



**County Commissioners of Kent County
Department of Parks and Recreation
at the Kent County Community Center**



11041 Worton Road * P.O. Box 67, Worton, MD 21678 * 410-778-1948

Batting Cage & Pitching Machine Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

Please read this document in its entirety and sign the accompanying release and waiver. The release, waiver, and signature page reflects your understanding of these policies and procedures. All members of your group are required to sign the release and waiver in order to utilize the Batting Cage facility and equipment. Members of your group under the age of 18 must have a parental consent each time the batting cage and pitching machine are used.

In order to reserve the batting cage a rental application (select Gym B option) must be completed and submitted to Parks and Recreation with a \$100 refundable deposit. The requestor must be at least 21 years of age and the reservation must be a minimum of one hour. Once the requested date and time is approved and rental payment (due within seven days of approval notification) is made, an approved contract will be issued for signature. Upon receiving the signed contract, the requestor must complete a mandatory orientation for use of the batting cage and pitching machine. The requestor must indicate whether the use will be for baseball or softball at the time of the request.

It is the goal of Kent County Parks and Recreation to ensure that everyone is well served and has a positive experience. Please direct questions, concerns, or suggestions to the Recreation Supervisor.

Courtesy of Others

- In the spirit of being courteous and considerate of all guests, please **promptly exit** the gym when your batting cage time has expired. Often times there will be another use following yours. Example: A 7 pm ending time means that you are **exiting** the gym at 7 pm.
- Be courteous to front desk staff and to patrons who use the facility before and after your rental. If you have any concerns or problems, please contact the Recreation Supervisor at your earliest convenience so that we can try to resolve issues so that everyone is satisfied.

Pitching Machine

Setting up the Pitching Machine – Only KCPR Staff Will Set Up Equipment

1. Prior to using the pitching machine, inspect the power cord and all mechanical assemblies for damage. Do not use the machine if it is not in good working order and be sure to inform the staff on duty of any problems.
2. Choose the correct pair of legs for the type of batting that you will be doing. Baseball legs are the longer legs and softball legs are the shorter legs.
3. Place the pitching machine on the floor **being careful not to damage the feeder chute**. The machine *must be placed on top of the mat* to keep it from scraping the floor and/or damaging the pitching machine. To adjust the legs of the pitching machine, use the metal push pins, adjust to desired height, and allow the pin to snap in the opening. Each leg can be adjusted the same way. Ensure the push pins on the legs are completely into the desired opening.
4. Find the wrench that you will need for the following steps. It is on the shelf (labeled axle 2) in the box with the extra pitching machine chute. The wrench is labeled "pitching machine."
5. Choose the correct ball feeder for the type of ball that you are using. The large feeder is for softballs, and the smaller feeder is for baseballs. Match the ball feeder bracket holes with the holes on the pitching machine. Put bolts in place and tighten.
6. Find the correct settings on the side of the pitching machine for the type of ball you will be using. Place the bracket in the correct setting and secure in place by tightening bolts.
7. Return the wrench to the tool kit once you have finished with it.
8. Set up the pitching machine behind the protective screen and plug it into wall socket.

Care of the Pitching Machine

1. Do not roll the pitching machine tire on surfaces that might cause damage to the tire. If the tire becomes deformed, flat or damaged, do not use it and notify staff on duty immediately.
2. Abuse of the equipment may cause the ball chute to weaken, crack, break, rot, etc. **Be careful with the chute when you are changing the legs! DO NOT STAND PITCHING MACHINE ON ITS CHUTE END.** While you are changing the legs, be careful not to bend, crack, or break the ball chute. Hand check and examine the ball chute before using. Do not use if there is a problem and notify staff on duty immediately.
3. Do not allow the pitching machine to fall on its wheel. This will damage the machine.

Pitching Machine Rules and Guidelines

1. Batting Cage Supervisors/Pitching Machine Operators who use the pitching machine and the batting cage, **must first complete a Batting Cage Orientation.** There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this policy.
2. Only the Supervisors, who have completed the batting cage orientation, may feed balls into the pitching machine. **Anyone under the age of 21 IS NOT PERMITTED** to feed balls into the pitching machine.
3. Close supervision is necessary when the pitching machine is used with and near children. The pitching machine tire can cause severe physical harm and use must always be closely monitored.

Pitching Machine Operation or Batting Cage Supervisor

It is required that the Pitching Machine Operator spend a minimum of 30 minutes for training on use of the pitching machine before using it for the first time with a batter. He/she should try different dial settings, different pitching angles, etc. before use with a live batter.

