



2024 YOUTH FASTPITCH SOFTBALL RULE BOOK

For anything not covered in this rule book,
refer to the current USA Softball Official Rules of Softball. This is
a free download at the link below (or search for “usa softball
official rules”.)

www.usasoftball.com/official-rulebook/

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Section 01 – Guidelines and Procedures

Purpose:

- (1) To seek the best competition, sportsmanship and brotherhood of coaches, players, fans and spectators alike regardless of race, religion, sex, or age.**

- (2) To do our best in classifying teams to where they can be competitive and enjoy the game of Softball. No Team enjoys being humiliated and being in a game where they are out classed. Our number one goal is to classify teams from Top traveling teams to Recreational teams in a group where each team is playing in a classification where they belong.**

- (3) To work with any group, league, or association that is willing to follow our guidelines and has the same interest in Softball as we do and promotes the game of Softball.**

- (4) To support and encourage any Community, County, State, or Country in an effort to spread Softball and get more people of all ages, (ESPECIALLY OUR YOUTH), religion, sex, or race involved.**

Rule Interpretations:

Basic terms used in Softball such as batter, fielder, base runner, infield fly and etc. will be the same as in the USA Softball Rule Book. If a question comes up and cannot be resolved by an umpire on the field, the Tournament or League Director will make a decision and will be required by G.S.A. to inform the Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director of their decision and a

side letter will be generated to inform teams of what the ruling will be in the future should that circumstance arise again.

Returned Check Policy:

Each Director has their own policy.

Rain Out Policy:

Each Director has their own policy.

Liability:

(G.S.A. accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability for any bodily injury or property damage to coaches, ball players, fans, or other members of the general public which arise from any G.S.A. sanctioned event or any actions of any kind of any G.S.A. Directors or Umpires whether intentional or by accident. A roster must be filled out and signed in every G.S.A. Tournament or event, and by signing that roster, you are saying you agree to this Statement. All Youth rosters will require parent or legal guardian signature if under age and player's signature if not, and coach's signature.)

Section 02 – Protests

Types of Protests:

(1) Misinterpretation of a playing rule: These must be made before the next pitch or should it be the last play of the game, be made before the umpires leave the field.

(2) Ineligible player: These may be made at any time. A decision will be made as soon as possible. It's not always possible to make a decision on this during the game or even before the Tournament is over. If the team is found guilty, appropriate measures will be taken.

(3) Protests that won't be considered: Judgment decisions made by an umpire such as safe, out, balls, strikes, fair or foul.

Protests Fees:

Any team wishing to protest a game shall pay the full tournament fee of that particular tournament. League teams shall pay \$180. Teams that win the protest will receive the money back.

Protest Procedure:

The Coach or Manager of the protesting team shall notify the home plate umpire immediately of his/her intent to protest the game. Umpire shall then notify the opposing team and scorekeeper. Umpire shall also notify the League or Tournament Director immediately.

Written Protest:

In the event the situation cannot be resolved by a League or Tournament Director a written protest should be filled out and sent in to the Area Director and it will be forwarded to the National Director. These should be sent in no later than 3 days from the time of incident and contain the following information.

(1) Date, Place, and Time of game.

(2) Names of Umpires, scorekeepers, League or Tournament Director.

(3) Rule and section of Official rules or local rules in question.

(4) List all information pertaining to protest (5) List your name and any contact information for getting in touch with you.

Protest Decisions:

(1) Protest decisions will be looked at closely and handled in the best interest of Softball and the Team or Teams involved.

(2) Ineligibility protest in cases where the Team or player is found to be ineligible will be handled with the team found guilty forfeiting all games played and dropped to bottom of Rankings and may risk being banned from G.S.A. for the remainder of the year. Coaches are required to have birth certificates for all players with them at each Tournament. Players who are 15 and over and have a valid Driver's license may use a driver's license in place of a birth certificate.

Section 03 – Umpires

Umpire Responsibilities:

One or more umpires will be used in any G.S.A. sanctioned League or Tournament. They shall be responsible for the conduct of the game and be responsible for a decision of playing conditions

on the field once the game begins or before the start of the game. They will apply these rules and maintain order and discipline on the playing field during the game.

Decisions:

No umpire shall have the authority to question decisions made by another umpire. However umpires may choose to consult with each other over a difficult call. But the final decision is made by the umpire who originally made the call.

Change of Umpires:

Teams may not request a change of umpires during or before a game. Umpires will only be changed in the event of illness or an emergency.

