

Peninsula Softball League

2023 GIRLS 14U FASTPITCH PLAYING RULES

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2023 GIRLS 14U FASTPITCH PLAYING RULES

The following rules are organized and based on the USA Softball Association Official Rules of Softball, Team Edition. 2023 USA Official Rules shall apply, unless modified in the following rules. Rules stated herein may restate official rules for added emphasis or clarity, may make local exceptions to the Official Rules, or may add rules that are otherwise not embodied in the Official Rules. In case of a conflict, the rules stated herein shall apply.

RULE 1 – DEFINITIONS

Definitions shall be as stated in the USA Official Rules.

RULE 2 – THE PLAYING FIELD

- A. Field: The playing field shall be as prescribed in the USA Official Rules. If teams use an end of outfield fence (as opposed to an open, unrestricted field), the distance to that line shall be set at least 160 feet if possible. The pitching distance in the 14U division is 43 feet.
- B. Set-up: Home team shall be responsible for setting up the field, including installing bases before the start of the game and for returning bases to storage when the game has ended.

RULE 3 – EQUIPMENT

- A. Uniforms: Uniforms must be worn by each player on a team and must be alike in color only. An exception is when a player from a lower division (play up) is filling out the roster for another team and none of that team's uniforms are available. In this instance, the player shall wear the uniform from her own team even though it may be different in color and style. A pitcher shall be allowed to wear white sleeves under her uniform jersey.
- B. Sweatshirts or Jackets on Cold Days: Sweatshirts or jackets with or without numbers may be worn in the field and up at bat on cold days and nights. If numbers are not visible, the player's number on her jersey must be shown to the umpire and opposing team, when requested. Colors of sweatshirts or jackets need not match.

- C. Jewelry and Medical Alert: Players may not wear jewelry during an official game. Medical alert bracelets and necklaces are not jewelry and may be worn but must be taped to the body in such fashion that the medical alert information is visible.
- D. Pitcher's Glove Color: A pitcher's glove may be of one solid color or multi-colored as long as the color(s) are not the color of the ball being used in the game being played. Since yellow balls are used exclusively in this division, a pitcher's glove shall not have any yellow or optic yellow color on it. If a pitcher is found to be using a non-conforming glove, the umpire will stop the game and require the pitcher to obtain a conforming glove.
- E. Replacement Gloves and Mitts: If during play, a glove or mitt breaks or is otherwise determined to be unusable by the umpire, the player may immediately and without delay obtain a legal replacement glove or mitt and is entitled to three warm-up catches prior to restarting the game. To avoid any conflict with the USA excessive warm-up rule, a pitcher participating in this warm-up shall throw the ball overhand.
- F. Batting Helmet Masks: All batting helmets shall be outfitted with a securely fastened NOCSAE approved face-mask.
- G. Balls: The official softball is the 12" regulation ball from Wilson, Dudley, or Worth.
- H. Cleats: Metal cleats are allowed as per USA rule guidelines.

RULE 4 – PLAYERS, COACHES, SUBSTITUTES

- A. Players: A player is defined as a youth of the proper age for their division of play. A team must have the minimum number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game. The minimum number of players is eight. A game may begin or finish with (8) eight players, but no fewer. When starting a game with (8) eight players (otherwise known as "shorthanded"), the vacant ninth position must be listed last in the batting order, but, contrary to USA Official Rules, will not be taken as an out.
- B. Players Arriving Late: If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives, that player shall be inserted in the vacant position in the batting order. If a player arrives prior to the start of the third inning, she is eligible to play and shall be inserted as the last batter in the line-up. Players arriving after the start of the third inning are *not* eligible to play.

