clinic (optional) prior to the season.
Cary youth baseball coaching guide on Teamsideline
T-ball/Mite coaching website and clinics
USA Baseball app

The challenge has been lack of participation and awareness and use of these resources.

The committee offered the following feedback:

- Make the USA baseball clinic mandatory.
- Push out practice plans to coaches.
- Offer clinics a few weeks into the season.
- Send reminders about resources available to the coaches.
- Need a clinic to teach coaches how to teach pitching/catching.
- Head coaches need multiple strong, reliable assistants.
- Check with other municipalities to see what they are doing for their coaches.
- Perhaps there is too much information, provide laminated, one page (front/back) of coaching tips that they could easily take to field.
- Coach mentors, form a group of interested, experienced past coaches who could be a resource to current coaches, answer questions, possibly come out to a practice and provide feedback.

Age 9-10 Pitching

An Athletic committee member provided the following impromptu coach feedback from Pony baseball (age 13-14) skills evaluations.

- In short, all the coaches were in favor of this. While these were all 13-14 coaches, all seemed to have coached 9-10's at some point in time. Some wondered why 9-10's were not already pitching.
- All agreed that the pitch count rules will keep kids from being overused and compel coaches to develop more pitchers.
- None feared that the quality of the 9-10 game will be adversely impacted by becoming a "walk-fest". All understood, though, that local rules would nonetheless be developed to address this potential situation should it happen.
- All agreed that it's part of the game that needs to be taught and that starting to do so at 11-12 was thought to be too late. Some even mentioned that waiting until 11-12 has maybe even somewhat adversely impacting the quality of the 11-12 game by virtue of kids finally pitching for the first time, as well as hitters seeing live pitching for the first time.
- All agreed that 9-10 hitters will need to adjust to no longer getting a pitch in a given location via a pitching machine and needing to be taught how to hit "live" pitching.
- I mentioned our discussions re: a "hybrid" approach to the start of the 9-10 season, e.g. first one-third of the season to be machine-pitch to allow coaches time to identify and develop pitchers. Most thought that this would be OK. The few who said that they didn't think that this was really necessary later conceded that they could see where this might be a reasonable compromise toward getting kid-pitch instituted at the 9-10 level. They also felt that maybe eventually such a hybrid approach could be later eliminated.
- A universal comment was that there would be a definite need for more practice times to accomplish this.
- There were also comments about the need for pitching clinics for kids, as well as for coaches so that they could teach it properly. When someone indicated that there were some clinics available, it sounded as if these needed to be better publicized.
- Finally, someone added that maybe this would improve the "competitive" profile of our 9-10 league such that we'd maybe attract some 9-10's who were playing elsewhere because we didn't have kid-pitch until 11-12.

Staff reported on challenges to implement pitching in younger age groups.

The 9-10 age group is currently registers by zone, we do not have fields in each zone that we could build a permanent pitching mound. Portable mounds are not popular and difficult to move on and off the field. Currently 9-10 baseball and 10U softball share fields, that would not be possible with a permanent pitching mound.

Would coaches have enough time to teach proper mechanics to pitchers/catchers as well as the other fundamental baseball/softball skills to the rest of the team?

Hybrid season presents several challenges, 9-10 baseball umpires now feed the pitching machine and do not call balls and strikes. Asking players to switch to new rules and umpires calling the game from behind the plate during the game or mid-season would be challenging for the players, coaches and umpires.

Currently there are opportunities for players younger than 11 to participate in player pitch. The age groups our fall youth leagues include pitching for 10 year olds (Single A and Double A age 10-11 player pitch).

There is a special request process in place for younger players to request a play up into a player pitch league. Staff suggested offering a month long player pitch league in July for 9-10 year olds who wanted an introduction to player pitch or perhaps pitcher/catcher clinics for players and coaches.

There was some discussion on offering a machine and player pitch option for the 9-10 age group. There were concerns that there would not be enough teams in each option to keep the zone concept for this age group.

A committee member asked if this age group had to pitch from a mound. If not, that would eliminate the need to build mounds on fields, having fields in each zone and sharing of fields. Are there reasons not pitch from flat ground? Staff will do further research on pitching without a mound.

The catcher position was also discussed. There would need to be local rules in place addressing advancing on passed balls/wild pitches.

The committee will continue this discussion at the April meeting.

Peter Bolac made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Meeting adjourned.