Section 04 – Equipment

(1) Bats Shall be marked "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" by the manufacturer and not be on the current USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List. Should a bat have "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" not available because of wear and tear on the bat and still legal in all other aspects it will be considered legal.

(A) Altered Bat - A bat that was once legal, but has been structurally changed including, but not limited to: shaving, rolling or artificially warming the bat barrel. The bat shall not be tampered with in any way to either add or diminish the size of the bat from its original manufacturer specifications.

(B) Weighted sleeves or fans or donuts will be allowed in the on-deck circle but must be removed from the field of play if not in use.

(2) Official Softball: G.S.A. fast pitch will use a 12 inch, core 44 minimum to core 47 maximum optic yellow 375 compression maximum softball for 12 Under and up. 8 Under and 10 Under shall use an 11 inch, core 44 minimum to core 47 maximum optic yellow 375 compression maximum softball.

(3) Gloves: May be worn by any fielder. MITTS may also be used by any fielder.

(4) Uniforms: All players should wear uniforms that are alike in the same color.

(A) Headwear: Caps, Visors, or headbands are optional. But if worn should be alike in color and with bill to the front.

(B) Numbers should be worn on the uniform.

(C) Pants/Shorts: Pants or shorts may be worn but should be alike in color.

D) Shoes: Shoes must be worn by all players. Metal cleats may be worn by age groups 14U and older but the cleats must be no longer than 3/4 of an inch.

(E) Jewelry: No exposed jewelry may be worn that in the umpire's judgment could be dangerous to a player/players.

(F) Casts: Cast made of plaster or other hard substance in their final form may not be worn during a game. If the cast is covered in such a way to soften the cast it may be acceptable if approved by the Tournament Director.

(G) G.S.A. reserves the right to make changes or withdraw any approval or disapproval of any equipment at any time should in G.S.A.'s determination change the game, affect the safety of participants or spectators, or creates a players performance to be more a product of the equipment rather than their individual skill.

(5) Catchers must wear a NOCSAE approved protective helmet with mask, chest protector, and shin guards. Any player warming up a pitcher within the confines of the ball park shall wear NOCSAE approved helmet with mask.

(6) Any player batting on deck or on base must wear a helmet. Helmets shall have a non-glare (not mirror-like) surface. Under no circumstances shall a player remove their helmet until in dugout. Should an umpire detect a runner deliberately removing their batting helmet during playing action, a dead ball will be called, the player will be called out, and if a double play was in order, the runner closest to home plate will also be called out, remaining runners return to the base last touched. No runner shall score a run after a player has been declared the third out of an inning for deliberately removing their batting helmet. If this third out is a force out, all runs scored on the play are canceled. Chin straps are also recommended.

Section 05 – Players and Substitutes

(1) Rosters: Can have up to 18 players on roster.

(2) Line-up cards : Must be completed and submitted to the official scorekeeper and umpire before the start of the game. Line-ups need to at least include first initial, last names and jersey numbers. In the event a number is listed wrong, correct the mistake and continue with the game as long as the name is correct. You need to designate your pitcher and catcher on the line up card. If you have players that are EH's or a BB they must be labeled.

(3) Teams may drop down one player if an injury, sickness or an emergency and not be penalized. If you drop down one player, that spot in the batting order will just be skipped over. That player can not reenter the game. If you have a sub that hasn't entered the batting order they must take her place. However if you drop down 2 players or more, then an out will be recorded every time that spot comes up in the batting order. The defensive team in that situation will be allowed to walk a player to get to that out. The minimum number of players a team will be allowed to drop down to is 8. Any less than 8 players team must forfeit. You can start with 8 with no penalty. Loss of the (BB) from your lineup does NOT count as dropping one player.

(4) We have Free defensive substitution. Which means any 9 can play defense or in 8u and 10u any 10 can play defense without having to let umpire or team know.

(5) EH(S): are base runners that can run for anyone at any given time as many times as you want. You can replace an EH with another EH or BB or the original runner they came in to run for. If you put a substitute player to come in to bat or run for an EH you lose that EH.

(6) BB: is a base runner only. CAN NOT play defense or bat. They are ONLY A RUNNER.

(4)(7) SUBS: can play defense at **any time**. If a sub bats, they are tied to the player they went in for. That original player can play defense or be subbed back in the original batting spot.