- C. Players Leaving Early: Any player leaving a game prior to its completion will have her turn at bat counted as an out. Local exceptions to this rule are players leaving because of (1) illness, (2) injury, (3) emergency, and (4) notification by one coach to the other prior to the start of the game that a particular player or players will be leaving the game prior to its completion. After the game has started, a team shall not be entitled to exception (4) above. If a player leaves the game for reasons other than those provided in the exceptions above, the batter's position in the batting order will be taken as an out when the player is due to bat. Conversely, no outs will be taken when a position in the batting order is vacant as a result of one or more of the above exceptions. The batting order will be compressed to the number of remaining batters when a vacancy occurs based on the exceptions above. The coach shall notify the umpire and opposing coach when invoking an exception under this rule.
- D. Players from a Lower Division "Play up" Filling Out a Roster: When a team is short of players for a particular game, players may be brought up from a lower division of the league to fill out the roster up to 10 players giving the team one player over the number of players on the field. The player(s) shall be placed last in the batting order (rotation) and shall only play the outfield or on emergency basis pitch. An emergency basis is defined as when the team has no experienced 14U pitcher available to pitch due to situations such as absence, injury or innings availability. A regular rostered player who is not expected to start a game but arrives prior to the third inning may be inserted in the last position of the batting order and any players brought up shall remain in the batting order. The player(s) who was (*were*) brought up to fill out the roster shall play at least six (6) outs on defense (i.e., the minimum playing time required in a game). The team should attempt to provide the player(s) with its team uniform to wear. If none is available, the player(s) shall wear her/their own team's uniform. Teams may have duplicate jersey numbers for guest players. **Player(s) are not allowed to be pulled from another team within the same division and age group.**
- E. Defensive Substitutes: Defensive substitutions may be made at the coach's discretion to meet the minimum participation requirements as outlined in Rule 5, Section M below. Pitching & Catching changes shall be reported to the umpire and other team, prior to the change taking place. To speed up play, other player changes need not be reported.
- F. Courtesy Runner Substitutes: USA rules permit the use of courtesy runners for a pitcher and catcher provided that the courtesy runner is someone who is not currently participating or has not participated in the game. Since by local rule all players must participate in the game, the rule is hereby locally modified to allow a courtesy runner from the participating players and the courtesy runner shall be the player scheduled to bat last in the inning. Locally, a courtesy runner may

also be used for an injured or ill player. If the pitcher, catcher, injured or ill player, and player who has left the game early are scheduled to bat last in the inning, the coach may use as a courtesy runner the player scheduled to bat last in the line-up prior to that player's position in the batting order. In the top of the first inning only, the pitcher and catcher are identified as those players listed on the line-up as the pitcher and catcher. Thereafter, the pitcher and catcher are identified as the last players who physically played that position on defense.

An exception to the rule would be where a team is going to change pitchers in the following half-inning but the player who will pitch is on base and is unable to warm-up. In this case, the player on base who is going to pitch may be replaced by the person scheduled to bat last in the inning. If this is done, the player who is taken out shall pitch at least three outs in the next half inning. (Comment: A coach may not declare a player as a pitcher, catcher, injured or ill just for courtesy base running purposes. For courtesy base running purposes, a coach may not change pitchers or catchers while at bat. The official pitcher and catcher for courtesy base running purposes are the pitcher and catcher who completed the prior half-inning on defense, except as provided above.)

- G. Injured Players: A substitute player (defensively and/or offensively) may be used for an injured player. If the injured player is unable to return to the game by their next at bat, player shall not be allowed to return to the game.

RULE 5 – THE GAME

- A. Starting Times: Weekday games start at 5:30 p.m. After daylight savings time begins, games start at 6:00 p.m. at all locations. Consult schedule for weekend games. The umpire will announce the official starting time of the game to the Official Scorekeeper at the start of each game.
- B. Starting Line-ups: Starting line-ups shall be presented to the Official Scorekeeper and/or opposing manager at least ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the game and must include the names and uniform numbers of the players present.
- C. Game Balls: Home team shall provide two game balls to the umpire prior to the start of the game. One should be new and the other can be nearly new.
- D. Home Team/Third Base Dugout: Home team will normally occupy the third base dugout. An exception is that in the event of a double header, teams will not change dugouts, regardless of whether they are the home or visiting team for the second game.

- E. Warm-ups Prior to Game: Batting practice, pitching practice, and infield practice are not allowed in fair territory of the infield, prior to the start of the game. Warm-ups are confined to foul territory of the infield and the grass outfield in fair or foul territory.

- F. Game Length: Games shall be seven (7) innings or one hour and thirty (1:30) minutes in length, whichever limit is reached first. A new inning starts when the final out is recorded in the prior inning, and a new inning shall begin if any amount of time is left on the official game clock. That new inning shall be played to its conclusion whether or not time expires during the playing of that new inning. (An exception to the completion of the new inning is a game being stopped due to rain, darkness, or some other reason as described below.) Game time shall start upon first warm up pitch thrown.

