



10U Fairfield Sports Association Softball Rulebook

Commissioner's Note

We are so excited to have you out on the field this season. As a reminder, this is a youth recreational league. The aim of this age group and the design of this program is to positively encourage our girls to develop a genuine love for the sport and become the best athletes they can be.

Code of Conduct

Fairfield Sports Association (FSA) is a volunteer organization dedicated to providing a positive sports experience for the youth in our community. The goal of FSA is to promote sportsmanship, teamwork, self-confidence, and physical fitness. Participation in a competitive team sports program that emphasizes positive reinforcement can play a significant role in the development of children and provide lifelong memories.

Coach's Code of Conduct

- Maintain self-control at all times.
- Set a good example for all players and spectators.
- Do not use profanity, offensive language, or engage in any inappropriate actions.
- The use of alcoholic beverages or tobacco products before or during sporting events is strictly prohibited.
- Refrain from raising your voice in anger or engaging in arguments.
- Coaches are responsible for ensuring their team's parents behave appropriately.
- If a parent is ejected, the coach may also be ejected (Umpires discretion)
- Ejections will result in an automatic one game suspension.
- Do not verbally abuse officials, coaches, players, or spectators.
- Always remember that this is supposed to be fun for the girls.
- Play hard, play fair, and always respect the spirit of the game.

Team Event Limit

To promote player well-being, balance, and family time, teams are limited to a maximum of **three (3) events per week**.

An **event** is defined as **any organized team activity**, including but not limited to:

- Practices
- Voluntary practices
- Games
- Scrimmages
- Team meetings
- Any other time the full team or a portion of the team is required or expected to meet in person

No team may exceed three total events in a single calendar week, regardless of the type or combination of events. Coaches are responsible for ensuring compliance with this rule.

Game Limits and Durations

- **Kid Pitch:** 5 innings or 75 minutes.
 - If time becomes an issue, **do not start a new inning**. No new inning will start with 5 minutes or less remaining on the clock.
 - All regular season games will stop after 1 hour and 25 minutes (85 minutes). At that point, the final score will reflect the score following the last completed inning.
 - **Rain Outs:** To be considered a complete game, both teams must have completed 2 full innings or 45 minutes.
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Game Balls

- Both teams will supply one game ball.
 - FSA issues an 11" .47 max COR hard softball.
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Umpires

- Two (2) umpires will be positioned at home plate and the field.
- Their judgment calls are deemed final.

Coaches

- The **Head Coach** is the only person allowed to speak to the umpire.
- Any coach on the field or in the dugout must be wearing a team jersey or a shirt of the same color as the team's jersey.
- One mound visit per half inning. The pitcher must be substituted out on the second mound visit.
 - This starts over every inning as well with each pitcher.
 - A visit to the mound counts as a visit, regardless of the coach.
 - If the pitcher is injured (hit by a batted ball) a coach may check on the player and won't count towards a mound visit.

Run Limits

- **5 runs per inning** maximum.

Rules

- USSSA rules will serve as the primary set of rules for FSA softball except as modified herein.
- All-Star and Club teams will have a separate set of rules for tournaments once those teams are formed and begin practicing.
- All players are required to wear a batting helmet with a facemask.
- All defensive players must wear fielding masks, including the pitcher.
- USSSA/ASA approved fast pitch softball bats may be used.

Offensive Lineup

- The batting lineup may consist of a **minimum of eight (8) players**.
- All players present must be in the batting order
- All players will bat at least once per game, regardless of any run rule in effect. If additional at-bats are required to complete the batting order, those at-bats will be allowed; however, the final score will not be affected.

Defensive Positions

- The defensive team must have **at least eight (8)** and a maximum of **ten (10)** players in the field.
 - No more than **six (6)** players, including the catcher, can be positioned inside the dirt.
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Pitcher Appearances Per Game

- A pitcher is limited to **no more than two (2) appearances per game**.
 - An **appearance** is charged when a player:
 - Assumes the pitching position in the pitching circle and
 - **Delivers or attempts to deliver at least one (1) pitch** to a batter, whether legal or illegal.
 - An appearance is considered **complete** when:
 - The pitcher is removed from the pitching position **and**
 - A different pitcher subsequently delivers or attempts to deliver a pitch; **or**
 - The defensive half-inning is completed, defined as either:
 - The defensive team records **three (3) outs**, **or**
 - The offensive team scores **five (5) runs**, resulting in the conclusion of the half-inning.
 - If a pitcher re-enters the game as the pitcher and delivers a pitch after previously being removed, that re-entry constitutes an **additional appearance**, regardless of inning.
 - Once a pitcher has completed **two (2) appearances in the same game**, the pitcher:
 - **May not pitch again for the remainder of the game**, regardless of:
 - Inning
 - Number of outs recorded
 - Number of batters faced
 - Defensive substitutions
 - Injury, strategy, or conference
 - The following **do not** constitute an appearance:
 - Being announced or listed as the pitcher but removed **before a pitch is thrown**
 - Warm-up pitches taken in the bullpen or on the field
 - Defensive conferences or visits that do not result in a pitch being thrown
 - Penalty: Any pitch thrown by a pitcher exceeding the two-appearance limit per game shall be ruled an **illegal pitch**. Upon discovery, the pitcher shall be removed immediately and declared **ineligible to pitch for the remainder of the game**.
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Pitching Rules

