



# KENT COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

## BATTING CAGE AND PITCHING MACHINE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The Department of Parks and Recreation has established these guidelines for using the batting cage at the Community Center. All participants must follow these rules. Failure to comply will result in immediate termination of usage privileges for all group members. The Department reserves the right to revoke user privileges at any time.

Please read the guidelines carefully and sign the attached release and waiver form. By signing, you acknowledge your understanding of these policies. All group members must sign the release and waiver to use the batting cage and equipment. Participants under 18 must have parental consent each time the batting cage and pitching machine are used.

### Reservation Process:

- Complete a rental application (select Gym B option) and submit it to Parks and Recreation.
- A \$150 refundable deposit is required unless the rental is for the Kent County Youth League; in that case, the deposit is waived.
- The requestor must be at least 21 years old and reserve the cage for a minimum of one hour.
- Once the requested date and time are approved, the rental payment is due within seven days. An approved contract will then be issued for signature.
- After signing the contract, the requestor must complete a mandatory orientation on using the batting cage and pitching machine.
- Indicate whether the use will be for baseball or softball at the time of request.

### Setting Up the Pitching Machine

*(Only KCPR Staff will set up equipment)*

- **Inspection:** Facility Monitors must inspect the power cord and all mechanical parts for damage before use. Do not use the machine if it is damaged.
- **Leg Selection:** Choose the correct legs: longer legs for baseball, shorter legs for softball.
- **Placement:** Place the pitching machine on the floor with care to avoid damaging the feeder chute. Always set it on top of a mat to protect both the floor and machine.
- **Adjusting the Legs:** Adjust the machine's height using the metal push pins. Ensure the pins snap fully into the desired openings on each leg.
- **Wrench Location:** Find the wrench labeled "pitching machine" on the shelf in the box with the extra chute.
- **Ball Feeder:** Choose the correct feeder: large for softballs, small for baseballs. Align the feeder bracket holes with the machine holes, insert bolts, and tighten.
- **Machine Settings:** Adjust the bracket to the correct setting for the type of ball, as indicated on the machine's side. Tighten bolts to secure it.
- **Storage:** Return the wrench to the tool kit after use.
- **Setup:** Position the pitching machine behind the protective screen and plug the extension cord into a wall socket.

### Batting Cage Setup and Takedown Instructions:

#### Setting Up the Batting Cage:

- The Contract Holder must assist the Facility Monitor with setting up and taking down the batting cage.
- Staff on duty will provide the pitching machine, protective screen, specific-use balls, and other equipment.
- Position the protective screen and place the pitching machine behind it. Lay the required carpet under the screen and pitching machine—using the machine without the carpet is prohibited.
- To move the batting cage, hold the corner sides (NOT THE ROPES) and slowly walk it across the gym.
- When near the pitching machine and screen, lift the net over the equipment and continue moving it to the opposite wall.
- Secure the batting cage by hooking the clamp from the rope onto the metal circle on the wall near Gym B entry doors.
- Contract Holders must ensure proper setup to prevent damage. Misuse resulting in damage will require full payment for repairs or replacements.

#### Taking Down the Batting Cage:

- Unhook the clamp from the wall.
- Holding the corner sides of the net, slowly walk the cage back across the gym, lifting it over the pitching machine and screen.
- Secure the cage net to the wall using provided bungee cords, ensuring it is flush against the wall and out of the way.

## GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR BATTING CAGE USE

- **Access and Supervision:** Only approved user groups may access the batting cage. An approved adult (21 years and older) must supervise the cage, manage setup/take-down, and operate the pitching machine during scheduled usage.
- **Orientation Requirement:** All Batting Cage Supervisors/Pitching Machine Operators must complete a Batting Cage Orientation to operate the pitching machine. Only those who have completed the orientation are permitted to feed balls into the machine. Anyone under 21 is prohibited from feeding balls into the machine.
- **Safety Measures:**
  - Close supervision is required when using the pitching machine, especially with children. The pitching machine tire can cause serious injury and must always be monitored.
  - All users enter and use the batting cage at their own risk. The County Commissioners and the Department of Parks and Recreation are not liable for any injuries or equipment damage in the batting cage or gym.
- **Waivers and Helmets:** Only participants who have signed a waiver may use the batting cage. All users under 21 must wear batting helmets when in the cage or batting.
- **Usage Limitations:** Only two people are allowed in the cage at once: the operator and the batter. The "L" screen must always be used with the pitching machine.
- **Machine Operation:**
  - Pitching machine adjustments must be made from behind the machine and never while a batter is in front. Set the speed according to the user's age.
  - Do not roll the pitching machine tire on surfaces that could damage it. If the tire is damaged, deformed, or flat, do not use it—notify staff immediately.
  - Do not allow the machine to fall on its wheel, as it can cause damage.
- **Equipment Care:**
  - Handle the ball chute carefully when adjusting the legs. Avoid standing the pitching machine on its chute end and inspect it before use. Report any damage to staff immediately.
  - Abuse of equipment, such as pulling, hanging, or placing hands in the netting, is not allowed and may lead to damage.
- **Reservation and Cleanliness:** User groups can use the batting cage only during their reservation times. The batting cage area must be kept clean and litter-free by all users.
- **Spectator Rules:** Spectators must stay at least three feet away from the batting cage.
- **Reporting Issues:** Report any equipment malfunction, damage, or hazards to the contract holder and Facility Monitor at the Welcome Desk immediately.

### Batting Cage Supervisor (Contract Holder) Responsibilities & Guidelines

- **Training:** The Pitching Machine Operator must spend at least 10 minutes training on the machine before using it with a batter. This includes testing different speed settings, pitching angles, and adjustments.
- **Machine Setup:** Allow the machine to warm up for 1 minute. Test pitches without a batter to adjust speed and height based on the batter's ability level.
- **Safety Checks:** Ensure the area in front of the pitching machine and target is clear before use. Make eye contact with the batter and signal readiness before feeding the ball into the machine.
- **Feeding the Machine:** Hold the ball consistently high in the air where the batter can see it. Before feeding the ball, look up to confirm the batter is ready. Simulate live action when feeding to help the batter time the pitch.
- **Safety Precautions:**
  - Keep hands, fingers, and loose clothing away from the moving parts of the machine to prevent injury.
  - Do not throw high bouncing grounders.
  - Only the adult Batting Cage Supervisor (Contract Holder) is allowed behind the protective screen near the pitching machine.
- **Ball Requirements:** Only use balls specifically purchased for the pitching machine. Do not use out-of-round, soft, mushy, or wet balls, as these affect pitch accuracy. Avoid mixing ball types (e.g., leather, rubber). Balls with threads are prohibited as they damage the machine's tires.
- **Machine Care:** The machine must never be left unattended while plugged in. Unplug it when not in use or when adjusting parts.



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## BATTING CAGE/PITCHING MACHINE PERMISSION, RELEASE, AND WAIVER

Due to the physical nature of using a pitching machine and the risk of injury, including death, I understand that participation may result in harm. I have read and understand the policies and guidelines for the Batting Cage and Pitching Machine. By signing, I acknowledge these risks and release Kent County Commissioners, Kent County Parks and Recreation, its employees, and agents from liability for any injuries, except those caused by faulty equipment, gross negligence, or willful misconduct. I also understand I am responsible for any costs related to damage or replacement of equipment due to misuse.

\*For participants under 18, parental consent is required each time the batting cage/pitching machine is used. Consent can be provided via a handwritten note with the date, parent's name, signature, and child's name if the parent is not present.

<b>Printed Name</b> *If under 18, Child Name/Parent Name	<b>Signature</b> *If under 18, Parent's Signature	<b>Date</b>