- G. Official Games: A game shall be recorded as "official" when either (1) at least five (5) full innings have been completed, or (2) one hour and thirty (1:30) minutes have elapsed. A game will be "official" at the conclusion of one hour and thirty (1:30) minutes of play, regardless of the number of innings completed. If time expires in the middle of an inning and the home team is behind in the game, the inning will be played to its conclusion. If time expires in the middle of an inning and the visiting team is behind in the game, the inning and game will end at that point. A game will be "official" if the game is ended by an umpire prior to the one hour and thirty (1:30) minute mark, so long as five (5) full innings have been completed. A game is unofficial if it is stopped before the completion of five (5) full innings and one hour and thirty (1:30) minutes. Games will not be posted in the league standings until they are "official." Games that are stopped before they are "official" shall be resumed from the exact point where they were stopped.

- H. Stopping or Ending a Game Early (Rain, Darkness, and Other Reasons): In the event a game is stopped due to rain, darkness, or some other reason determined necessary by the umpire or league, the final outcome shall be based on the score at the end of the last fully completed inning of play. (For example, if the game is stopped for rain, darkness or some other reason without completing the sixth or seventh innings, the game reverts to the fully competed fifth or sixth innings, as appropriate. The game is then recorded as an "official" game based on the score at the end of that appropriate inning. If the game is stopped before completing the fifth inning and time remains on the official clock, the outcome is not determined by reverting to the fourth inning, because four (4) full innings, with time remaining on the clock, does not constitute an "official" game. In that situation, the game must be resumed later from the exact point it was stopped.

- I. Rescheduled and Resumed Games: Games will be rescheduled and resumed only when cancelled or not completed (as outlined above) due to rain, darkness, or some other reason determined necessary by the umpire or league. Games where the time limit has expired are official and will not be resumed. Games that will affect the final team standings shall be rescheduled; games that will not affect the final team standings may be rescheduled but are not mandatory. Should the league and/or coaches not wish to reschedule or resume a game, the league and/or coaches may do one of the following: (1) accept as complete and official a game that was stopped prematurely; or (2) declare a tie game. Should one coach wish to reschedule or resume a game and the other not, the game shall be rescheduled or resumed, unless the league determines otherwise.

It is the responsibility of the home (host) team coach to coordinate with the visiting team coach and to contact the home/host team league president or designee to obtain a date, time, and location for a rescheduled/resumed game. Once a rescheduled/resumed game is assigned, the host league president or designee shall notify the umpire liaison who in turn shall contact the umpiring association to secure umpires. Incomplete or cancelled weekday games will normally be rescheduled for the following Sunday. Incomplete or cancelled Saturday games will normally be rescheduled for the Sunday of the following weekend (one week later). (The website should be consulted for the exact schedule.)

A resumed game shall be started from the exact point where it was stopped, including time left on the official game clock. It is recognized that not all of the same players may be available for the resumed game. To the extent possible, the same players should occupy the same positions in the batting order and the same players should resume their places on base (i.e., if runners were actually on base when the game was stopped). Changes in defensive positions may be made. A pitcher's game week outs shall revert to the week when the game was originally being played. A pitcher may not exceed her game week outs for the week in question.

