

AAA Lightning Detection System and Procedures

The Archer Athletic Association exists to provide team sports activities for the youth in the Archer Cluster community. A primary goal of operating these sports programs is to provide a safe environment for the parents, volunteers, and especially the children as they practice and play. AAA is constantly examining how we serve our community and what investments we can make as an organization to better meet our goals and the needs of our community. Most recently, AAA invested in the installment of a state of the art lightning detection system. The system can accurately detect lightning strikes within a 10 mile radius of our baseball/softball park on Harbins Rd. and our multi-use park on Indian Shoals Dr. The procedures outlined below are consistent with those used by the Georgia High School Association, the National Weather Service, and other youth athletic programs in Gwinnett Co. The use of this system will provide a clear signal and plan of action that should result in consistent action by coaches to protect the safety of themselves and their players. It is the expectation of the Archer Athletic Association that all of our sports directors and volunteer coaches follow the procedures as stated below.

Procedure

When a lightning strike is detected within a 10 mile radius of the park:

- The system will sound a warning horn for 15 seconds.
 - A strobe light will be activated where the system is mounted. (on the side of the press box at the multi-use field & near the concession stand at the baseball/softball park)
 - This strobe light will continue to flash as long as the lightning warning is in effect.
1. When the horn sounds all activities, practices, or games should be suspended immediately and all participants and spectators should exit the park and return to their vehicles. One advantage of the system is that it gives advanced warning allowing participants adequate time to return to their vehicles without getting caught in a storm.
 2. In the case of a game in progress, the game should be suspended as soon as any active play ends unless the game officials determine that the warning horn itself caused interference with the play.
 - Example #1: Baseball/Softball: The horn sounds as a pitcher releases the ball and the batter is startled by the horn. The game official may rule a “no pitch” and game play should then be suspended.
 - Example #2: Football: The horn sounds after the ball has been snapped. The officials may wait until a tackle is made and the play ends to suspend play. Or the game official may rule that the horn affected the result of the play (missed extra point, dropped pass, etc) and rule it as a dead ball/no play.
 3. As soon as lightning is detected the system will begin a 30 minute countdown. The countdown will start over every time another lightning strike is detected.
 4. When the 30 minute countdown ends with no lightning strikes detected, the system will sound 3 blasts of the horn for 5 seconds each and the strobe light will shut off to signal the all clear to resume game play or practice.
 5. If there are storms in the area, it is the responsibility of the coaches to determine if the system has been activated before a practice or game begins. For example, a practice

may be scheduled to start at 6:00 PM. The lightning system sounded the warning horn at 5:15 before the coach arrived. The last lightning strike was detected at 5:35 PM. The 30 minute countdown doesn't expire until 6:05 PM. The coach should check the strobe light and make sure that it isn't flashing before starting practice.

- a. Baseball/Softball Park: Detector is located on the side of the concessions pavilion facing the playground.
 - b. Multi-use Park: Detector is located on the side of the press box facing the flag pole.
6. We should soon be adding an app that will be available to all directors that will also alert them of an active warning and show the countdown timer for when the warning ends. It is ultimately the decision of the director to determine if field and weather conditions are safe for practice or play to resume after the "all clear" signal has been given.