

Consortium Softball - Fastpitch Rules - Spring 2023

Our consortium follows National Federation of State High School Associations Rules for Fastpitch Softball with some modifications. The modifications are intended to address the developmental aspects of the younger leagues, ensure player safety and facilitate the equitable participation of all players.

These rules will be used at all games. Coaches should not deviate from these rules and must have a discussion and mutual agreement on all rules at the plate meeting before the game with the umpire for 10u and 13u games.

- For all divisions, the home team must provide 2 game balls for each game.

GENERAL INFORMATION			
	8U	10U	13U
Ages	Girls in K -3 rd Grade	Girls in 3 rd – 5 th Grade	Girls in 6 th – 8 th Grade
Size of Ball	11"	11"	12"
Distance for Bases	55'	60'	60'
Distance to Pitcher	35'	35'	40'
Length of Game ¹	Complete 6 innings or 105 minutes	Complete 6 innings or 105 minutes	Complete 7 innings or 105 minutes

1. Length of Game – All Divisions

- The last inning is the inning whose top half begins 90 minutes after the scheduled start time of a game. All games will have a 105-minute maximum limit. The time limit begins from the start time of the game declared by the umpire.
- If a batter is up at the time limit, the batter will finish her at bat.
- If the last inning cannot be completed, the score reverts to the end of the previously-completed inning.
- All teams must quickly clear the field and dugouts at the 105-minute time line for the next game. As they approach the 105-minute time limit, teams are highly encouraged to begin to pack up and organize gear (team and personal gear) to facilitate a speedy exit from the field and respective dugouts.

UMPIRES/GAME INFO			
	8U	10U	13U
Umpires ²	Offensive and Defensive Coaches	Provided by home field	Provided by home field
Field Coaches	1st and 3rd base coaches; please see bottom of page 3 below for more information	1 st and 3 rd base coach	1 st and 3 rd base coach

2. Umpires - 8U Division:

- The 1st base coach makes all calls at 1st base and fair/foul balls on the 1st base side of the infield.
- The 3rd base coach makes all calls at 3rd base and fair/foul balls on the 3rd base side of the infield.
- The Coach Pitcher makes all calls for plays at second base, at the plate, determining the 10 foot rule, strikeouts and determines when play stops on defensive plays. The Coach Pitcher also makes the final call in plays where there are disputes.

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SCORING			
	8U	10U	13U
Runs allowed per inning	3 runs Applies to ALL innings	4 runs Applies to Innings 1 to 3	5 runs Applies to innings 1 to 3
Continuation ³	No	No	No

3. Continuation:

- There is no continuation. The runs allowed per inning apply innings 1-3. The runs allowed per inning is a hard stop for runs scored regardless of play in the field. There is unlimited runs beginning in the 4th inning and through all remaining innings.

PITCHERS			
	8U	10U	13U
Pitcher ⁴	Coach Pitch	Player and Coach	Player
Number of Batters a Pitcher Can Hit before She MUST Be Removed ⁵	N/A	3	3
Hit by Pitch ⁶	Yes, see page 5	Yes	Yes
Intentional Walks	N/A	No	No

4. Coach Pitch – 8U Division

- Coaches will pitch to their own teams and will not interfere with the ball if hit into play. If the coach or a bucket is hit by a ball, "dead ball" will be called. Players will advance one base as required.
- Coaches may take no more than one extra pitch per six pitches to a batter to account for a bad pitch. A pitching coach must verbalize or communicate which pitch is the bad pitch before adding the seventh pitch.
- Coaches should pitch from 35' (but no closer than 30') but can move closer to home plate and adjust the arc as needed.

Coach/Pitcher – 10U Division

- There are NO walks. Once a player pitcher has thrown ball 4, the offensive team's coach steps in and throws a maximum of 5 pitches. A foul tip on the fifth or subsequent pitches results in another pitch.
- The strike count continues from where the player pitcher left off. The batter will either get a hit, strike out, or be called out after the 5th pitch from the coach (if it is not a foul ball/tip). In addition, players on base when a coach is pitching may not steal or advance on a passed ball.
- Pitches should be thrown with as little arc as possible. The coach pitch ball should not go above the pitcher's head.
- The coach can pitch from the pitcher's mound, the Distance to Pitcher (General Information), or distance in between.

5. Number of Hit Batters – 10U and 13U Divisions

- No more than 3 above the knee during the game. After the 3rd hit batter (3 above the knee), pitcher MUST be removed and cannot pitch the remainder of the game.

6. Hit by Pitch – 10U and 13U Divisions

- Any ball that hits a batter inside the batter's box is considered hit-by-pitch regardless if it touches the ground first. In addition, the batter does not have to attempt to move out of the way from being struck by the pitch. (A ball that hits the ground before the batter does not count towards the 3 that removes the pitcher.)