- J. Tie Games and Tie-Breaker Rule: If the score is tied when time expires, the game will end in a tie. If the score is tied after seven (7) innings have been played but before the time limit expires, the Tie-Breaker Rule (Rule 5, Section 11, USA official rules) shall be followed. The runner starting at second base shall be the player scheduled to bat last in the inning (e.g., If the number 5 batter in the batting order is to lead off, the number 4 batter will be placed on second base. If the number 4 batter is the pitcher, catcher, injured or ill player, or player who left the game early, another runner may be used resulting in the player whose name precedes that player in the line-up being placed on second). If time expires during playing under the Tie-Breaker Rule, the team ahead at the end of the last full inning of play will win. If the teams are tied at the end of the last full inning of play, the game will end in a tie. If it is determined that the wrong player has been placed on base, the game shall be stopped and the wrong player shall be disqualified (i.e., removed from playing the rest of the game) and replaced with the appropriate player and the game shall be played on from that point. If the wrong player has scored before it is discovered, the run shall count but the player shall still be disqualified. Playoff games may not end in a tie; the Tie-Breaker Rule, as noted above, shall be followed until a winner is determined. (For further information on disqualified versus ejected players and the effect on the game, refer to Points of Emphasis at the end of these rules.)
- K. Team Play: The maximum number of players participating on the field on defense at any time by one team shall be nine (9); the minimum number of players shall be eight (8). (If one team can field only eight [8] players, the opposing team may still field nine [9].) Any team with fewer than eight (8) players at the start of the game will lose by forfeit. If both teams are unable to field minimum teams at game time, a double forfeit will be declared resulting in a half-win/half-loss for each team.
- L. Minimum Play: Each player shall participate on the field on defense a minimum of two (2) innings (6 defensive outs). Failure of any team to observe this rule may be grounds for disciplinary action against the coach and forfeiture of the game. Coaches are encouraged to allow players to play longer than the minimum during the season and play infield sometimes so that the girls will learn through experience to play better softball.
- M. Positioning of Players: Prior to the release of a pitch, teams shall have their outfielders positioned:
1. At least twenty-five (25) feet to the outfield side of first base, second base, and third base or twenty-five (25) feet from any point along an imaginary line extending between the bases;

2. Such that no more than two (2) outfielders are located on either side of dead center of the field. (Dead center is an imaginary line extending from home plate through second base and into the outfield to the end of the playing field.)
 3. A team fielding nine (9) players shall have three (3) outfielders; and a team fielding eight (8) players shall have two (2) outfielders.
- N. Ten-Run Ahead Rule: A ten (10) run rule will be used for all games except the Championship Game of the end of season tournament. If after five (5) innings one team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more, the game shall be concluded by the umpire.
- O. Six-Run Ahead Rule: The team at bat may score:
1. One (1) run over the opposing team's score if the team at bat begins the inning behind by six (6) or more runs; or
 2. A total of six (6) runs if the team at bat begins the inning behind by less than six (6) runs; or
 3. A total of six (6) runs if the team at bat begins the inning ahead in the score.
- In any case, the play in progress must be completed, and *all* runs (continuous) will count on the play even in the event more than six (6) runs are scored prior to a dead ball.
- P. Home Run Rule: Any ball hit on a fly beyond a line designating the end of the outfield (e.g., designated by cones, fences, or other forms of demarcation) will be ruled a home run. A fly ball caught in the air in the playing field and carried across the line designating the end of the outfield will be ruled an out and a dead ball; with fewer than two outs, all runners shall advance one base without risk of being put out. On a field that is open and unrestricted with no designation of the end of the outfield, all balls are played as live.
- Q. Ground Rule Double: If cones or a painted line are used to designate the end of the outfield, any ball crossing these forms of demarcation after having contacted the ground in fair territory will constitute a ground rule double and umpire shall award bases for base runners accordantly.

- R. League and Tournament Champions: The team with the best record at the end of the regular schedule of games (including rescheduled and resumed games) is the "league champion." If there is a tie for first place, the teams will share the title of "league champion." An end of season tournament will be played at the end of the regular schedule of games. The winning team will be the "tournament champion."
1. Rules: All rules of the 2022 Girls 14U Fast Pitch Softball Playing Rules shall apply, except that pitchers will not be limited to the outs and game week restrictions of the regular game schedule. (Comment: Pitchers may throw at the coach's discretion.)
 2. Seeding: Teams shall be seeded in the tournament based on their order of finish in the regular schedule. Any ties in the order of finish will be broken based on the relative performance of the teams in the following areas:
 - a. Percentage of wins to losses
 - b. Head to head competition
 - c. Total runs against during the regular season(includes every game vs. every team the entire regular season)
 - d. Total runs for during the regular season(includes every game vs. every team the entire regular season)
 - e. Toss of coin
 3. Determination of Home Team: The higher seeded team in any game shall be the home team.