- Pitchers entering the game for the first time get 8 warm-up pitches.
- Subsequent pitchers get 5 warm-up pitches.

- If a pitcher hits **3 batters** in one inning, the pitcher must be substituted out. She may return to pitch the following inning. If a pitcher hits **5 batters** in a game, the pitcher must be removed and cannot re-enter for the remainder of the game.
- **Coach-Pitcher:** When a player-pitcher walks 1 batter in an inning, the coach-pitcher enters the game. The coach-pitcher delivers pitches with one foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. The coach pitcher must deliver a flat pitch with a full pitching motion similar to a players-pitcher motion. No communication is allowed once the coach-pitcher enters the field.
- The defensive player acting as the pitcher must position themselves to the left or right of the coach-pitcher within the pitching circle, with both feet inside the circle and behind the pitching rubber.

Pitching Rules:

- **For a batter with two strikes:** The batter has two pitches (or one swing) to put the ball in play unless the ball is fouled. If the batter swings and misses, it is a strike, and the batter is out.
 - **For a batter with less than two strikes:** The batter has three pitches (or two swings) to put the ball in play unless the ball is fouled after the second strike. If the batter swings and misses twice, the batter is out.
- **Interference Rules:**
 - **Intentional Interference:** If the coach-pitcher intentionally interferes with a play, the ball is declared dead, the batter is out, and all other base runners return to their base at the time of the pitch.
 - **Unintentional Interference:** If the coach-pitcher unintentionally interferes with a play, the ball is declared foul. The batter is not out, and all other base runners return to their base at the time of the pitch.

Bunting and Slapping

- **Bunting and slapping** are allowed. However, on a bunt attempt where the batter puts the bat across the plate and the pitched ball is out of the strike zone, a ball should be called unless the batter moved the bat toward the ball.
- **No bunting is allowed off coach pitch.**
- **Slashing** (when a batter shows a bunt, pulls back, and then takes a full swing) is not allowed. If slashing is declared by the umpire, the batter will be automatically out. If the play occurs with two outs, this will count as the third out. The player and coach will receive a warning; the player will be out of the game after a second offense.

Runners

- Runners may leave the base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- **PENALTY** for leaving early: The ball is dead, and the runner is out.
- Stealing bases is permitted.
- Runners may not advance once the pitcher has the ball in the circle.
- Runners must follow the traditional path between bases, defined as the direct line between two bases, with three feet on either side of the line. A base runner may deviate slightly from this line if avoiding a fielder, but they may not intentionally interfere with a fielder attempting to catch the ball.
- **Coach Pitch Rule:** When a coach pitcher is in the game, runners may not take a lead of more than one-third (1/3) of the distance to the next base. Lines/markers will be drawn between 1st and 2nd base and between 2nd and 3rd base to clearly mark the maximum allowable lead. Runners exceeding this limit will be called out.

Sliding Rules

1. **Plays at the Base**
 - While sliding is encouraged, a runner is not required to slide if there is a throw-down or a play at the bag. **NO SLIDING INTO FIRST BASE**
2. **Plays at the Plate**
 - In the case of a play at home plate (e.g., on a pass ball), it is the umpire's judgment to determine whether the runner is safe or out if she does not slide. Please discuss in detail with the umpire at the home plate meeting before the game.
3. **Head-First Slides**
 - Runners are not allowed to slide head-first when advancing to the next base (e.g., during a stolen base attempt).
 - However, a runner may dive back head-first to a previously occupied base, such as when the defense attempts to pick off a runner who has taken too large of a lead after a pitch.