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BATTING			
	8U	10U	13U
Batting Lineup ⁷	All players	All players	All players
Balls and strikes ⁸	No (6 - or 7- pitches that cross the plate in the strike zone)	Yes (but no walks)	Yes
Foul ball on last pitch	Player continues to bat	Player continues to bat	Player continues to bat
10 foot rule ⁹	Yes (line should be drawn before the game)	N/A	N/A
Dead Ball - batted ball hits coach pitcher	Yes Runners advance one base.	N/A	N/A
Thrown Bat	One warning for EACH team. Next thrown bat, ball is dead and batter is out	One warning for EACH team. Next thrown bat, ball is dead and batter is out	One warning for EACH team. Next thrown bat, ball is dead and batter is out

7. Batting Lineups – All Divisions

- Players who arrive after the first pitch of the game will be added to the end of the lineup. If a player leaves the game and/or is unable to bat, her place in the lineup is skipped and an automatic out is NOT taken.

8. Balls and Strikes – 10U Division

- There are NO walks. Once a player pitcher has thrown ball 4, the offensive team's coach steps in and throws a maximum of 5 pitches. The strike count continues from where the player pitcher left off. The batter will either get a hit, strike out, or be called out after the 5th pitch from the coach (unless it's a foul ball on the last pitch).

9. 10 Foot Rule – 8U Divisions

- A batted ball must go forward at least 10 feet on the ground in fair territory to be a fair ball. Defensive players can make plays on all foul pops, including those hit behind the plate, that go over the batter's head (i.e., if the ball is caught, the batter is out). Teams must use this rule unless otherwise agreed to by both coaches.

* 8U Unoccupied Outfield Position Rule and Coaching Positions: Some 8U teams may not have sufficient players to field 10 players in the defense. For those games and with coordination between 8U coaches before the game, if a ball is hit into the outfield and the defensive team does not have a player in an outfield position, offensive runners are permitted to advance no more than two bases. 8U base coaches must be outside the baselines. Coaches assisting in the defense can be in the outfield or in a position that does not obstruct play. Coaches must consult pre-game on coaching positions to ensure agreement and avoid disputes.

10U Bunting Rule: Batters may only bunt from player pitchers and not coach pitchers. Only a maximum of two plate appearances per inning may show a sacrifice bunt, whether a successful bunt is laid down or not. The batter must square around before or as the pitcher begins her pitching motion for her bunt attempt. Other bunting techniques including, but not limited to, slapping, drag bunting and fake bunting are not authorized at 10U.

Recreation Softball - Fastpitch Rules

BASERUNNING			
	8U	10U	13U
Stealing/ Advance on passed ball	No	Yes (cannot steal Home)	Yes
Sliding	Yes (feet first only)	Yes (feet first only)	Yes
Dive Back to Base	N/A	Yes	Yes
Advance on overthrows - to 1 st Base ¹⁰	No	Yes – at own risk but maximum of 1 base	Yes
Advance on overthrows - to 2 nd & 3 rd Base ¹⁰	No	Yes - except throws from catcher to 2 nd /3 rd on an attempted steal	Yes
Intentional Bunting	N/A	2 bunts shown per inning	Yes
Courtesy Runner ¹¹	No	Yes	Yes
Advance on dropped third strike ¹²	No	No	Yes
Infield Fly Rule ¹³	No	No	Yes
Collision Rule	N/A	Called by umpire	Called by umpire
Stealing 2 nd Base on a walk ¹⁴	N/A	No	Yes

10. Overthrows - 10U Division

- A batter/base runner CAN advance to 2nd base on an overthrow at 1st base during a defensive play but cannot proceed any further. This limitation applies only to the runner at 1st base. All other runners on base at the time of the overthrow are not limited to one base. If the ball is still in play on an overthrow to first, the defense can attempt to make a play on a runner going to second base after an overthrow without liability of giving up any additional bases to that runner (i.e., runner limited to one base).
- A base runner on 1st base CAN advance to 2nd base on an overthrow as the result of a pickoff attempt of that base runner by the catcher.
- A base runner at third base CANNOT advance home on an overthrow on a pickoff attempt of that base runner by the catcher. A base runner stealing third base CANNOT continue to advance past third base on an overthrow by the catcher. Any base runner going to first base that chooses to advance on an overthrow will run at their own risk (unless the umpire awards second base to the runner) of being thrown out at second base and cannot continue past second base in that series of play, even if the ball is overthrown at second base in a sequential throw during the same play.

11. Courtesy Runner – 10U, 13U divisions

- A courtesy runner may be used for the player who starts the next inning in the catcher or pitcher position and may be inserted at any time after the player has safely reached base.
- The courtesy runner should be the player who made the last out of the inning. If there are no outs, then the courtesy runner is the last runner who scored a run. If there are no outs or no runs in the first inning, then the courtesy runner is the last batter in the batting order.