RULE 6 – PITCHING REGULATIONS

- A. Pitching Outs and Game Week: A player may pitch no more than thirty (30) outs per game week. A game week begins on Monday and runs through the following Sunday. Outs not recorded due to abbreviated games shall not be counted as outs pitched during that week. An exception to the thirty (30) outs per game week rule is if a starting pitcher has pitched an entire game (21 outs); the starting pitcher may finish the game without the additional outs counting against her total for a game week. Pitcher's outs for rescheduled and resumed games shall be based on and revert back to the outs recorded

in the game week for the games being rescheduled and resumed. Pitcher's outs in games that are not a part of the league (e.g., friendly games with other teams from other cities) will not count against a pitcher's outs per game week.

- B. Changing Pitchers: An individual player may only be brought into the pitcher's position twice throughout a game. A team shall not be allowed to transfer a pitcher back and forth from pitching to a fielding position or from the bench to a pitching position in order to put a specific pitcher against a specific batter or batters throughout the entirety of the game. This may be considered contrary to fair play and/or delay of the game. Coaches guilty of this practice may be subject to disciplinary action.

RULE 7 – BATTING

- A. Rotation Batting Order: All players who are in attendance shall be listed in the line-up and take their turn batting. Some players will be batting even though they are not playing defense. Since all players in attendance are listed in the line-up, the batting order will remain the same throughout the entire game.

RULE 8 – BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER

USA rules on Batter-Runners and Runners shall apply.

RULE 9 – PROTESTS

USA rules on protests (Rule 9) shall apply with the following local modifications:

- A. Resolution of Issues: All questions of judgment and rule interpretations by umpires that arise during the playing of a game shall be resolved at the game. Final determinations on these issues shall be made by the umpire at the game and these determinations may not be protested.
- B. Protest Filer and Subject of Protest: Protests may be filed by the head coach, assistant coach or manager of a team (the latter two only if the head coach is unavailable) based on one or more alleged violations of rules regarding eligibility of players, use of disqualified or ejected players, not playing all players the minimum number of innings (outs) on defense and/or use of a pitcher who has exceeded the number of outs she is allowed to pitch in a game week.

- C. Protest Submission: Protests shall be submitted in writing to the Protest Committee within 72 hours of the ending of the game. If a violation has occurred in a game that was stopped for rain, darkness, or other reason determined necessary by the umpire or association, a protest may be submitted prior to the playing of the resumed game. Written protests may be submitted by email or hard copy. Protests shall contain the following information: (a) date, time, and place of the game; (b) names of the umpires and scorers, if known; (c) description of rule(s) alleged to have been violated; and (d) description of essential facts supporting the protest.
- D. Review of Protests: The Protest Committee shall consider all valid protests and render a decision as soon as it is able. After due consideration, the decision on a protested game will result in one of the following: (1) the protest is determined to be invalid and the game result stands as played; (2) the protest is determined to be valid and the offending team shall forfeit the game; or (3) the protest is determined to be valid and some other appropriate remedy is adopted by the Protest Committee, based on its review of all facts in the case. All decisions of the Protest Committee shall be final; there will be no appeals to another body.
- E. Composition of Protest Committee: The Protest Committee shall be comprised of the presidents of all of the softball programs participating in a particular division / league. Each president, in his or her discretion, may designate another individual to perform these functions for them.

RULE 10 – UMPIRES

A. Umpires for Games: If no official USA or other league designated umpires are available at game time, each team will be asked to provide one volunteer to umpire the game. If one team cannot provide a volunteer, the other team may provide two or the game may proceed with just one volunteer. If one or more official umpires arrives after the game has started, the umpire(s) will take control of the game in progress (games will not start over). The Official Scorekeeper shall record the time and point in the game that the umpire(s) arrived.

RULE 11 – SCORING (also known as scorekeeping)

- A. Official Scorekeeper or Scorer: The home team shall be Official Scorekeeper/Scorer for each game. If a competent scorer is not available to the home team, the coaches may by mutual agreement appoint someone not from the home team to act as Official Scorekeeper. If agreement cannot be reached, the umpire shall designate the Official Scorekeeper/Scorer.

- B. Records: The official scorekeeper or scorer shall keep records of each game based on the rules/guidelines of USA Rule 11.

RULE 12 - JOINT ALL-STAR TEAMS

To the extent allowed by USA rules, leagues participating in the 14U inter-city league may create joint All-Star teams for post-season play. This could involve an all-star team from one participant league picking up players from another participant league who was unable to field an All-Star team.