

Batting Cage
and
Pitching Machine

Policies, Procedures And
Guidelines

Hello!

Many people use the West Midland Family Center gym and batting cage facilities. It is the goal of the WMFC staff to make sure that everyone is well served and has a positive experience whenever they visit the Center. If you ever have any questions, concerns, problems, complaints or suggestions, we welcome you to contact the Recreation Director so that we can better serve you.

Courtesy of Others

In the spirit of being courteous and considerate of all Center visitors, we ask that you **promptly exit** the gym when your batting cage time is finished especially if there is someone that is another batting cage rental following yours. Example: A 7PM ending time means that you are **exiting** the gym at 7PM.

Be courteous to front desk staff and to patrons who are before your rental time or after your rental time. If you have any concerns or problems please contact the Recreation Director at your earliest convenience and we will do everything that we can to try to work out problems or conflicts so that everyone is happy! 😊

Pitching Machine

Setting up the Pitching Machine

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 Recreation Director 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 a mat*** to keep it from scraping the floor and/or damaging the pitching machine. Loosen the T-handle, remove the legs and insert the correct legs into the bottom of the machine. Turn the T-handle to tighten legs in place. All legs must be put in at the same time. Make sure that the legs go all the way into the bracket.
4. Find the wrench that you will need for the following steps. It should be in one of the ball crates, tied to a green lanyard.
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 and 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 bracket in correct setting and secure in place by tightening bolts.
7. Return the wrench to the ball crate once you have finished with it, so that the next person will not have to spend precious time searching for it.
8. Set up the pitching machine behind the appropriate safety net and plug it into wall socket.
9. 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.
10. Adjust the speed on the pitching machine being careful to match the machines ball speed to the batter's ability level. Refer to the Batting Cage Manual for dial settings/speeds.

Care of The Pitching Machine

11. Do not roll the pitching machine tire on surfaces that might damage to the tire. If the tire becomes deformed, flat or damaged, do not use it.
12. Abuse of the equipment may cause the ball chute to weaken, crack, break, rot etc. ***Be careful of the chute when you are changing the legs!*** **DO NOT STAND PITCHING MACHINE ON ITS CHUTE END UNLESS THERE IS A CUSHION (CARPET, MAT, ETC)** to put it on. 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.

13. Do not allow the pitching machine to fall on its wheel. This could damage it.

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 rule.
2. Only the supervisor, who has complete the batting cage orientation, may feed balls into the pitching machine. **Children and teens ARE NEVER ALLOWED** to feed balls into the pitching machine.
3. Close supervision is necessary when the pitching machine is used near children. The pitching machine tire can cause severe physical harm.

Pitching Machine Operation

It is suggested that the Pitching Machine Operator spend an hour or so experimenting with 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 working with a real batter.

1. 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. Adjust the height and speed of the ball as needed before calling the first batter to the plate to bat.
2. It is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** that the operator makes sure that the area in front of the pitching machine and all the way to the target is clear before feeding the machine.
3. The Pitching Machine Operator must first signal the batter and establish eye contact, before inserting the ball into the pitching machine. The operator should hold the ball the same way each time when feeding the balls into the machine. The operator should 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 sure that the batter is watching and is ready to receive the pitch. He/she should then bring the ball down to the chute simulating live action so that the batter can time the ball correctly. The operator should watch the ball into the wheel, and then look up to the batter.
4. Do not put hands or fingers into the ball chute. Hand and fingers should go only up to the edge of the chute.
4. **DO NOT** throw high hopping grounders with the pitching machine.
5. 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.
6. Never let anyone except the adult supervisor come behind the safety net near the pitching machine.
7. 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.
8. The pitching machine would 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.

Batting Cage

Setting up the batting cage

1. Obtain the keys for batting cage from the WMFC Front Desk.
2. Check out the yellow drill box from the WMFC Front Desk.
3. Obtain and set up the appropriate pitching machine safety net, the pitching machine, the balls, and other batting cage equipment from the Program Equipment Room.
4. Put the appropriate safety net in place and position the pitching machine behind it.
5. Lower the required carpet to the floor and position under home plate. The batting cage may not be used without this carpet!
6. Obtain the basketball hoop tool from the corner of the gym (or the gym equipment room) and carefully swing the basketball hoop to the south gym wall. **DO NOT ATTACH THE BASKETBALL HOOP TOOL TO THE BASKETBALL FRAME WHEN SWINGING THE FRAME TO THE SOUTH WALL, ATTACH THE TOOL TO THE BASKETBALL HOOP** instead. Attaching the tool to the frame will result in the frame being bent and damaged. ***Batting cage users who damage the basketball hoop frame will pay for damages.*** Responsible parties are usually determined by way of the cameras in the gym. ***Batting Cage Supervisors are responsible for making sure that those helping them to set up the cage do so in a way that does not result in damages.***
7. Before lowering the cage, position someone to ensure that the cage does not get caught on the signs or metal sign brackets on the west gym wall.
8. Using the drill in the yellow drill box, plug the drill into the power outlet, place the drill end over the crank bolt, turn the drill "on" and slowly lower the batting cage net to the gym floor.
9. Be sure to let out quite a bit of white rope when you lower the cage. You will need quite a bit of rope to put the cage up when you have finished using it. There will be a black tape around a portion of the white rope that should be showing if you have let out enough rope.
10. Unclip the white cord around the batting cage and tie the white cord to the west gym wall.
11. Untie the 5 individual black ropes on the west side of the batting cage and then tie the 3 "top" ropes (not the two bottom ropes) to the 3 eyebolts on the wall on the west side of the gym.
12. Grab the corner sides (NOT THE ROPES!) of the batting cage and walk the batting cage slowly across the gym.
13. As you near the pitching machine and net, lift the batting cage up and over the equipment and continue walking the cage to the wall until you reach the east side of the gym.
14. Tie the 3 top ropes on the east side of the batting cage to the 3 eyebolts on the east gym wall.