(2)(8) Teams will be allowed to make changes to their roster until 7 days before the State Tournament. At which time the last official roster we have on file for your team will become your team's official frozen roster. Once the roster is frozen teams will be allowed to add 2 players within your own teams classification. You will not be allowed to add a pitcher from a team playing in a higher classification than your team without approval from G.S.A. National Office or by the Advisory board. You may drop as many as you like but can only add 2. The Board and Directors will be looking all thru the year and may move teams either up or down in classification during the year in order to have the best competition possible. Once rosters are frozen no team will be

moved in classification. Teams must play in at least two GSA Tournaments (one rainout counts towards this total) at the seven day period prior to the State Tournament, Region Tournament or World Tournament to participate in these tournaments. (Exception: lower-level Copper Minus and All Star teams may be granted an exception.) No players will be allowed to play in two age divisions in the same Tournament. A player may play in two age divisions, just not in the same Tournament. Unusual circumstances may be looked at by the G.S.A. National Office or by the Advisory board.

(3)(9) Age cutoff for Youth will be January 1. Whatever age the player is, as of January 1, will be the age classification they are eligible for. Teams **MUST** Age up to the current age beginning August 1. Season begins August 1 and ends July 31. Players may play up in classification, but may not play down in classification. All teams must be able to present a Sanctioned G.S.A. Director with either a birth certificate or valid Driver's License for proof of player's age. Should a team not be able to do this at the tournament the Tournament Director will have the right to require any information needed from players. The game will not continue until which time the coach can provide birth certificates or valid driver's license. After investigation should that Team be found to have illegal players that Team may be banned for the remainder of the year. After investigation and the team is found to be legal and asked for birth certificates or valid driver's license again at any time during the year and can't provide them at the Tournament again this team will forfeit all games and fees for that Tournament. G.S.A. Directors may randomly ask for birth certificates or valid driver's license without a request from another team. Your responsibility as a coach is to have all documents with you at all times.

(4)(10) A player may be released from a frozen team's roster should a parent or legal guardian request a release using the approved G.S.A. Youth release form which may be found at the National website at <http://gsateams.com>. The player may be released immediately upon the coach's approval. If the coach does not approve the release the player will be released once the approved release form has been received by the State Director. Players may only be released in this manner one time during the year.

(5)(11) The head coach will be informed when a player has been ejected. An ejected player may remain in the dugout unless there are further problems in which case the Coach or parent will be asked to leave the playing field and take the player with them. Refusal to do this may also result in that team forfeiting the game. An ejected coach, parent, or spectator must leave the field and remain out of sight of the umpires. An ejected coach shall not participate in any way, including phone calls, text messages, or relaying instructions via a third party.

(6)(12) Blood Rule: A player, coach, manager, or umpire who is bleeding or who has blood on their uniform shall leave the playing field until appropriate treatment can be administered. If a team has a substitute they must be placed in the game and continue the game. If the team has no substitute the player may return, if in the in the umpire's judgment the problem is taken care of in a reasonable amount of time. Uniform rules will be waived in the case the player has to change.

Section 6 – Playing Field

(1) Buckets are not allowed on the field during play.

(2) Ground Rules: There may be special rules set aside by different parks, Leagues, or Directors

when there are special circumstances or obstructions.

(3) The Double base is optional for first base. If the double base is used the runner may touch the colored, or part of the bag in foul territory. If an errant throw pulls the defensive player into the colored bag area, a defensive player may catch the ball, standing on the colored bag and it will be an out if it's called an out by the Umpire. In this event, the batter-runner can touch the white bag. After the batter-runner runs past the bag, the batter-runner and defender can use either side of the bag.

(4) The following distances shall be used. These may be modified based on individual field conditions.

Age	Pitching	Bases	Fence
6-8	35 Feet	60 Feet	150 Feet
9-10	35 Feet	60 Feet	200 Feet
11-12	40 Feet	60 Feet	200 Feet
13-14	43 Feet	60 Feet	200 Feet
15-16	43 Feet	60 Feet	200 Feet
17-Up	43 Feet	60 Feet	200 Feet

Section 07 – The Game

(1) Home Team: In Pool Play the umpire shall assign one coach Heads, the other coach Tails and flip a coin. In Bracket Play, the higher seed has the choice to play as home or visitor..

(2) Teams that intend on intentionally walking a batter must pitch a complete at bat if there are any runners on base.

(3) When a potential injury occurs, time will be called immediately by an umpire. All runners will then be placed by the umpires..

