

2023 Annual Report

Ariton Parks & Recreation

Registrations by the numbers

(xx) = 2022 registration numbers

Basketball:

- Total players: 113 (87)
- 6U teams: 2; Players: 18
- 8U Teams: 4; Players: 33
- 10U Teams: 5; Players: 34
- 12U Teams: 4; Players: 28

T-ball:

- Total players: 38 (35)
- T-ball teams: 4

Baseball:

- Total players: 110 (91)
- 6U Teams: 2; Players: 26
- 8U Teams: 2; Players: 28
- 10U Teams: 3; Players: 36
- 12U Teams: 2; Players: 20

Softball:

- Total players: 41 (26)
- 8U Team: 1; Players: 14
- 10U Team: 1; Players: 14
- 12U Team: 1; Players: 13

Cheerleading:

- Total cheerleader: 83 (58)
- 8U Squad: 33
- 10U Squad: 28
- 12U Squad: 22

Football:

- Total players: 93 (71)
- 6U Flag: 17
- 8U Mini-Mites: 31
- 10U Termites: 19
- 12U Pee-Wee: 26

Spring Season

New concession stand

The spring season was a great overall success. The Town of Ariton improved the capital grounds by converting Batting Cage #2 into a concession stand with covered seating. While it is an ongoing project, the new concession stand has provided much needed space for concessions and cooking, and added additional restroom facilities in a more central location in the park. With the loss of a batting cage to our new concession stand, the Commission purchased a portable batting cage to erect behind Laney-Miller Field 1. This will serve as an additional resource to coaches and teams until a new permanent batting cage is constructed.

Dedication of new Terry-Hughes Field 3

At our opening day ceremony, the Mayor and Town Council dedicated the multi-purpose field, naming it Terry-Hughes Field 3. The field is a work in progress, and our plan is to eventually have lights installed, a new scoreboard, bleachers and even expansion to a full-size football field.

First annual Hit-a-Thon!

The Spring Committee launched a fun and successful fundraising event - the first annual Hit-a-thon. We raised \$4,219 in one day and plan to make it a recurring event!

With the increased registrations year-over-year, the spring season realized a larger profit than in years past - even after the purchase of a new batting cage and other one-time expenses were factored in. This is only made possible with a dedicated Committee and committed parents. Thank you!

The Champions Wall

Last year saw the construction of our Champions Wall. We retroactively recognized the first ever Ariton Parks and Recreation teams to compete at the State Championship. In 2023 we saw two more teams compete at the State level, and their competition will be recognized on the Champions Wall this year!



Fall Season



Football Safety Equipment

Our initial plan was to purchase new helmets in a three-year phased approach. The Commission approved the purchase of 20 helmets each year, beginning in 2023, and continuing until all helmets were replaced. Thanks to the hard work of our coaches and Fall Committee, we were able to purchase all 65 of the helmets in 2023. This is a substantive improvement in the safety of our participants and quality of our equipment, enhancing the improvements made by purchasing all new shoulder pads in 2022.

Two Super Bowls - One season

With our second full season of flag football, we've seen an increase in interest and participation. Our Commission added a commissioner dedicated to the flag football program. We were selected to host our first Flag Football Super Bowl this year, further contributing to the success of the program.

2023 was also our year to host the tackle football Super Bowl. Thanks to the Fall Committee, coaches, parents and community volunteers, we closed out the season in a big way!

Cheer Competition wins!

Every year our cheerleaders participate in a cheer competition held by the Pea River Football Association. This year our Pee-Wee cheerleaders brought home the title of champions, while our Termite cheerleaders were first runner-up. Congratulations ladies!

Winter Season

Purple Cat Classic

Our basketball sports participation has increased every year since our inaugural season in 2019. In 2023 we hosted our first Purple Cat Classic - an area-wide, all-day tournament that showcases our kids' athletic

improvements in the sport they love, while they battle it out against neighboring towns. It was a fun and productive day!

Travel teams

With increased participation in our program, we are able to play more home games and not travel as much on average. We did see the need to prepare our older participants for a more competitive environment as they progress to junior high sports and implemented a travel team for 10U and 12U boys to play other towns.

New Sponsorship program

As a way to show support for those who support us, we added sponsorship opportunities to businesses, parents and families. Each team is now sporting a sponsor on the back of their jerseys.

Plans for the upcoming year...

- Purchase and installation of retractable basketball goals
- Installation of scoreboard on Terry-Hughes Field 3
- Launching the new soccer program

A note from our President

It has been an exciting year for Ariton athletics - our boys made it to the elite 8 in basketball and then capped off the year with baseball earning our first varsity state championship! I don't know if you all saw the baseball picture floating around social media, but it was a picture of nearly that same state championship team, just 7-8 short years ago, as our rec baseball boys. And that should excite all of us! We have an opportunity to lay a foundation, create a love and passion for a sport, and teach and develop these kids to set them up for future success - and not only in sports, but in life as well.

Thank you all for investing your time and energy to make this program the best it can be. A Chinese proverb states '*a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step*'. If we make each individual decision based on what's in the best interest of the kids, then the compilation of those small steps lead to a successful and fruitful recreation program.

And that is my challenge - let's make the best decisions that put our children in the best position to be successful.