12. Dropped third strike – 13U

- When the catcher fails to catch the **third strike** before the ball touches the ground and there are fewer than two outs and first base is not occupied at the time of the pitch or any time there are two outs

13. Infield Fly – 13U

- An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort. The rule applies when 1st and 2nd bases (or when 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases) are occupied with less than 2 outs.

14. Stealing 2nd Base on a walk – 13U

- A runner who was walked can attempt a steal to 2nd base as long as it is a continuous motion and does not stop or pause after touching 1st base.

Consortium Softball - Fastpitch Rules

DEFENSE			
	8U	10U	13U
Minimum Number of Players (see below)	7	7	7
Maximum Players in Field ¹⁴	10	9	9
Initial Position of outfielders	4 outfielders- must be on the grass except deep/large infields	On outfield grass.	On outfield grass.
Minimum Playing Time (Defense) ¹⁵	At least 3 innings (1 in infield)	At least 3 innings (1 in infield)	At least 3 innings (1 in infield)
Maximum Playing Time ¹⁶	3 innings maximum at any one position	3 innings maximum at any one position	3 innings maximum at any one position
Stopping Play (Defense)	Player in possession of ball within the base line as called by the Coach Pitcher	Time called by umpire	Time called by umpire

14. Maximum Players in Field – 10U

- Coaches have the option to play 10 players in the field (4 outfielders instead of 3) if they can mutually agree before the start of the game.

15. Minimum Playing Time – All Divisions

16. Applies only to players that are present for the entire game. Also catcher is considered an infield position in the 10U and 13U divisions.

16. Maximum Playing Time – 10U and 13U divisions

17. Playing time limit does not apply to the catcher in the 10U and 13U divisions. Any inning that a player is at any one position counts as a complete inning in that position, even if they did not play in that position the entire inning. (ie. Pitching, even if a player only pitches to one batter, that inning counts toward the three allowed even if she does not throw the full 3 outs or inning maximum)

8U teams may play with catchers if they wish to do so. One team may choose to use a catcher and the other may not (i.e., the teams do not have to both play with catchers). Coaches will discuss catchers prior to the beginning of each game and make arrangements for the safe retrieval of softballs behind batters at the backstop if catchers are not used.

For 8U batters hit by a pitch, a pitch that hits a batter is deemed unhittable and does not count against the batter and her six pitches. At the discretion of the two coaches, a player hit by a pitch may be awarded 1st base.

FOR ALL DIVISIONS: For the minimum number of players, if coaches agree and to ensure appropriate-sized teams for all games, players from another team can fill in positions for the opposing team to avoid a forfeit and ensure enough players.

For Spring 2023, some leagues will mandate 3rd graders play at 10u; other leagues allow 3rd graders to play at either 8u or 10u. The consortium anticipates all 3rd graders from all leagues to play in the 10u division in Fall 2023. Coaches should discuss this matter before all games if they wish to know whether 3rd graders are playing in any given 8u or 10u game. This does not impact the 13u division.

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Other Important Safety Rules

Suspending play for Lightning

- If at any time lightning is seen or thunder is heard at the field, all play must be stopped immediately and all players, coaches, and fans need evacuate the area and seek shelter. Play cannot continue until there has been a 30-minute waiting period after the last lightning flash is seen. Even if weather conditions appear to have improved within the 30-minute window, you must wait the required time. Lightning can strike from as far as 10 miles away.
- The onus of removing a team or individual from an athletic site in the event of lightning activity is on the coach supervising the activity. The safety of all team members rests with that coach.

Concussion Awareness

- If a player has a suspected concussion during a practice or game, that player is to be immediately removed from that activity and is not allowed to participate in a practice or game until they have a note from a doctor allowing them to play. Coaches should report these incidents to the appropriate points of contact within their leagues.

Warming up Pitchers • Anyone under the age of 18 who is warming up a pitcher prior to or during a game must wear a catcher's mask. This applies to both players and non-players.

Jewelry • All jewelry must be removed prior to the game. Hard adornments to control a player's

hair, including beads, are permitted and do not need to be removed prior to or during a game.

Helmets • Batting helmets must be worn at all times when the batter/runner is in the field of play.

- Batting warm-ups must take place in an area that is out of play and away from spectators. The on deck batter may warm-up in the batter's circle but must be alone. All warm-ups with toss, tees, hitting sticks, bat sleeves or any other equipment other than the player's bat, must take place in an area out of play and away from spectators.
- Face masks on helmets are required for all divisions. It must be a classic cage face mask; "C" flaps are not permitted or authorized under any circumstances.
- All players at all divisions must use appropriately-approved softball bats; baseball bats are not authorized. The umpire shall remove an illegal bat and have it replaced with a legal bat. There are no ejections due to an illegal bat in our consortium rules. If players wear cleats, metal cleats are not authorized in any division. All players who wear cleats must only wear rubber-mold cleats; cleats, however, are not mandatory.