(4) Regulation Game:

(A) A regulation game consists of seven innings. The game shall be called if and when any run rules come into effect or if the home team scores more runs in six and one half innings and/or before the third out of the seventh inning.

(B) In the event of inclement weather G.S.A. officials will have the right to shorten the game in an effort to get all games in.

(C) A shortened game will be considered regulation if four or more innings have been played, or if the home team scores more runs in three and one half innings or more.

(5) Extra Innings / Tie Breaker: Should the score be tied after seven innings or by time limit, to start the next inning the each team shall place their last two, completed at bat, batters at second and third. With the last batter placed on second base and the next to last batter placed on third. Teams will be allowed to substitute their Extra-Hitter(s), Base-Burner, or any eligible substitute player in extra innings just as you can in regular play.

(6) Forfeited Games: An umpire may forfeit a game in favor of a team not at fault in the following cases.

(A) If an umpire is physically attacked by any team member or spectator.

(B) If a team fails to appear on the field or is already on the field and refuses to begin a scheduled game.

(C) If after a warning from the umpire a team willfully violates any of the rules.

(D) If one team refuses to continue play after the game has begun.

(E) If an ejected player, coach, spectator or manager does not leave playing field or follow umpire's directions within a reasonable amount of time in umpire's judgment.

(F) In the case of a player being ejected and that team does not have enough remaining players to continue the game.

(G) An umpire or Tournament Director may forfeit a game because of unsportsmanlike conduct or making a mockery of the game.

(H) If necessary Tournament directors may allow up to 15 minutes before declaring a forfeit during the team's first scheduled game of the day. The game clock will be started at the scheduled game time. After their first game, all teams are expected to be on time for their next scheduled games.

(I) The score of a forfeited game shall be 1-0 in favor of the Team not at fault. The reason for 1-0 is so it does not adversely affect the rankings.

(10) Run rule shall be 10 runs after 3 innings, 8 runs after 4 innings, and 6 runs after 5 innings.

Section 08 – Pitching Regulations

(1) Pitching regulations are as defined in the USA Softball Rule Book.

Section 09 – Batting

(1) Batting regulations are as defined in the USA Softball Rule Book

Section 10 – Batter – Runner

- (1) The Batter-Runner and Runner rules are as defined in the USA Softball Rule Book**

Section 11 – 8 Under Rules

(1) 8U Games will be 60 minutes in length – finish the inning or 6 innings, whichever comes first. Championship game for each bracket will be 75 minutes – finish the inning.

(2) No more than 6 runs per inning may be scored; a mercy rule will go into effect at 15-12-10 run differential at the 3rd, 4th and 5th innings.

(3) 9 or 10 defensive players positioned anywhere on the field, including all girls on the infield dirt,

may be played throughout the game, allowing more girls to be played, or be rested, as needed.

(4) All players may bat (but not required to bat). Free substitution on defense is allowed.

(5) Batter will get 5 pitches. Contact must be made by the 5th pitch or the batter will be called out. No limit on foul balls.

(6) Play will continue with any number of overthrows and any number of bases taken, with the risk of being put out. Running the ball into the pitcher's circle does not stop play.

(7) Coach must start AND end with at least 1 foot inside the pitchers circle. If a coach is struck with a batted ball and is outside the circle, an AUTOMATIC out will be called for interference. It's the pitching coach's responsibility to know where the circle is and should ask the umpire for clarification if he/she is unsure. Otherwise, if a coach is struck with a batted ball and has made EVERY attempt to avoid the ball, the umpire will call NO PITCH and reset to the last pitch count. The coach in the pitcher's circle must make every effort to leave the playing field, attempt to remove the bat, and retreat to foul territory, as soon as the ball is in play.

(8) Up to TWO coaches may be anywhere in the outfield, fair or foul, to direct the fielders, but they must stay BEHIND the deepest fielder at all times.

(9) There will be a predetermined hash mark on each baseline, indicated in the dirt, prior to the game start. When the lead runner has been stopped at a base, this hash mark will be used by the umpires to help determine which base other runners will be held to, forward or back.

(10) Face masks on helmets are a REQUIREMENT and chin straps should always be used to keep the helmets in place while a player is running the bases.

(11) A copy of each player's birth certificate must be available to the Tournament Director at any given time. Please keep this paperwork nearby for the entire course of the day. The information on the birth certificates must match up with the official roster that was turned in prior to the start of your first game.