Dropped Third Strike Rule

- There will be no dropped third strike rule in effect to begin the season, regardless of the pitcher.
 - The dropped third strike rule will go into effect three-quarters of the way through the season and will remain in effect for the remainder of the season, including playoffs.
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The Look-Back Rule

- The Look Back Rule is in effect when:
 - The ball is live.
 - The batter-runner has touched first base or been declared out.
 - The pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitching circle.
 - Any runner in motion may continue without stopping or may stop once. If a runner stops, they must immediately return to the last base touched or attempt to advance to the next base.
 - Once a runner stops at a base, they may not move off that base. If a batter-runner overruns first base and does not attempt to advance to second immediately, they are committed to return to first. Failure to adhere will result in the runner being out.
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Player Injury or Illness

- If a player is unable to continue due to injury or illness, the team will not be penalized when it is the missing player's turn to bat. The player's batting spot will be skipped over without penalty, and the next batter in the lineup will proceed. Once the injured player has left the game she cannot return to the game.
 - If the player must leave a game early for a non-injury or non-illness, discuss the matter with the opposing coach at the plate meeting before the game begins. From there the coaches will come to a decision whether to issue an out to that players' vacated spot in the line-up.
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Playing Time

- **Player Rotation:** Coaches must rotate players to maximize playing time for all participants. Failure to comply with the following rules below will result in a team forfeit and the score will be recorded as 11-0.
 - **Courtesy runners** are allowed for pitchers and catchers. These runners must be the last recorded out.
 - **No player shall sit twice before all players have sat once. This is a continuous process and DOES NOT restart every game.**
 - **Every player must play the infield at least 1 inning per game.**
 - If safety is an issue, the league coordinator and commissioner must approve.
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Pick-Up Players

- **Eligibility:** If a team has fewer than **9 players** present, they may pick up a player from within the association under the following conditions:
 - The pick-up player must be enrolled in FSA Softball for the current year.
 - The pick-up player must not be a current player in the same division or the next division up.
 - The pick-up player must bat last and play the OF the entire game.

 - **Process:** The coach of the team needing a player must:
 1. Contact the coach of the potential pick-up player to check availability.
 2. The coach of the pick-up player will then contact the player's parents to confirm availability and facilitate connection with the team in need.
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Final Standings; Tie Breaker and Scoring Guidelines

Section 1: Criteria for Final Standings

- **Win-Loss Record**
- **Head-to-Head:** The record of each team against one another.
 - This is only applicable for a 2-team tie break. If 3 or more teams are involved in a tie break, head-to-head will be skipped and the next criteria down will be used.
- **Runs Allowed:** The total number of runs scored against your team.
- **Runs Scored:** The total number of runs scored against the opposing team.
- **Run Differential:** The difference between runs scored and runs allowed (Runs Scored - Runs Allowed).
- **Coin Flip**

Section 2: Scenarios for Determining Game Completion and Score

1. Scenario 1: Home Team Wins by Holding Lead

- **Condition:** The home team is leading, and the visiting team fails to tie or take the lead in the top half of the final inning with 5 minutes or less remaining on the clock, the game is over.
- **Outcome:** The home team wins, without needing to bat in the bottom half of the inning, the score is recorded as is.
- **Example:** The home team records the third and final out in the top of the 4th inning while leading 5-2. The final score recorded will be 5-2.

2. Scenario 2: No Time Constraint

- **Condition:** The visiting team is leading, and the home fails to tie or take the lead in the bottom half of the final inning with 5 minutes or less on the clock.

- **Example:** The visiting team is batting in the top of the 4th inning with a lead of 6-3. They score 2 runs, making the score 8-3. Since there is no time constraint, the home team bats and scores 0 runs. The final score recorded will be 8-3, as the inning was completed.
- **Outcome:** The visiting team wins, and the score is recorded as is.

3. Scenario 3: Time Constraint

- **Condition:** The visiting team is leading, and the bottom half of the inning is not completed due to drop dead time. See rule under Game Limits and Duration.
- **Example:** The visiting team is batting in the top of the 4th inning with a lead of 6-3. They score 2 runs, making the score 8-3. However, there is not enough time for the home team to bat. The final score will revert to the prior inning's score, 6-3. Visiting team wins.
- **Outcome:** Score reverts to the last completed inning.

4. Scenario 4: Run Rule

- **Condition:** If a team has a significant scoring margin and time is not a factor, the game is completed. The visiting team has 11 or more runs after the top half of the 4th. 6 or more runs after the top half of the 5th. The home team has 11 or more runs after the bottom half of the 3rd and 6 or more runs after the bottom half of the 4th.
 - **Example:** The visiting team is batting in the top of the 4th inning with a lead of 10-0. They score 1 run to make it 11-0. The run rule is in effect due to the home team being mathematically eliminated. The game over, and the score recorded 11-0.
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Pre-Game Procedures

- **Infield Warmups:** No infield warmups on the dirt prior to the game.
- **Batting Cage Access:** Teams will have access to the batting cages 1 hour before the game. The visiting team will have 25 minutes, followed by the home team for the remaining 25 minutes.
- **Questions and Concerns:** Any issues or rule clarifications must be addressed during the pre-game meeting at home plate, prior to the start of the game.