

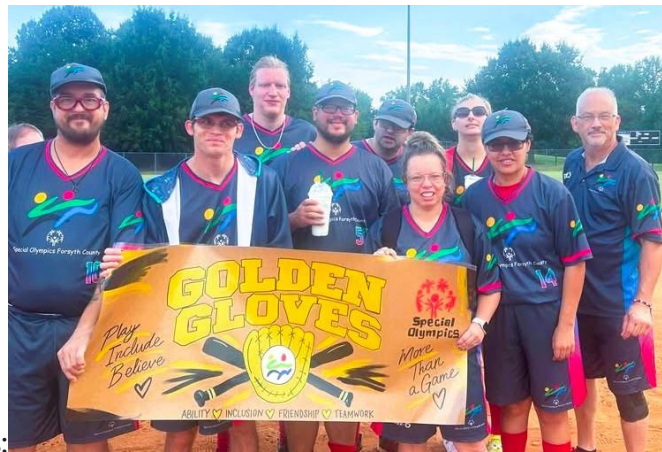
PRESS RELEASE from the SOFC PR team: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Photos submitted by SOFC families and supporters.

17th Annual Battle of the Bats Hits a Home Run at Central Park

CUMMING, Ga. — The energy at Central Park was electric on Saturday, September 19, as Special Olympics Forsyth County and Forsyth County Parks and Recreation co-hosted the 17th Annual Battle of the Bats tournament.

This year's event welcomed 24 traditional and modified Special Olympics softball teams from across Georgia. Hundreds of family members, friends, and cheering fans filled the stands to support the athletes. Among the hometown favorites taking the field were local Forsyth County teams—the Golden Gloves, Loose Cannons, and Mystic Batters—alongside the Skittles softball skills group, who brought enthusiasm and spirit to every inning.



SOFC Golden Gloves:



SOFC Loose Cannons:



SOFC Mystic Batters:

SOFC Skittles Skills Team w/ GBI Team and Bomb Squad Robot:



The day kicked off at 8:45 a.m. with Opening Ceremonies, introducing the teams and recognizing the more than 50 community volunteers whose efforts made the tournament possible. Play ran continuously through the final pitch at 3:15 p.m. While temperatures climbed throughout the afternoon, the heat was matched only by the high-fives, outstanding sportsmanship, and camaraderie on display.

A High-Tech First Pitch

A highlight of this year's festivities was a special appearance by Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Agents Lisa Vorrasi and Chris Minney. To the delight of athletes and spectators, the agents showcased the GBI Bomb Squad Robot, which delivered the ceremonial first pitch ball directly to Coach Wayne Hancock and athlete Cole Maxie to open the games.

Photo Here:



Powered by Community Support

An event of this scale relies heavily on community partners and dedicated volunteers. Umpires United provided professional officiating, while youth athletes coached by Jacob Bollinger from the Service Softball 14U 10th Mountain Division provided score-keeping and joined dozens of local residents to keep operations running smoothly.

Event organizer Linda Fitzpatrick, alongside volunteer coordinators Gail Johnson and her daughter Quinn, emphasized that the tournament's success rests entirely on teamwork.

"We are grateful for all the helping hands from our families and the community to be able to host this day," Fitzpatrick said. "There are a lot of people behind the scenes who help us be successful, and we want everyone to know they do not go unnoticed. We believe in the power of sport, and hosting this day is one of the many activities Special Olympics Forsyth County does to help impact and change the lives of our athletes, their families, and our community."

Preparing for State Games and Local Impact

Beyond providing high-level competition, the Battle of the Bats serves as a vital fundraiser. Special Olympics Forsyth County receives no state funding and is 100% responsible for financing its own local programs. Operating in partnership with the Forsyth County Therapeutic Program, the organization provides year-round sports training and competition

for over 100 local athletes, coaches, and Unified Partners across various skill levels. The tournament gave teams essential practice as they prepare for the Special Olympics Georgia (SOGA) Fall State Games in Valdosta on October 16–17, where local athletes will compete in bocce, golf, softball team play, and softball skills.

Get Involved

To learn more about local sports opportunities, register as a Unified Partner, make a donation, or volunteer, visit www.soforsyth.com.

To inquire about participating in or sponsoring the 2027 Battle of the Bats, contact event organizer Linda Fitzpatrick at **LindaSOForsyth@gmail.com**.