

# 2024 Annual Report

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*Ariton Parks & Recreation*

## Registrations by the numbers

*(xx) = 2023 registration numbers*

### Basketball:

- Total players: 121 (113)
- 6U teams: 3; Players: 24
- 8U Teams: 5; Players: 41
- 10U Teams: 5; Players: 33
- 12U Teams: 4; Players: 23

### T-ball:

- Total players: 41 (38)
- T-ball teams: 4

### Baseball:

- Total players: 107 (110)
- 6U Teams: 2; Players: 26
- 8U Teams: 3; Players: 31
- 10U Teams: 2; Players: 29
- 12U Teams: 2; Players: 21

### Softball:

- Total players: 39 (41)
- 8U Team: 2; Players: 24
- 10U Team: 1; Players: 15
- 12U Team: 0; Players: 0

### Cheerleading:

- Total cheerleader: 71 (83)
- 8U Squad: 32
- 10U Squad: 23
- 12U Squad: 16

### Football:

- Total players: 102 (93)
- 6U Flag: 21
- 8U Flag: 13
- 8U Mini-Mites: 25
- 10U Termites: 24
- 12U Pee-Wee: 19

## Spring Season

### *All-Star Tournaments*

The 12U - Ozone boys team led by Coaches Matt Murphy and Blake Wise competed in the State All-Star tournament. While they came up short of the title, our boys gave it their all and represented the community of Ariton well.

Ariton was the host of the 8U AA Diamond Youth District tournament. It was a long weekend, but because of the dedication of our Spring Committee and parents to work the gates and concession stand, we were able to raise over \$6,000.

### *New Pitching Mounds*

Our program was able to take our budget surplus from the season and purchase two Porta-Lite fiberglass pitching mounds. Each mound is designed with a full body, high performance poly protected resilient core with fiberglass reinforcement giving the pitcher a solid, no bounce, yet cushioned baseball mound that reduces knee and ankle strain.

### *Concession Stand improvements*

Our parents and fans have thoroughly enjoyed the addition of our new concession stand. This year, thanks to the Agriculture class at Ariton School, we were able to add picnic tables in the pavilion area. Also, many thanks to Johnston Trucking for the crushed rock that was donated for the pavilion as well. Additionally, the Town of Ariton installed durable privacy stalls in the bathrooms.

## Fall Season

### *Fundraiser success*

The Cheer participants held a Dine & Donate fundraiser in September. A portion of the proceeds from customers dining at DiFillipo's in Ozark were donated to our Cheer program. We raised \$477!

The Football participants raffled off a Yeti cooler in October. The net gains of the raffle to the program was \$1,137!

### *Program Growth*

This year marks the third season we've provided flag football competition. Every year we've seen growth in interest and participation. Our first year we started with two 6U teams. Last year we dedicated a Commissioner to oversee the program. This year we expanded to provide two 8U teams as well.

### *Competition Wins!*

Every year our cheerleaders participate in a cheer competition held by the Pea River Football Association. This year all three of our squads, Pee-Wee, Mini-Mite and Termite cheerleaders brought home the title of champions!

Additionally, our 6U Purple Flag football team won its first Super Bowl ever.

## Winter Season

### *Purple Cat Classic*

In 2024 we hosted our annual Purple Cat Classic - an area-wide, two-day tournament that showcased our kids' athletic improvements in the sport they love, while they battled it out against neighboring towns. It was a fun, productive and profitable weekend!

### *New Basketball Goals*

Over the summer, we were able to purchase two new removable basketball goals for the younger participants. These new goals will contribute greatly to the safety and success of the program for our younger participants.

### *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...

- Installation of stadium lights on Terry-Hughes Field 3
- Installation of scoreboard on Terry-Hughes Field 3
- Launching the new volleyball program

## A note from our President - *Jennifer Wilkerson*

As we reflect on the past year, I am reminded of the important role Ariton Parks and Recreation plays in our community and the lives of the kids we serve. Our leagues are more than just athletics; they are places where our families come together, where children learn both athletic and life skills, where friendships are formed, and where our community is strengthened. If you want to see the heartbeat of the Ariton community, just attend an Ariton sporting event!

The passion, dedication, and involvement of our commission members, their families, our volunteers, and the community has built a strong, thriving parks and recreation program. Today, as we celebrate all the successes of the past year mentioned above, I'd also like to highlight the wins not documented on paper.

Throughout each season, we are faced with many decisions, both large and small, each impacting our program. We have made a concerted effort to base these decisions not on winning alone, but on taking the best approach for our children first and foremost. I watched our hard decisions be approached with care,

integrity, and compassion, and I believe we were rewarded for these efforts with the successes of our programs, and most importantly, the growth of our children.

And this is my challenge going forward – for Ariton Parks and Recreation to continue to make sound decisions, in the best interest of our children, to sustain the program’s commitment to excellence to ensure that Ariton Parks and Recreation continues to grow and flourish, enriching the lives of all who live in our great town. I look forward to watching many years of progress, growth, and success from Ariton Parks and Recreation! It has been an honor being President.