Putting The Batting Cage Away

15. Untie the 3 top ropes that are attached to the east wall.
16. Holding on to the corner sides of the batting cage net, slowly walk the cage across the gym.
17. Lift the cage up and over the pitching machine equipment.
18. Untie the 3 top ropes that are attached to the west gym wall.
19. Tie all of the 5 ropes (3 top and 2 bottom) on the west side of the net together so that the next person can easily untie them.
20. Tie all of the 5 ropes (3 top and 2 bottom) on the east side of the net together so that the next person can easily untie them. ***These 10 ropes MUST BE TIED together so that they do not hang down into the gym after the net is hoisted up to the ceiling. If the ropes hang down when the net is in the air, children using the gym will pull and hang on them and the cage will be permanently damaged.***
21. Untie the white cord and encircle the batting cage netting with it. Once the white cord is clipped around the netting it should be at waist height. Positioning the cord above waist height will result in having to use the drill to hoist the net higher than needed, or will result in the net hanging too low.
22. Tighten the white cord around the cage and pull up the slack.

23. Position someone between the west wall and the netting to hold the white cord right and make sure that the cage does not "catch" on the signs on the west gym wall as it is being hoisted to the ceiling.
24. Using the drill, raise the netting until the entire cage is above the gym "Exit" sign on the west wall. The black tape that is around the white rope will be up near the ceiling cables if you have succeeded in raising the net high enough.
25. If there are cords hanging from the cage after you hoist it up, you **MUST** bring the cage back down and re-tie the cords so that they do not hang down when the cage is hoisted to the ceiling.

Batting Cage Supervision

1. ***The Batting Cage Supervisor must always be present whenever the batting cage is in use.***
2. Only two people are allowed 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, or responsible teen, 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.
5. The appropriate softball or baseball safety net must be used and the Pitching Machine Operator must stay behind the net at all times.
6. **Batters are NEVER allowed to go behind the safety net to retrieve or pick up balls.** The only person ever allowed behind the safety net is the pitching machine operator.
7. Spectators must remain at least 3 feet away from the batting cage walls.
8. On deck batters may not have bats in their hands. All bats must be kept inside the cage.
9. Gym doors between the two gyms are not to be used or opened when the batting cage is being used. Set up the cage in such a way so as to block entry to these doors.
10. No one is allowed to pull, hang, put their hands into or do anything to the batting cage netting, that would in any way result in damaging it.
12. All equipment must be returned to its proper place when you have finished using the batting cage, unless the group following yours needs to use the same equipment. Communicate with the supervisor that follows you in the cage. Be sure that his/her group needs the equipment that you are planning on leaving out. If he/she does not need the equipment then it is your responsibility to put it away.

Batting Cage Rental Information

Batting Cage Rental Procedure

- To request time in the batting cage, you must fill out a "Batting Cage Rental Request Form". You can obtain a "Batting Cage Request Form" from the WMFC Front Desk.
- The "Batting Cage Request Form" can be returned to the WMFC Front Desk, faxed or mailed. Please write "c/o Recreation Director" on your request.
- In addition to the "Batting Cage Request Form", you must complete a "Batting Cage Orientation" prior to your first rental date. Please call the WMFC Recreation Director to make an appointment for a "Batting Cage Orientation".
- Batting Cage reservations are usually taken on a first-come first-serve basis.
- Long-term reservations take priority over short-term reservations.
- For the months of October through April we begin accepting requests October 1st.
- Additional information can be found on the WMFC website at www.wmfc.org.

Returning Batting Cage Supervisors Procedure

- Each year, during the month of September, batting cage supervisors from the previous year are given first opportunity to reserve batting cage time for the upcoming year. It is your responsibility to contact the Recreation Director in September to reserve your batting cage time slots.
- On October 1st of each year the requests from last years supervisors are reviewed and time slots are filled per their request, if possible. Reservation forms are then sent to the supervisors with a return deadline. If the reservation forms are returned with payment by the deadline, the time slots are reserved. If the form is not returned by the deadline, the spots are returned to the schedule and can be reserved by someone else.
- Once the due date for the batting cage supervisor's reservation forms has passed, batting cage time is opened up to new users.

Pitching Machine Speed Settings

If you own a one-wheel machine, you should know the following important fact:

A 60 mile per hour fastball thrown 45 feet from home plate
is equal to
A 74 mile per hour fastball thrown from 60 feet 6 inches.

Pitching Machine Speed Chart

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

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