1. Adjust the speed on the pitching machine, being careful to match the machine's ball speed to the batter's ability level. Refer to the Batting Cage Manual for dial settings/speeds.
2. Allow the pitching machine to warm-up for approximately 1 minute before using it. After the warm-up, test the positioning of the machine by feeding balls into it without a batter present. Adjust the height and speed of the ball as needed before calling the first batter to the plate to bat.
3. It is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT that the operator makes certain that the entire area in front of the pitching machine and the target is clear before feeding the machine.
4. The Pitching Machine Operator must first signal the batter and establish eye contact before inserting the ball into the pitching machine. The Operator must hold the ball the same way each time when feeding the ball into the machine. The Operator must hold the ball high into the air where the batter can see the ball. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Before placing the ball into the feeding chute, the Operator must look up at the batter to make absolutely certain that the batter is watching and is ready to receive the pitch. He/she must then bring the ball down to the chute simulating live action so that the batter can time the ball correctly. The Operator must watch the ball into the feed wheel, and then look up to the batter.
5. Do not put hands or fingers into the ball chute. Hand and fingers must not be positioned past the edge of the chute.
6. DO NOT throw high hopping grounders with the pitching machine.
7. Keep hands and loose clothing away from moving tires on the pitching machine. Severe physical harm will result if the tires catch body parts or clothing.
8. Never allow anyone except the adult Batting Cage Supervisor go behind the protective screen near the pitching machine.
9. Out-of-round, soft, mushy or wet balls will affect accuracy of pitches and MUST NOT BE USED. Mixing different types of balls (leather, rubber, etc.) will affect consistency of pitches. For best accuracy throw only one type of ball at a time.
10. Only the balls that were specifically purchased for the pitching machine may be used in the pitching machine. **DO NOT USE BALLS WITH THREADS!** They will "eat" the tire on the pitching machine. Any ball other than those provided by KCPR will not be permitted.
11. The pitching machine must never be left unattended when it is plugged in. Unplug the machine from the outlet when it is not in use and before putting on, taking off, or adjusting parts.

Pitching Machine Speed Settings

Important fact for pitching machine users and operators: Speed varies upon distance from home plate.

Pitching Machine Speed Chart

<u>Dial Setting MPH</u>	
20.....	23
30.....	29
40.....	35
50.....	39
60.....	44
70.....	48
80.....	53
90.....	56
100.....	60

Note: The speeds above are actual miles per hour (mph) at a distance of 45 feet.

Storage of the Pitching Machine and Protective Screen

1. The pitching machine is located in the main storage room (off of the gymnasium) against the wall to the left of the room in front of the racks of chairs.
2. The protective screen is located in the main storage room in front of the pitching machine.

Batting Cage

Setting up the Batting Cage

1. The pitching machine, protective screen, specific use balls, and other batting cage equipment must be provided by staff on duty.
2. Put the appropriate protective screen in place and position the pitching machine behind it.
3. Put the required carpet on the floor and position it under the protective screen and pitching machine. **The batting cage may not be used without the carpet!**
4. ***Batting cage users who damage the equipment due to misuse will be responsible for the full cost of damages and replacement. Batting Cage Supervisors are responsible for making sure those helping them to set up the cage do so in a way that does not result in damages.***
5. Grab the corner sides (NOT THE ROPES) of the batting cage and walk the batting cage slowly across the gym.
6. As you near the pitching machine and protective screen, lift the batting cage net up and over the equipment and continue walking the cage to the wall until you reach the other side of the gym.

Batting Cage Supervision

1. ***The Batting Cage Supervisor must always be present whenever the batting cage is in use.***
2. Only two people are permitted in the cage at a time, the batter and the Pitching Machine Operator.
3. The Batting Cage Supervisor is responsible for supervising the batter inside the batting cage. The Batting Cage Supervisor must choose another adult to supervise home plate and "on deck" batters, when he/she is working with a batter in the cage.
4. All batters must wear a helmet at all times when inside the batting cage.
5. The protective screen must be used, and the Pitching Machine Operator must stay behind the net at all times.
6. **Batters are NEVER permitted to go behind the protective screen to retrieve or pick up balls.** The only person ever permitted behind the protective screen is the Pitching Machine Operator.
7. Spectators must remain at least 3 feet away from the batting cage perimeter (net).
8. "On deck" batters may not have bats in their hands. All bats must be kept inside the cage.
9. No one is permitted to pull, hang, put their hands into or do anything to the batting cage netting that would in any way result in damage to it.
10. All equipment must be returned to its proper place when you have finished using the batting cage, unless a group following

yours will be using the same equipment. Communicate with front desk staff to determine use after yours. Be sure the next group needs the same equipment you are planning on leaving out. Otherwise, it is your responsibility to put it away.

Putting the Batting Cage Away

1. Holding on to the corner sides of the batting cage net; slowly walk the cage across the gym.
2. Lift the cage up and over the pitching machine equipment.
3. Secure the batting cage net to the wall using bungee cords provided and ensure net is flush to the wall as close as possible so it is out of the way of the gym floor.

